
handbook for the
SEARCH

by Emma M. Vilardi

DEDICATED TO ALL PERSONS ENMESHED IN THE TRIAD,
and to Hazel, my mother, an adoptee, embodiment
of my ancestors who have gone before her. For
within each of us is a tiny cell in which is
hidden the complete history of our individual
mystique. Our heritage and identity, the key
to each soul, and the legacy we bequeth to our
children and their issue, infinite.

A very special thank you to Mary Jo Rillera,
for the sharing of mutual dreams.

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Being revised

ADOPTEE

VITAL RECORDS ~ BIRTH

THE ADOPTEE: WHAT ARE THE LEGAL EFFECTS OF ADOPTION UPON YOU AS AN INDIVIDUAL

To understand the search you are about to undertake, a brief review of Adoption Laws in general is needed.

An adoption is a judicial proceeding necessitating a judge of a competent court in a required jurisdiction. Termination of the rights and duties between the child and its natural parents, by the substitution of an equivalent legal status between the child and its adoptive parents.

As the laws of no two states are identical, it is suggested you obtain from your individual state, the pamphlets outlining pertinent statutes. See List A.

GENERAL

ADOPTION

PROCEDURE

1. Petition, signed by the persons seeking to adopt; setting forth appropriate information respecting the child, its natural parents, the adopting parents, and may also include a request for a change of the child's name. Natural parents' names, residence and often additional information as to race, religion, and marital status. In most states, if a child is illegitimate, it is not required to furnish personal data or name of father.

2. Verification.

3. Consents, by natural parents, or other legal guardian such as agency.

4. Legal notice.

5. Investigation (A written report made to the court, details vary from state to state, by court investigator).

6. Hearing.

7. Court Order of Adoption (Interlocutory and Final decree.)

8. Amended Certificate of Birth.

States provide secrecy of legal records in adoption proceedings. In general reference to adoption codes, these records can not be consulted by anyone, except by an order from the court for which good cause must be demonstrated.

It is rare, that the adoptee is granted access to the sealed records. If you are not aware of the exact law in your state pertaining to the original certificate of birth, it is suggested that you check under that state's Vital Statistics Act. If you do have legal right of access to these records, make sure you can cite the exact section of the statute to the State Registrar. Copies of statutes are distributed in libraries of each state.

Please be advised that the amended certificate of birth by adoption will contain the following true facts, never altered.

1. Certificate number
2. Place of birth
3. Date of birth
4. Doctor's name
5. Hospital (if named)

As such, these facts will be the basis for the start of your search.

If you do not have a copy of the amended certificate (after adoption) or if you are legally entitled to your original certificate: Apply to State Registrar, State Board of Health at (your State of Birth) State Capital, in person, or by written request.

Ask for a "photostatic copy of certificate of birth," and enclose the required fee, usually 3 dollars, with a check or money order.

A complete list of all "State, Territorial and Regional Health Authorities" can be obtained from: The Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402. Ask for Department of Health, Education and Welfare Publication Number (HSM) 72-10.

Do not overlook the fact, if you locate your natural parents' identity, that their certificates of birth could provide you with vital background on your parents' next of kin.

IRREVOCABILITY & CONTRADICTION of ADOPTION ACT

If you were born in New York City, the number on your certificate of birth after adoption, or on the certificate (short form) could provide a clue to locate your identity at birth. Go to: New York Public Library, 238 William Street, New York, N.Y. (Municipal Archives & Records Retention Center). Ask for the Register of New York City Records by the year of your birth. Birth data will be shown as follows: Name; sex; date of birth by month, day, year; initial of borough; Certificate number. Remember, you have to match exact certificate number to know your name at birth.

We have been advised that no photocopies are allowed of these records, so copy everything exactly!

If all else fails, you still have the right to petition the court of jurisdiction showing "good cause" in writing, or by an attorney. Again it depends on individual state statutes.

Submit *copies* of all vital records you have, and state clearly that this is a "Petition showing good cause." List simply, your needs, including the fact of your need "for a state-of-well being." Sign your present name, adoptive identity, *nee* (born) your name at birth (if known). Sign in front of a notary, who will affirm your signature and the date. Be able to provide the notary, proof of your identity.

If at all possible, ascertain the name of the Presiding Judge of Surrogate and mail the Petition directly to him, register and request a return receipt.

To locate the proper court of jurisdiction see List B.

Concerning Birth Certificates in accordance with: Section 16 and 17, of the Model State Vital Statistics Act - 1959 Revision (Price not available at this time). Request from: Superintendent of Documents, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. For *Birth* and *Death Records* of United States Citizens who were born or died outside of the United States and for *Birth Certificates of United States*—"for alien children adopted by United States Citizens." Request: Public Health Service Publication HE20.0—fee: 35¢ from: Superintendent of Documents at the above address.



In concept, each adoption is irrevocable. In actual practice, all but nineteen states make it legally possible for adoptions to be revoked. Twenty states, allow annulment of adoption, only on a legal defect in the adoption procedure.

The only person who can challenge the validity of an adoption in the majority of states, is the natural parent within a set specific time. Certain adoption laws in the state involved. One or two years, extreme limit being noted.

Nine states offer the adoptive parents the option for an annulment on physical, mental and moral defects of the adoptee.

West Virginia and Vermont statutes carry a provision which allows an adoptee within one year after his Twenty-First Birthday to file a "Dissent To His Adoption," upon which, the decree of adoption is vacated.

New York permits adoptions to be set aside, "by mutual consent of both parties; by or on, the behalf of the adoptee; by the adoptive parent because of desertion by such child; or misdemeanor or ill behavior of child."

Wyoming statutes have a provision concerning a child abandoned, and placed for adoption, "may be reclaimed by its natural parents by reimbursing the county for the support of the child during abandonment and by posting a bond as future guarantee, and the paying of reasonable compensation."

NOTE: Upon receipt of a certified copy of a court order of annulment of adoption, the State Registrar restores the original Certificate of Birth to its original place in the files.

For "Legislative Guides for the Termination of Parental Rights and Responsibilities And the Adoption of Children," ask for United States Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare - Publication #394 1961 (Children's Bureau) no fee. Inquire from: Superintendent of Documents, at the aforementioned address.

INHERITANCE and DEATH RECORDS

For specific statutes concerning rights of inheritance, see each state's legislation. In general, most states rule that the adoptee may inherit from his adoptive parents. Some states restrict the right of inheritance to limited heirs of the body: Maine, Ohio, Vermont, and West Virginia.

Other states having special provisions in their statutes allowing the adoptee to inherit from his natural parents are: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Texas, Vermont, and West Virginia.

NOTE: These states might accept inheritance as "good cause" in a petition for release of sealed files and birth records.

In Iowa, the courts hold a child may inherit from its natural parents under common-law.

For every death, official documents are filed where the event occurs. These are prepared by professional attendants, hospital authorities, physicians, funeral directors, and cemeteries. These records are filed in State Vital Records—City or Municipal Records, and often County sources. To secure a certified copy of a death certificate, write or visit the Vital Statistics Office where the death occurred. See Publication #630A-1 for individual addresses of State Vital Statistics offices and fees.

Give the following facts, wherever possible:

1. Full name of deceased, sex and race.
2. Parent's name, including Mother's maiden name of the deceased, if known.
3. Month, day, year, of date of death of deceased.
4. Month, day, year, of birth (also place of birth, if known).
5. Place of death, city, county and state.
6. Residence of deceased.
7. Name of wife or husband, if dead, say so.

State your relationship to deceased, such as son or daughter. Reason for request: such as inheritance; your signature, if adopted or married, or both followed by the word, *nee* (born) and your original name at birth.

NOTE: If you are the illegitimate issue of the deceased, *It Is Not* necessary to state the fact.



SOCIAL SECURITY RECORDS

Seldom will this office provide a copy of personal data or whereabouts on a living person, other than yourself.

If the person of your search is deceased, and you know their Social Security Number, submit a copy of the death certificate, and state your request for information, the reason for request, and your relationship to the subject of search.

Ask for photocopies of the original application and any filed changes, or claims.

If subject of search was female, state her maiden name in full.

A good rule for establishing original date of application would be 16 to 18 years after date of birth. Example year of birth is 1922
+ 16 years = 1938.

Write to nearest: (see phone directory) Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Social Security Administration; or Division of Disbursement, Treasury Department.



DIVORCE and ANNULMENT RECORDS

Ask for: Where to write for Divorce Records. United States and Outing Areas, Revised 1970. Write to Superintendent of Documents, at the aforementioned address. Public Health Service Publication #630C—fee 35¢

In the past, if the county was unknown, it was virtually impossible to secure a certified copy of a divorce record. Now, the centralization of divorce records in 35 states and three independent registration areas make it easier. The above publication will provide you with each state and data in full.

To secure a certified copy of the record, enclose check or money order to cover fee and provide the following information:

1. Full name of husband and wife (maiden name, if known).
2. Residence of both at time of divorce.
3. Ages at time of divorce (or dates of birth).
4. Places of birth.
5. Date and place of divorce action.
6. Type of divorce action, if known.

State your name, relationship to above, legal reason for request. (Keep in mind that most states require established residence prior to the divorce action.)



OTHER INFO SOURCES:

1. Libraries

Libraries: Reference Department, Public Library, Main Branch Municipal Library or Reference Department, State Historical Society Library or Reference Department, County Historical Societies, State Libraries; County Libraries, University and College Libraries.

Write to the Main Public Library in the town of your search. At that time ask them for addresses of other sources you might be interested in. Keep your requests terse and to the point. Inclose reasonable fee for photocopy, cost of which range from 10 cents to 25 cents per page or clipping. If a large and long established library, their files and sources are apt to include:

A. Former city directories by years -- surname and given name "usually contain name of head of household, name of spouse, occupation and business address, and residence.

B. Past and present phone directories. State year and surname you desire. A good procedure is to check every five year span.

C. Listings and addresses on: Churches, Schools, Cemeteries, Hospitals, Doctors and so on.

D. News file - Personal histories and obituaries.

2. Church records

Church records: For information on baptisms, cradle rolls, Bible schools, nursery schools, confirmations, Parish membership, funerals, agencies, homes. All these are great sources of personal data on families in general. Request certified statement from Custodian of Church records and Archives.

Source of addresses on individual churches of various faiths can be secured from past city directories, telephone directories, public libraries. For help and guidance, write:

A. Episcopal--To be found within specific parishes.

B. Jewish Synagogues and Agencies-- American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio and American Jewish Historical Society, New York, New York.

C. Baptist--American Baptist Historical Library, Colgate--Rochester Division School, Rochester, New York.

D. Methodist--Methodist Church Records, Drew--Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey.

E. Roman Catholic--(for reference to) c/o National Genealogical Society, Publication #5 by Cora C. Curry, Washington, 1935, or care of the Parish Priest, individual parish.

F. Mormon--Church of Latter Day Saints--Church Office Salt Lake City, Utah. Note: this faith has one of the greatest archives known, representing micro-filmed records of many other faiths, civic vital records, cemetery records, and thousands of compiled family genealogies. Don't overlook this source!

3. Historical assoc.

Municipal, County and State Historical associations: Good source for local records on churches, out of print directories, cemetery records.

4. Wills

Wills and intestate records (Index to wills)--Provide full name, date of death and exact residence (street number, town, county, state). Inquire about fee for search and photo copy or certified copy of will to: Clerk of County Court, County Court House. Note: most always to be found at county seat of residence.

5. Zip codes

National Zip Code Directory - will save you a great deal of time in your communication efforts. Can be purchased at most book stores.

6. Phone books

Phone Directories - For old directories, (street, criss-cross, reverse, telephone and city) consult library in town of search. For present directories, any state or locality of your search, request from your local telephone office's Business Representative.

7. School records

School records - your's or your natural parents. Write to Board of Education, Records and Admissions or Principal's office, exact school. Note: "request photocopies of health records, admission records, attendance, and transfers." Supply them with name, age, year and grade. Often your certificate of birth is recorded by them, birth date, place of birth parents' names.

For complete register of schools nationwide, write to: Superintendent of Documents, United States Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Ask for: Education Directory, 1972-73, Public School Systems Item 53M, price \$2.10. Contains 256 pages of listings, 16,960 schools and mailing addresses.

8. Medical records

Medical records - Often, will release to an attorney.

Hard to get, best submit your request for certification as a polite demand. Sign before notary and send registered, request return receipt. Do not elaborate, state sound basic reason for request, such as medical need or to legitimate identity at birth, or for reasons of legal inheritance rights.

- A. Hospital, request from record division.
- B. Physicians - certified statement.
- C. Blood banks.
- D. Public Health Service, Visiting Nurse Association.

9. Voter registration

For voter's registered address - by election year, write to: Chief Clerk, Office of State Board of Election Commissioners, County Court House, County and State. It is more successful to write for a request, than to visit them in person.

10. Newspapers

Newspapers - will often grant permission to use files or to request specific clips if you know approximate date. Large libraries often have back issues on micro-film.

11. Insurance records

Insurance Records - (Medical and Personal files). Obtain listings on major companies from phone directories. Provide a name, residence, year and reasons for request and relationship to subject of search.

12. Veterans records

Veteran's Records:

A. Selective Service Records concerning:

Veterans of World War I - write to: Federal Records Center, 221 St. Josephs Street, East Port, Georgia

Veterans registered during and since World War II - write to: Selective Service Board of State where they were registered.

B. National Personnel Records Center, G. S.A. (Military Personnel Records) from WWI, WWII, and after, 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, Mo.

C. Veterans Administration - Administrative Service, Washington, D.C. 20420, or Veterans Administration, city or town of search.

D. Veterans groups, State, Local or National Posts:

1. *Veterans of Foreign Wars* (see local telephone directory)

2. *American Legion* NOTE: The United States Government will not provide you with photo-copies of files on veterans whose service terminated less than 75 years ago.

However, if you can prove relationship to the veteran (vital records and documents) they will usually provide certain information from their files. You can help to locate the veteran's records, if you provide them with his full name, service number or VA number, branch of service, dates of service, rate or rank, field of action, and all other vital information known.

Often, a local VFW or American Legion Post can help supply you with the above facts.

13. Census records

Census Records, write to:

Personal Census Service Board, Administrative Service Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Pittsburg, Kansas. NOTE: request form 10-611, application for search of Census records.

The Government does not undertake a search of these records lightly, must have legal cause, so wait until you have certain information available to you before you use this privilege. The application will explain the requirements in full and fee required.

14. Other Federal records

Other Federal Records, write to:

The National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, Washington, D.C.

NOTE: Has many records which may prove a person's age, citizenship, such as homestead application, ship passenger lists, seamen's protection certificate applications, pension applications, personal records.

15. Other Personal records

Other Personal Record Sources:

- A. Applications for motor vehicle operator's permits.
- B. Applications for driver's license.
- C. Car Insurance.
- D. Employment records.
- E. Fraternal organizations.

16. Marriage records

Marriage Records:

- A. write to: Superintendent of Documents, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. Ask for: Public Health Service Publication #630E, fee is five cents.
- B. Consult: Bureau of Marriage License, Town of Search, request photocopy.
- C. Church records.

17. Cemeteries

Cemeteries and Funeral directors:

Often willing to search and photo-copy their records, can provide personal data such as next of kin. You must be able to provide date of death and full name.

A death certificate most always provides the name of the funeral director and cemetery.

Remember, those records created nearest your date of birth are usually the most helpful.



GENERAL ATTITUDE

Write for any information as opposed to inquiring in person.

REMEMBER: Be exact in your requests and state them as graciously as possible. Kindness helps. State your relationship to subject of search to all legal sources; submit copies of other vital records if it will aid that party to fill your request; always have any request for legal or vital records notarized.

Please express your appreciation for any endeavor extended towards your request.

FOOTNOTE ❖

*A FOOTNOTE TO "THE SEARCH" SUPPORTING THE ADOPTEE'S DESIRE TO KNOW**

A study conducted by Dr. Arthur D. Sorosky, clinical assistant professor at the child division of UCLA's center for health sciences, entitled, "The Controversy Over the Sealed Record in Adoption: A Psychological Investigation," was presented before the American Academy of Child Psychiatry October, 1973.

Sorosky conducted his study with two associates, Annette Baran, supervisor of foster homes and adoption services for the Vista Del Mar Child Care Service, and Reuben Pannor, director of social work and research at Vista Del Mar.

"We do not view our project as completed in any sense," Sorosky said. "It is only in the pilot stage and, at best, can provide some preliminary observations and impressions. We are presenting our findings at this point because we want to bring the matter to the attention of the mental health community and hope the publicity will establish our reputation as a center for the scientific research of this phenomenon."

"Although the present standards of anonymity were developed as a safeguard to all of the people involved in adoption, our study indicates that for many, the standards have been the cause of insoluble problems," he said.

Adoption agencies, the paper said, should begin to consider the following:

-A recognition that many birth parents have not resolved their feelings about relinquishing a child for adoption, and a significant percentage have a life-long, unfulfilled need for further information or contact with that child;

-A recognition that adoptees feel a greater lack of biological connection and continuity that has been previously accepted, and these are feelings which cannot be discounted as occurring only in maladjusted or emotionally disturbed individuals;

-A recognition that adoption agencies need not maintain the role of protector;

A recognition that the time has come to set up procedures within these agencies to meet the "new challenges." These would accept the adult adoptee as a "full client" with the right to full information and the cooperation of the agency, and;

A recognition that the agencies have a responsibility to share with the legislature their own wealth of experience, making recommendations to bring about changes in the present state adoption laws if needed.

There are a number of reasons, Sorosky said, why an adoptee feels the need for further information about his or her past. They include medical necessity, genealogical curiosity, a fantasy of being reunited with the idealized "good parent"- often as the result of a poor relationship with the adoptive parents- and the late revelation of adoption with the resulting bewilderment.

"In many cases the feeling is a matter of filling in the gap within the adoptee's own identity," Sorosky said. "A link from the past to the future. They often believe if they have the knowledge of their past, they would feel whole. They would know themselves better. The mystery then would be over."

Traditionally, because of bargains made at the time of adoption, adoptees seeking data about themselves have not only been refused, but have often been labeled as neurotics and have been advised to seek professional therapy. In the current movement, which started 20 years ago, adult adoptees are insisting they have a constitutional civil right to this information about themselves.

Also, birth parents who gave up their children for adoption have been experiencing the desire to see their children again, to know how they are and what they have become, Sorosky said.

"Many of the letters I have received were quite emotional in content and attitude," Sorosky said. "Some reflected deep wounds and a great need to express feelings.

"Many of the birth parents seem to be existing at two levels: functioning well within marriage, family, parenting, etc., but harboring deep emotional unresolved feelings and sharp memories of the bearing and relinquishing of a child."

*Excerpts from an article by Marlene Cmons, "Los Angeles Times," October 23, 1973

List A

For information concerning legislation on adoption for each state, write to:

- ALABAMA**
State Department of Pensions and Security - Administrative Blvd.
64 North Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130
- ALASKA**
Department of Health & Social Services
Division of Social Services
Pouch HO5
Juneau, AK 99811
- ARIZONA**
Department of Economic Security
P. O. Box 6123
Phoenix, AZ 85005
- ARKANSAS**
Department of Social & Rehabilitative Services
Social Services Division
P. O. Box 1437
Little Rock, AR 72203
- CALIFORNIA**
Department of Health
Social Services Division
State Office Bldg. 8
714 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
- COLORADO**
Department of Social Service
State Social Services Bldg.
1575 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203
- CONNECTICUT**
Department of Social Services
110 Bartholomew Avenue
Hartford, CT 06115
- DELAWARE**
Division of Social Services
P. O. Box 309
Wilmington, DE 19899
- FLORIDA**
Department of Health & Rehabilitative Services
1311 Winewood Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32301
- DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**
Department of Human Resources
District Bldg. 14th & E Strs. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004
- GEORGIA**
Department of Human Resources
Division of Social Services
211 H Health Bldg.
47 Trinity Ave. S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30334
- HAWAII**
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, HI 96809
- IDAHO**
Department of Health & Welfare
700 W. State Street
Boise, ID 83702
- ILLINOIS**
Department of Children & Family Services
1 North Old State Capitol Rd.
Springfield, IL 62706
- INDIANA**
Department of Public Welfare
100 N. Senate Ave. Room 701
Indianapolis, IN 46204
- IOWA**
Department of Social Welfare
Rob't. Lucas State Office Bldg.
12th & Walnut Sts.
Des Moines, IA 50319
- KANSAS**
Department of Social & Rehabilitation Services
State Office Bldg.
Topeka, KS 66612
- KENTUCKY**
Department of Human Resources
Bureau for Social Services
Bush Bldg. 403 Wapping St.
Frankfort, KY 40601
- LOUISIANA**
Department of Health & Human Resources
P. O. Box 44065
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
- MAINE**
Department of Human Services
State House
Augusta, ME 04333
- MARYLAND**
Human Resources Department
Social Services Administration
11 South Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
- MASSACHUSETTS**
Department of Public Welfare
600 Washington St.
Boston, MA 02111
- MICHIGAN**
Department of Social Services
300 S. Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI 48926
- MINNESOTA**
Department of Public Welfare
Centennial Office Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155
- MISSISSIPPI**
Department of Public Welfare
P. O. Box 4321 Fondren Station
Jackson, MS 39216
- MISSOURI**
Department of Social Services
Broadway State Office Bldg.
Jefferson City, MO 65101
- MONTANA**
Department of Social & Rehabilitation Services
836 Front St.
Helena, MT 59601
- NEBRASKA**
Department of Public Welfare
P. O. Box 95026
Lincoln, NE 68509
- NEVADA**
Department of Human Resources
251 Jeaneli Dr. Capitol Complex
Carson City, NV 89701
- NEW HAMPSHIRE**
Division of Welfare
8 Loudon Road
Concord, N.H. 03301
- NEW JERSEY**
Division of Youth & Family Services
P. O. Box 510
Trenton, NJ 08625
- NEW MEXICO**
Department of Health & Social Services
P. O. Box 2348
Santa Fe, NM 87503
- NEW YORK**
Department of Social Services
1450 Western Ave.
Albany, NY 12243
- NORTH CAROLINA**
Department of Human Resources
Division of Social Services
Albemarle Bldg.
325 N. Salisbury St.
Raleigh, NC 27611
- NORTH DAKOTA**
Social Service Board
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND 58505
- OHIO**
Department of Public Welfare
State Office Tower
30 E. Broad St.
Columbus, OH 43215
- OKLAHOMA**
Department of Institutions
Social & Rehabilitation Services
Box 25352
Sequoyah Memorial Office Bldg.
Oklahoma City, OK 73125
- OREGON**
Department of Human Resources
198 Commercial St. S.E.
Salem, OR 97310
- PENNSYLVANIA**
Department of Public Welfare
322 Health & Welfare Bldg.
Harrisburg, PA 17120
- RHODE ISLAND**
Department of Social & Rehabilitative Services
Aime J. Forand Bldg.
600 New London Ave.
Cranston, RI 02920
- SOUTH CAROLINA**
Department of Social Services
North Tower Complex
1535 Confederate Ave. Ext.
Columbia, SC 29202
- SOUTH DAKOTA**
Department of Social Services
New Office Bldg.
Pierre, SD 57501
- TENNESSEE**
Department of Human Services
State Office Bldg.
Charlotte Ave.
Nashville, TN 37219
- TEXAS**
Department of Public Welfare
John H. Reagan State Office Bldg.
1400 Congress Ave.
Austin, TX 78701
- UTAH**
Department of Social Services
104 Capitol
Salt Lake City, UT 84114
- VERMONT**
Department of Social & Rehabilitation Services
Agency of Human Services
81 River St.
Montpelier, VT 05602
- VIRGINIA**
Office of Human Resources
P. O. Box 1475
Richmond, VA 23212
- WASHINGTON**
Department of Social & Health Services
P. O. Box 1788
Olympia, WA 98504
- WEST VIRGINIA**
Department of Welfare
State Office Bldg. # 3
1800 Washington St. E.
Charleston, WV 25305
- WISCONSIN**
Department of Health & Social Services
1 W. Wilson St.
Madison, WI 53702
- WYOMING**
Department of Health & Social Services
Hathaway Bldg.
2300 Capitol Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82002

List B

To identify the proper court for adoption proceedings:

Venue: the county or other geographical or political division where adoption proceeding must be held.

ALABAMA — Probate Court.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at petitioner's residence, child's residence, or agency residence.

ALASKA — Superior Court.

Petitioner has choice of venue, statewide.

ARIZONA — Superior Court.

Petitioner does not have choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of petitioner.

ARKANSAS — Probate Court.

Petitioner does not have choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of child.

NOTE: Proceeding may be brought in County Court in cases of destitute, delinquent, homeless or abandoned children.

CALIFORNIA — Superior Court.

Petitioner does not have choice of venue, proceeding must be held at residence of petitioner.

COLORADO — Juvenile Court, if functioning otherwise, County Court.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner, residence of child, residence of agency.

CONNECTICUT — Probate Court.

Petitioner does not have choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of petitioner.

NOTE: If child is in an institution, petition is filed in district where the institution is located.

DELAWARE — Orphans Court.

Petitioner does not have choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of petitioner.

KENTUCKY — Circuit Court.

Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of petitioner.

LOUISIANA — Juvenile or District Court.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner or residence of parents or legal custodian.

MAINE — Probate Court.

Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceedings must be brought at residence of petitioner.

NOTE: If non-resident of state, then proceeding to be brought in county of residence of child.

MARYLAND — Circuit Court sitting in Equity.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner or residence of child.

NOTE: If petitioner is non-resident, then proceeding to be brought in county of residence of child.

"Baltimore City — Equity Court."

MASSACHUSETTS — Probate Court.

Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of petitioner.

NOTE: If petitioner is non-resident, then proceeding to be brought in county of residence of child.

MICHIGAN — Probate Court.

Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of petitioner.

MINNESOTA — Juvenile Court.

Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of petitioner.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA — Domestic Relations Branch of Court of General Sessions, *only*.

FLORIDA — Circuit Court.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner, residence of child, residence of agency.

GEORGIA — Superior Court.

Petitioner does not have choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of petitioner.

NOTE: The court may, for good cause, permit the petition at residence of child or residence of agency.

HAWAII — Circuit Court.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner or residence of child.

IDAHO — Probate Court.

Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of petitioner.

ILLINOIS — Circuit Court.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner, residence of child or parents, or residence of agency or guardian.

INDIANA — County Court with Probate jurisdiction.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner, or residence of child.

IOWA — District Court.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner, residence of child, or residence of agency.

KANSAS — Probate Court.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner or residence of child.

NOTE: If petitioner is non-resident of state, then proceeding must be brought at residence of child, or the county where agency is located.

MISSISSIPPI — Chancery Court.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner; residence of child or where child was born, found, deserted or abandoned; or residence of agency where child was surrendered.

MISSOURI — Circuit Court, Juvenile Division.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner or residence of child.

MONTANA — District Court.

Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of petitioner.

NEBRASKA — County Court.

Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of petitioner.

NEW JERSEY — Superior Court, Juvenile Court, Domestic Relations Court, Supreme Court, if parents were divorced in state, unless said court has awarded custody to an agency or consented to proceeding in another court.

Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of adoptee or at residence where agency has office.

NEVADA — District Court.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner or any county for child. Adult adoption, at residence of petitioner or residence of adoptee.

NEW MEXICO — Child adoption District Court; Adult adoption District or Probate Court.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner, or residence of child.

NEW HAMPSHIRE — Probate Court.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner or residence of child.

NEW YORK — Family or Surrogate Court.

Petitioner does not have choice of venue, proceeding is brought in county of residence of petitioner. If petitioner is non-resident of state, then proceeding will be brought in county where child resides; or if child is adopted from an institution, the county where it is located.

NORTH CAROLINA — Superior Court.
Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner, residence of child, or if child is a public charge, at residence of child when it became a public charge.

NORTH DAKOTA — District or Probate Court.
Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding must be brought in county where petitioner resides. If petitioner is non-resident of state, proceeding must be brought in county where child resides.

OHIO — Probate Court.
Petitioner has choice of residence, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner, county where child was born, county where child has a legal settlement, or county where child has become a public charge.

OKLAHOMA — County or Children's Court, if existent.
Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of petitioner.

OREGON — County Court or any other court of competent jurisdiction.

Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of petitioner, or where the parents or legal custodian reside, or residence of child.

PENNSYLVANIA — Orphans Court or "Philadelphia" Municipal Court.
Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner, residence of child, or, with court permission, residence of agency.

RHODE ISLAND — Juvenile Court under 18 years;
Probate Court over 18 years.
Petitioner has choice of venue if adoptee is over 18 years.
Proceeding may be brought only at residence of petitioner, residence of the child or residence of agency, if the adoptee is under 18 years.

SOUTH CAROLINA — Common Place Court or court with concurrent jurisdiction.

Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner, residence of child or agency.

NOTE: Whether petitioner is resident or non-resident.

SOUTH DAKOTA — County Court.
Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner, residence of child or residence of agency.

TENNESSEE — Chancery or Circuit Court.
Petitioner has choice of venue (but the State Attorney General has ruled that the proceeding should ordinarily be brought at residence of petitioner), residence of child, or residence of agency.

TEXAS — Chancery or Circuit Court.
Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought at residence of petitioner, residence of child or residence of agency.

UTAH — District Court.
Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding must be brought at residence of petitioner.

VERMONT — Probate Court.
Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding must be brought in own county of residence. If petitioner is non-resident, proceeding is brought in county of residence of child or agency.

VIRGINIA — Court of Records with Chancery Jurisdiction.
Petitioner has no choice of venue. If petitioner resides in the City of Richmond and north of the James River, the proceeding is brought in the Chancery Court in the City of Richmond. If petitioner resides south of the James River, the proceeding is brought in Hustings Court of the City of Richmond.

WASHINGTON — Superior Court.
Petitioner has choice of venue, proceeding may be brought in county of residence of petitioner or in county of residence of child.

WEST VIRGINIA — Circuit Court or Juvenile Court where Circuit Court does not sit as Juvenile Court.
Petitioner does not have choice of venue, proceeding must be brought in county of residence of petitioner.

WISCONSIN — County Court.
Petitioner has no choice of venue. If adoptee is a minor, proceeding will be brought at residence of child. If adoptee is adult, proceeding will be brought at residence of adult adoptee.

WYOMING — District Court.
Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding is brought in county of residence of petitioner.

PUERTO RICO — Superior Court.
Petitioner has no choice of venue, proceeding at residence only.



List C

Historic Associations and Libraries

ALABAMA

State of Alabama Department
of Archives and History
Montgomery, Alabama

ALASKA

Alaska Historical Library
Juneau, Alaska

ARIZONA

Prescott Historical Society
Sharlot Hall Museum
West Gurley, Prescott, Arizona

ARKANSAS

Arkansas History Commission
Old State House
Little Rock, Arkansas

CALIFORNIA

California State Library
Library & Courts Building
Sacramento, California
California Historical Society
2090 Jackson Street
San Francisco, California

COLORADO

Colorado State Museum
(Archives Section)
East 14th Avenue & Sherman St.
Denver, Colorado

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut State Library
Hartford, Connecticut

Connecticut Historical Society
1 Elizabeth Street
Hartford, Connecticut

DELAWARE

Delaware State Museum
(Archives Section)
316 S. Governor Avenue
Dover, Delaware

Delaware Historical Society
Market Street
Wilmington, Delaware

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Columbia Historical Society
1307 New Hampshire Avenue
Washington, D.C.

FLORIDA

University of Florida
(Library & Archives)
Seagle Building
Gainsville, Florida

St. Augustine Historical Society
22 St. Francis Street
St. Augustine, Florida

GEORGIA

Georgia Historical Society
501 Whitaker Street
Savannah, Georgia

HAWAII

Hawaiian Mission Childrens Society
(History)
553 S. King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii

IDAHO

Idaho Historical Society
610 Parkway Drive
Boise, Idaho

ILLINOIS

Illinois State Historical Society
Centennial Building
Springfield, Illinois

INDIANA

Northern Indiana Historical Society
112 S. Lafayette Blvd.
South Bend, Indiana

Indiana State Museum (Reference Sect.)
Indianapolis, Indiana

IOWA

Iowa State Department of History and Archives
Historical Building
East 12th & Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa

KANSAS

Kansas State Historical Society
Memorial Building
Topeka, Kansas

KENTUCKY

Kentucky Historical Society
Old State House
Frankfort, Kentucky
University of Kentucky (prior to 1900)
Kentucky Life Museum
Higbee Mill Pike
Lexington, Kentucky

MAINE

Maine Historical Society
485 Congress Street
Portland, Maine

MARYLAND

Maryland Historical Society
201 West Monument Street
Baltimore, Maryland

MASSACHUSETTES

American Antiquarian Society
(Library and Archives)
Park Avenue & Salisbury Street
Worcester, Massachusetts

MICHIGAN

Michigan State University Museum
(Library & Archives)
East Lansing, Michigan
Michigan Historical Museum
(Library & Archives)
505 N. Washington
Lansing, Michigan

MINNESOTA

Minnesota Historical Society
(Library & Archives)
Cedar Street & Central Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota

MISSISSIPPI

Old State Capitol Museum
(Library & Archives)
State & East Capitol Street
Jackson, Mississippi

MISSOURI

State Historical Society of Missouri
University of Missouri – Library Building
Columbia, Missouri
Missouri Historical Society
Lendell and De Baliviere
St. Louis, Missouri

MONTANA

Historical Society of Montana
(Library Archives)
Robert at 6th Avenue
Helena, Montana
Montana State University
Missoula, Montana

NEBRASKA

Nebraska State Historical Society
(Library Archives)
1500 R Street
Lincoln, Nebraska

NEVADA

Nevada Historical Society
Rena, Nevada

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire Historical Society
30 Park Street
Concord, New Hampshire
The Portsmouth Athenaeum
(Library Archives)
9 Market Square
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey Historical Society
230 Broadway
Newark, New Jersey

NEW MEXICO

Historical Society of New Mexico
(Library Archives)
Palace of the Governors
Santa Fe, New Mexico

NEW YORK

New York State History Museum
(Library Archives)
State Education Department
Albany, New York
Long Island Historical Society
128 Pierrepont Street
Brooklyn, New York
American Jewish Historical Society
(Archives)
3080 Boradway
New York, New York
New York Historical Society
170 Central Park West at 77th Street
New York, New York
American Baptist Historical Society
1100 S. Goodman Street
Rochester, New York
Staten Island Historical Society
Court & Center Streets
Richmondtown, Staten Island, New York
NORTH CAROLINA
World Methodist Building
(Church Research)
Lake Junaluska, North Carolina
Rockingham County Historical Society
Leaksville, North Carolina

NORTH DAKOTA

Cass County Historical Society
(Library Archives)
North Dakota State College
Fargo, North Dakota

OHIO

Historical and Philosophical Society
of Ohio
(Archives)
University of Cincinnati
Library – Room 205
Cincinnati, Ohio

Historical Society of
the Evangelical United
Brethern Church (Church Archives)
1810 Harvard Boulevard
Dayton, Ohio

Shaker Historical Society
Moreland School, Lee &
Van Aken Boulevard
Shaker Heights, Ohio

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma Historical Society
Historical Building
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

OREGON

Oregon State College
“Horner Museum”
Colisium
Corvallis, Oregon

Oregon Historical Society
235 S.W. Market
Portland, Oregon

PENNSYLVANIA
Lutheran Historical Society
Lutheran Theological Seminary
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania State Museum
(Library Archives)
State Museum Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Historical Society of the Evangelical
& Reformed Church
Fackenthal Library
Franklin & Marshal College
Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Museum of Moravian Historical Society
(Church Archives)
200 Block, East Center Street
Nazareth, Pennsylvania

Historical Society of Pennsylvania
(Library Archives)
1300 Locust Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Philadelphia Methodist Conference
Center & Old Street George Methodist
Church (Archives)
235-236 New Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

RHODE ISLAND
Rhode Island Historical Society
(Library Archives)
52 Power Street
Providence, Rhode Island

SOUTH CAROLINA
Charlestown Museum (Library Archives)
125 Rutledge Avenue
Charlestown, South Carolina

SOUTH DAKOTA
South Dakota State Historical
Museum (Archives)
Memorial Building - Capitol Avenue
Pierre, South Dakota

TENNESSEE
Tennessee State Museum
(Library Archives)
War Memorial Building -
Capitol Boulevard
Nashville, Tennessee

TEXAS
Texas Catholic Historical Society Inc.
(Catholic Archives, Southwest)
Congress & West 16th Street
Austin, Texas

University of Texas
Texas Memorial Museum
24th & Trinity Street
Baird, Texas

Baylor University (Archives)
Waco, Texas

UTAH
Latter Day Saints (Library Archives)
Temple Square
Salt Lake City, Utah
Utah State Historical Society
(Library Archives)
603 East South
Temple Square
Salt Lake City, Utah

VERMONT
Vermont Historical Society
(Library Archives)
State Library Building
Montpelier, Vermont

VIRGINIA
Virginia Historical Society
428 N. Boulevard
Richmond, Virginia

WASHINGTON
State Capitol Historical Museum (Archives)
211 West 21st Street
Olympia, Washington
Washington State Historical Society
(Archives)
315 N. Stadium Way
Tacoma, Washington

WEST VIRGINIA
West Virginia Historical Society
Room 610, Capitol Building
Charlestown, West Virginia
(Museum Department of) Archives
and History
Charlestown, West Virginia

WISCONSIN
State Historical Society of Wisconsin
(Archives)
816 State Street
Madison, Wisconsin

WYOMING
Wyoming State Museum
State Office Building
23rd Street & Central Avenue
Cheyenne, Wyoming



Emma May Vilardi was born in Clay County, Missouri. She is married to Anthony Vilardi, mother of Edward, grandmother of seven and daughter of Hazel, an adoptee.

Mrs. Vilardi has over twenty-five years of background experience in genealogy, tracing missing persons and estates, and as a researcher. She served as Historian for Kearny, New Jersey and as Historical Site Evaluator for the U.S. Civil War Commission.

Emma authored "Heritage and Legacy" in 1967 and "Handbook for the Search" in 1974. "Handbook" was originally distributed by ALMA and was the first guide to adoption search. In 1972 she began her association with the Adoptees Liberty Movement Assoc. serving as search co-ordinator and assistant and eventually headed the Western Regional Office. She resigned in 1978.

Emma May is a pioneer in the field of Adoptionology and Search. She has been instrumental in helping uncountable numbers of searchers locate their missing links. Presently, she is the registrar of the INTERNATIONAL BOUNDEX REUNION REGISTRY which she innovated in 1976.

INTERNATIONAL SOUNDEX REUNION REGISTRY
P.O. Box 2312
Carson City, Nevada 89701

LOCATED AND MAINTAINED in Carson City, Nevada by its innovator Emma May Vilardi, this endeavor is the the largest multi-group particiaption project of its kind. In the spirit of unity it seeks only to serve and support by solidifying a mutual goal: A CENTRAL REUNION REGISTRY.

WHO DOES IT SERVE? Any individual person seeking a reunion with next-of-kin by birth, and knowledge of their personal heritage; and/or any private or public institution, organization, association, or group representing such persons.

PEOPLE SEEKING REUNIONS are adult persons who were separated in the past from family members by birth through acts of adoption, foster care, war, orphaned, foundlings, as wards of state, institutionalization and divorce. Any registration of a search pertaining to a person under 18 years of age will be placed in a hold file until the 18th birthday.

HOW DOES IT FUNCTION? The basic data supplied by the person in search is codified by use of Soundex (conversion of the alphabet to six numerals) for the entry classification, file number and the single code line into the Soundex Ledgers. This code line is capable of seven points of match and enables the registrar to check over 1,000 entries in about five minutes. Three or more points of match will result in the individual file cards being pulled. In its present form it is computer ready.

IN THE EVEN OF A REGISTRY MATCH, the individual registrant or their designated organizational representative will be notified. NO PREFERENCE IS GIVEN. The registration of two persons in this registry resulting in a match will be regarded as mutual consent for contact.

FUNDING The I.S.R.R. is funded solely by Emma May Vilardi at this time. THERE IS NO CHARGE OR FEE FOR REGISTRATION.



Emma May Vilardi in 1978 - ISRR Founder

June 23, 1922 - July 9, 1990