

## ***8 Year Old Girl Returns Thanks***

***The Story of Dorothy Jean Trollope Steers-Neuerburg and Dianne Steers***

***By Casey Samuel Paxton***

"8 year old girl returns thanks". Sounds like any normal home where a young child bows her head and says a simple prayer during the meal. But those simple words helped solve a mystery and unite a family separated by an adoption for 55 years.

The statement about the 8 year old girl was in answer to the question "Grace and/or Family Prayer Observed in Parental Home" that was on the front page of a questionnaire given to a 27 year old pregnant widow with three other children as she entered the Holmes Home of Redeeming Love at Deaconess Hospital in January of 1954.

The 27 year old widow gave birth to a beautiful baby girl on April 28, 1954. Two days later, without ever having seen or holding this baby she signed a single page, giving that baby up for adoption. The widow was Dorothy Steers. She named the baby Dianne. Four days later the baby was adopted by a loving, Christian, childless couple, was renamed Karla Ruth Knight and a new family was formed.

Karla was reared on a small farm in southwest Oklahoma near the Russell community. She was the center of Clois and Mattie Knight's life. Throughout Karla's life she was told the story of her adoption many times. There was not a lot of information given to Clois and Mattie, but what they knew, they shared with Karla.

Karla did not know the particular facts surrounding the pregnancy of her birth mother, but she did know she had three older siblings and the mother was unable to raise a fourth. One thing Karla's dad made sure of was that Karla knew her birth mother loved Karla enough to understand she could not give her the things she would need and meet the needs of the three she already had. So, putting her children in front of her desires, she made the unselfish decision to allow another couple to raise her baby girl. Karla never felt she had been cast aside. Her parents made sure that she knew the decision to allow Karla to be adopted, was an extremely hard one for Dorothy to make. In fact, there is another part to the adoption that needs to be told.

Dr. Brunel D. Faris, the doctor who arranged the adoption had actually chosen another couple to adopt Karla. But he had a strict policy of just one child per family. He discovered the first family had been less than honest with him, as they already had a child. When he made this discovery he actually went back to the pile of adoption applications and remembered Clois and Mattie and knew their age would soon prevent them from adopting and pulled their file from the bottom of the stack. Though we will never know for sure, it is possible that Dorothy might have had a hand in the process. Though she would have never seen their names, she might have read their story and chosen this couple to raise her baby.

Karla was blessed to have Christian parents who loved, cared and spoiled her through her growing up years. They always told her she was special, because she was "chosen". Karla completely understood the adoption process, but never showed any signs of curiosity about finding either her birth mother or siblings.

There were times as she grew older and married that she would mention the fact she had siblings, but that was about as far as it went. But the older Karla got, circumstances caused her to wonder about her birth family, more for medical reasons than anything else.

In 1971 Karla and I married and later we found ourselves busy rearing our own children, Tonya-born in 1972 and Scott-born in 1975.

Then one day in 1976, the lack of medical information on Karla's side hit home. Doctors found a tumor growing on Tonya's neck. Doctors needed a full medical history, including one on both parents. Mine was easy, but for Karla there was no history other than her own. We questioned Karla's parents to see if they knew any medical history from Karla's birth mother. There was none. At the time Karla was adopted the adoptive parents were given the papers signed by the birth mother. But there was no medical history provided.

Mattie, the adoptive mom, handed me a blank check with the name of Karla's birth mother and the name of the doctor who both delivered her and arranged her adoption written on the back.

Since we knew her birth mother's name and the name of the doctor perhaps we could find the doctor and maybe, just maybe he might have some kind of records. I found the doctor's name in the phone book and made a call. Instead of the doctor, I had called his son-same name and also a physician. He informed us that his father had passed away, but that he indeed kept good records on all of the adoptions he had done. His son gave us his mother's phone number, but told us she had remarried.

I called the doctor's wife. She stated she had remarried and at one time had all of her late husband's records. But, her new husband was jealous of her late husband and to keep peace she had destroyed all of the records!

As a last resort we looked in as many phone books as we could, looking for a Dorothy Steers. We did not want to intrude on Dorothy's life, but we were desperate. No such name was found. But God was with us and Tonya came through her surgery without any complications.

Through the years Karla would occasionally mention that she had three older siblings but never seemed to be curious enough to try and find them although many times over the years her dad would offer to help her find both her birth mother and siblings. Now as we think back we wonder if Clois wanted to find them more for him than for Karla, perhaps in order to see Dorothy face to face to thank her for the sacrifice she made in giving Karla up for adoption. Clois told Karla on many occasions that he remembered being in the office of the doctor during the time they were making their application to adopt. During a visit he remembered seeing a very pretty young pregnant woman in the office. He felt sure it was Karla's birth mother as he told Karla that the older she got the more she looked like that woman.

Though I had known Dorothy's name for several years Karla never asked for the name. Then an unusual incident happened in 1992 where Karla heard Dorothy's name for the first time.

At that time we lived in Cheyenne, Oklahoma where we owned the newspaper and we were sitting in the front office visiting.

Through the day I had noticed a pickup with a camper shell driving up and down the street in front of our building. It passed by several times, eventually parked in front of our office and the driver got out of the vehicle, came in the front door and sat down.

This was not unusual for us to have visitors, but this visitor was different as throughout the entire time he seemed to keep his eyes more on Karla and his questions were not the normal questions we would hear. Though they weren't really personal he did ask a lot of questions about her such as where she grew up, her children and their ages, etc. It didn't really seem like he was prying at the time, it was just that his demeanor was a bit odd.

After about an hour he stood to leave and I realized that he had not introduced himself to us. Though I don't remember his first name, his last name stunned me. It was "Steers". I could not speak at the time, but after he left I looked at Karla and said, "His last name is the same as your birth mother!" We were both shocked! After explaining as quickly as I could I rushed out the door and drove around town trying to find him. He was gone. It was as if he had simply vanished. More on this later.

After our children left home Karla and I made the decision to sell our paper in Cheyenne and purchase the one in Mangum. This was done in 1999.

In 2001 we made our first attempt to find Dorothy by posting her name on a genealogy forum, where we made the simple statement, "Looking for Dorothy Steers, lived in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in the 1950's. Any info or leads would be appreciated". We never received any responses.

Karla's dad was in poor health and the move in 1999 allowed us to come back to Mangum to help her mom. Clois entered the nursing home and passed away in 2003. A couple of years later Karla became very ill and spent the better part of a year unable to work more than a couple of days a week, if that much. Again the medical history problem reared its ugly head. Doctors were stumped and she was put through many tests to determine exactly what was wrong.

At that point Karla began to have a bit of a desire to find her birth family, if for no other reason than to find some type of medical history. We searched for the best way to do something of this nature as her mother was still alive. Remember Clois often offered to help find the biological mom yet Karla's mother, Mattie, always made it perfectly clear that she did not want Karla to do a search of any kind and one time "pitched a fit" when it was mentioned. She never felt totally secure in the "mom" role. After a short illness in 2005 Mattie passed away.

A brief period of time later Karla got this burden that she had to find her birth mother. It was not that she had been waiting for her parents to pass away, it was a different type of burden and it was strong.

In November of 2005 I attended a men's seminar in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Over the many years of attending this seminar I had become acquainted with a man who was a private investigator from Houston, Texas. During one of the breaks I questioned him about what steps could be taken to find Karla's birth family. He gave some hints, then after returning home he used his resources and sent us a list of names of women across the nation with either the name Dorothy Steers or one with a similar spelling.

I eliminated those of just similar spelling as I knew the correct spelling of the name. I had kept that blank check that Mattie gave to me many years earlier in my wallet until it finally just fell apart. I had seen the name and was sure of the spelling.

Here we were with a list of names, but what do you do with them. Do you just call a lady on the phone and say, "Hi! Did you give a baby up for adoption in 1954?" We knew there had to be a better way. Thanks to the Internet we were able to locate a company in Florida that claimed to specialize in birth parent/adoptee reunions. We checked them out with the Florida Better Business Bureau and there were no complaints filed against the company. It was expensive, but we felt it was the best way to go. After all, they were professionals.

In January of 2006 we signed a contract, gave them the birth mother's name, Karla's birth date and the hospital where she was born. We were told it could take up to six months to complete the search. We were also told to not expect to hear anything from them for at least three months and after three months we could call them for an update.

We waited and waited. After three months we contacted them to see how it was going. They replied they were still looking and informed us that if they did not call us we could call them again in three more months.

Three months, then six months. No word except to tell us to be patient. Patience may be a virtue but when you need answers patience is not something easily obtained. Throughout 2006 and the early part of 2007 Karla's burden grew. She didn't know why, but she had to find her birth mother. As the weeks continued the burden deepened. In July we felt we deserved some type of answer so again we called the company in Florida and demanded to know what, if anything had been done.

A few weeks later we received what was basically a form letter stating they had done all they could do and were setting Karla's case aside. The letter told of many things which "may have been done" during the search. One thing that caught my eye was when they stated, "Since there was no newspaper at the time which may have given information it made the search more difficult". Hmm! No newspaper where she was born?!?! Perhaps they overlooked *The Daily Oklahoman* which had been the state's official newspaper since 1907, was printed in the very city where Karla was born and listed births in area hospitals on a daily basis. Yes, I can see how that might have been overlooked.

Here we were, almost two years later, several dollars shorter and nothing to show for our patience. Over the next year we continued calling the company demanding Karla's complete file to show exactly what had been done. As 2007 came to an end the deep burden Karla had to find the birth mother lessened. We did not know why-it just did.

Finally, after the threat of a lawsuit we received a package from the original company in August of 2009 which contained her complete case file. Well, the file was nothing more than a list of names, very similar to the one sent to us by the private investigator from Houston. There were no records of any calls being placed to anyone on the list. No records of contacts being made in the State of Oklahoma. Nothing! Nothing at all.

Toward the middle of 2009 Karla's cousin, Sylvia Roberts (better known as "Sis"), told Karla about a show on the WE channel that might interest her. The show was "The Locator", also located in Florida, and featured Troy Dunn, an investigator who specializes in finding lost people, and reuniting adoptees and birth parents. The show was very touching and Troy seemed real, but did we dare take another chance?

It took Karla a long time before she called the company to speak to them about the possibility of helping her. We spent long hours talking with them. We told them of the journey we had been on and did not want to take another chance only to be hurt again.

They sounded really concerned and knowledgeable. We talked and decided to try one more time. It was still costly, but was about one-fourth of what the first company had charged. For the first couple of weeks we heard from them daily. We knew each step they would take. We also knew that there would be times when they would be close to the answer, only to find out it was not the right Dorothy Steers.

There were a couple of times it really seemed very promising, but turned out to be wrong. Even though they kept in constant contact with us, the fear of never finding the answers began to strengthen.

Then it happened! Or, at least we thought so. On Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at about 6:15 our phone rang. It was our investigator, Julie Jones. She felt like she had found the one. It was the correct name and approximate age of what we thought Dorothy might be. Unfortunately she had passed away in 2004. She did have a child from a previous marriage, but it was just one, not three as Karla had been told. That child was also deceased. Maybe the story about the three siblings had been incorrect. The next morning we received by e-mail several pictures of the lady.

To many, the similarity was amazing. Though the lady and her daughter were both deceased, the daughter had a son who was living in Washington State. A few days later Karla called him and they visited for over two hours. Naturally he was shocked to think his grandmother may have given up child for adoption, but he was open to the possibility. Over the next couple of months Karla continued to visit with him, and both were very convinced that his grandmother was indeed Karla's birth mother.

But still, there was this nagging feeling with the difference about the number of siblings. Though Karla could accept this lady being her birth mother, she had to have proof. DNA was not an option. Finally we were able to obtain a copy of the signature on Karla's adoption papers and compare it to a signature of this Dorothy Steers. It was not a match. It wasn't even close. For almost three months, Karla thought she had answers only to be disappointed. This time it hurt deeply.

Though hurt, Karla was more determined than ever to find the answers that would give her some kind of closure.

Around the second week in March 2010 I again called Deaconess Hospital. This was where Karla was born and I knew at the time of her birth they had a home for unwed mothers. Karla's adoption was arranged by a doctor, and I had been told when I originally called them back in 1976 that the birth mother probably did not stay in the unwed mothers home since it was handled privately.

After playing phone tag with several people at the hospital we were told they did have a program to allow adoptee/birth parent searches. They sent us a form, but it was for the birth mother-not the adoptee. One last time Karla called Deaconess and once again told her story asking if there was any way we could get some kind of information on the birth mother.

Finally we got a break. Karla was transferred to where the records were kept for the unwed mother's home. The operator who talked to Karla got what information we knew and stated she would call Karla after she had the opportunity to do a little research. Thirty minutes later Karla received a call. Even though Dorothy did not use the facility to arrange the adoption, she did stay in a dorm room at the home. The operator confirmed that a Dorothy Steers had lived in the dorm for 4 months and she gave birth to a baby girl on April 28, 1954, and she named the little girl Dianne. Karla had always found it fascinating that the name "Dianne" was spelled with two "n's" rather than the normal way of with just one.

They would not give Dorothy's birth date, but did say she was born in the spring. They confirmed that she had three other children plus told us she was 27 and was a widow. That gave us some new information.

They offered to send Karla the complete information sheet for a small fee. But, pertinent information such as the mom's date of birth, maiden name, parent's names and any other name which might have been listed would have to be omitted.

On Wednesday, March 24, 2010 the packet from Deaconess Hospital arrived. We immediately began pouring over the information looking for some clue. We scanned the information which had been "whited out" looking for portions of letters or dates that might solve the mystery.

Then, we made discovery that would make the difference in our search. Near the bottom right hand portion of the first page was this question: "Grace and/or Family Prayer Observed in Parental Home". Below that was the handwritten answer- "8 year old girl returns thanks". It might not seem like much at first, but at least we discovered that one of the three siblings was female and at the time of Karla's adoption was 8 years olds.

We called Julie and gave her the information. On Friday, March 26 we left town and headed to Tulsa, Oklahoma where our granddaughter, Renee, would be competing in a dance competition. We were to return on Sunday, March 28. During the time in Tulsa, Karla asked several times if we should call Julie. I assured her that if they found anything they would call my phone.

There were two reasons for them to call my phone. Reason number one is that Karla hates to carry her phone with her at all times. But the second reason was that, by calling me I could answer questions without giving Karla false hope. Originally Karla and I had agreed that if we should happen to find her birth family, that I would be the first to meet them, just to check things out for Karla's protection. The investigator was told that only if she was 100% certain should she ask to speak to Karla, unless of course Karla initiated a call to her.

The dance competition ended, we loaded up and began the trip back to Mangum. Again Karla asked about calling just to see if the investigator had found out anything. I assured her that once we got out of Tulsa I would call. We never got out of Tulsa. At 3:30, March 28 (one month before Karla's 56<sup>th</sup> birthday), as we were going under an underpass my phone rang. I glanced down and noticed the caller ID revealed it was from Julie Jones, our investigator. I carefully answered the phone and her words were, "Casey, is Karla there?" My heart jumped, but before I handed the phone to Karla I asked one question-

"Do you have good news". The answer was a simple, "Yes". I looked at Karla and said, "It's Julie." She knew for me to hand her the phone meant her journey might be over.

Julie informed Karla that she had discovered the name of a man whose birth date would fit into the time frame and might possibly be one of Karla's three siblings. Julie called the number and spoke to a woman, Pam, who confirmed that she had once been married to a Ronnie Steers but he had passed away about 16 years prior and she was remarried. Julie told her Karla's story and Pam stated it could possibly be Ronnie's mother who had given up the baby, but because she was an in-law and since Ronnie was deceased she did not feel she could answer questions for the family. But she did say Ronnie's older sister, Linda, lived in Florida and her age would have made her the 8 year old mentioned in the papers.

Pam told Julie she would call the sister, Linda, then get back with her if Linda felt her mother was Karla's birth mother. She also said it would probably be Monday before she got back with her as Linda was not always easy to catch.

Well, it wasn't Monday, it was at 4:08 when the phone rang again. Again it was Julie. Pam had talked to Linda and Linda gave her permission to give Julie her number.

Julie called Linda and Linda's words were, "She was born in Oklahoma City wasn't she?" Linda recalled that she, her 2 siblings and their mother moved with her grandmother to Oklahoma City in October of 1953. Dorothy disappeared from January until May of 1954. She didn't know where she had gone or why, but was told by Grandmother Canning (Dorothy's mother) that everything would be okay. Linda always felt something else was going on, but it was never mentioned after her mother returned and they moved back to Guthrie.

Julie called back and told Karla what Linda had said. Then Julie dropped a bomb. Indeed there were three older siblings. Ronnie had passed away and another sister, Sharon was killed in a tragic car accident. Karla was then told that Dorothy married Donald Neuerburg in July of 1954, 2 months after Karla's birth. When Dorothy married again the couple had 4 more children. Julie tried to continue with the conversation when suddenly we heard Karla say "Wait. Did you say there are four other children?" Julie said yes then again tried to continue the conversation. Again we heard Karla as she said, "Wait! Are you saying there are seven others! I've got seven siblings!" It was true. Even though Karla had been reared as an only child there were seven others. Karla went from being one, to being one of eight!

Julie told Karla that Linda was excited and wanted to talk to her and that she could call her that evening.

It took a while before Karla was able to call her "new" older sister, but she did and they talked until the battery went out on the cell phone. Linda stated she felt something all of her life but never had the courage to ask her mother about it.

Linda gave Karla Dorothy's maiden name, Trollope, her birthday and the names of Dorothy's parents, Walter John and Nellie Minnie (Oliver) Trollope. While Karla was nearly 100% convinced about the find, she needed to confirm this information with the people at Deaconess Hospital. She was not about to get close to someone again only to find out later that she had not found her real birth mother.

Linda also told Karla it would take her a couple of days, but she would call Karla's "younger siblings" and break the news to them. We did find out why Karla's sense of urgency about seeing her birth mother had gone away as we found out that Dorothy passed away in November 2007.

As soon as Karla was able on Monday morning she called Deaconess Hospital. She gave them Dorothy's birthday, maiden name and the names of Dorothy's parents. The lady put Karla on hold then said, "Karla, look no further. You have found your birth mother". I wish I had a picture of Karla's face when she heard the news.

Later that evening Karla and Linda talked again for about 2 hours. Linda had been able to speak to some of the younger siblings, and even though they were shocked at the news, they were more than willing, anxious to be exact, to meet this new sister. And they wanted to meet as soon as possible. The date for the reunion was to be the following Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, my birthday. And it would be with just three of the siblings plus Ronnie's widow. Karla was nervous all week and I'm sure the others were pretty apprehensive about the meeting. What would they say? How would it go? Would they even like each other? What would it lead to?

During the week Karla had the opportunity to visit with most of them prior to the reunion. As I mentioned, Linda, the oldest lives in Florida. Ronnie passed away in 1994.

Now, do you remember the story about the man who came to our office that day and was so curious about Karla and the kids? When we were shown a picture of Ronnie, Karla and I both reacted at the same time in the same way. Ronnie looked just like the man who stopped by our office that day.

Sharon, the youngest of the older three siblings died in a tragic accident 30 miles north of Mangum. She was actually on her way to Mangum to pick up her husband, Willie Fatheree, who was returning from National Guard summer camp. Willie was reared in the Mangum area where Karla and I live and played summer ball with my older brother, Wayne, while they were in high school. In fact there are numerous people from our community who knew Willie well.

The four younger siblings are (in order of birth) Donna, who lives in Kansas, Barbara, Patricia and Mike. Barbara, Patricia, Mike and the sister-in-law, Pam all live in Enid, OK a mere 190 miles from Mangum.

The day of the meeting Karla's mind was going in all directions. She had many questions to ask, and the siblings had questions of their own. We met at Pizza Hut in Enid at 2:00. Barbara manages the Pizza Hut, so she had a special room just for us.

It was awkward at first, as could be expected. But within about 30 minutes it felt like some siblings had just decided to get together over a meal and visit. They had all received pictures of Karla prior to our meeting, but they wanted to see more of her growing up, plus pictures of our children and grandchildren. Karla, in turn wanted to see their pictures as well as pictures of her birth mom. Just like when a baby is born into a family and receives gifts, Karla received gifts from her family welcoming her with a dozen roses, a cross necklace, homemade cheesecake, and a huge cookie made by little brother Mike. On the cookie were 6 decorated eggs signifying that instead of 5 living siblings there were now 6. A special day indeed!

It was a totally terrific day. It was absolutely the best birthday I can remember. They continue to talk over the phone, e-mail each other and send text messages. It really feels like family and I feel Clois and Mattie would be proud to know that Karla has found them. This search was never about forgetting Clois and Mattie. They are, and forever will be Karla's parents. Nothing could ever change that.

Unless you're adopted you can never understand the sense of incompleteness that sometimes comes. You love your adoptive parents. It was them who reared you, nurtured you, taught you things about life, fixed the bumps and bruises and were there to stand by you through the rough times in your life. They are your parents. But through this process of talking with Karla during the search I found out that for many adoptees there is this empty spot in your life, especially if you know for certain that there are siblings out there somewhere.

When we contacted Deaconess Hospital and finally found the correct people with who to talk, they sent us a copy of a book which was written about the Deaconess Ladies at the home. It is a book about their first 100 years of operation and both the joys and struggles they endured in helping pregnant young women. The book tells how each mother is taught of God's love. The deaconess women cared about both the physical and spiritual aspects of each young lady who passed through their doors. In addition to assisting them with the difficult times during their pregnancies, they also witnessed to each girl, hoping to bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ if they did not already know of Him.

During the time Karla was born, when a woman decided to give a baby up for adoption they weren't allowed to see or hold the baby after it was born; yet God and Dorothy were the first to know Karla and Dorothy was the first to send up prayers for Karla. During the time span between the baby's birth and its adoption the precious Deaconess ladies would hold, love and pray over each child. From the time Karla was born on April 28, 1954 until the time she was adopted 6 days later she was literally bathed in prayer. Her mom and dad prayed over her all the days of their lives and it was the simple prayer of an 8 year old girl that allowed Karla to fill the hole in her life. I think that to say prayer is, and always has been a major part of our life is really an understatement.

You don't know how many times before we began this search that people would come to Karla and say, you look like someone I know. When that would happen Karla would always wonder if a brother or sister was living in the same town or maybe the next town over. Now, her questions, at least most, have been answered.

On April 15, Karla and Mike sent DNA samples to a testing lab for analysis. The lab informed us that it would take "3-5 working days" for the testing to be done and the results would be available to Karla via the Internet. Through the week Karla would occasionally check to see if the results had been posted. On Wednesday, April 21 Karla checked regularly to see if the results were available. At about 4:30 she tried one more time and it informed her that the results were available to her. She had a special "log-on" code. The file was opened and the results showed a more than 95% chance that Karla was the daughter of both Dorothy and Donald Neuerburg.

Though we felt it was almost proof positive we had to wait until Thursday, April 22 before we could talk to someone at the testing lab to make sure we were correctly interpreting the results, as we had been down the road of “being sure” only to find out we were wrong. Karla e-mailed the results to her siblings on Wednesday evening and we all felt 95% was proof positive but we were all anxious to hear from the head person at the lab.

On Thursday, I called the lab and asked for the “person in charge” who could answer my questions in “layman’s terms”.

The lab tech pulled up a copy of the report and I looked at our copy and began to question him. I informed him that we knew without a doubt Karla and Mike shared the same mother, our reason for doing the test was to determine the identity of the father. He stated that the results are based strictly on what the machine reads and it has no way of adding other pertinent information. Once he knew these two facts: 1) Dorothy was in fact both Mike and Karla’s mother and 2) Donald had no siblings, he stated his “non legal” belief was that they were full siblings. He also stated that the only way another man could be the father is if he were a sibling of Donald Neuerburg.

Did this answer all the questions? Unfortunately it did not. But those questions can only be answered by Dorothy and Donald. One thing we don’t question is their love and dedication to each other and their family.

We have learned so much about Dorothy and the siblings in the few weeks since our discovery. In her later years Dorothy devoted her life to helping children through the Foster Grandparent program. She not only has “blood family” but countless numbers of unrelated children who think of her as their grandmother.

Yes, there are still questions but there is one thing we do know, God does not make mistakes. Had the decision to give Karla up for adoption not been made things would be a lot different. A wonderful, Godly and childless couple, Clois and Mattie Knight would have never had the joy of rearing their precious daughter. More than likely, I would not have met the woman who means more to me than anything else, and we would not have shared in the joy and trials of rearing our two children, nor seeing our four wonderful grandchildren. Country music artist, Roger Miller, once said, “There is no such thing as coincidence - just God”.

To the siblings who received the shock of their life, I want to say this, “Thank you for the way you have accepted Karla. Through this long process of looking for answers, it was never her intention to hurt anyone. She just needed answers. Throughout her life she always longed for siblings. Now she has them, a bunch of them, and she is so happy to have found each of you. We do regret that we never had the opportunity to meet Dorothy and Donald, but we can all be assured that one day, there will be a tremendous reunion.”

At the time of our great reunion, the questions won’t matter anymore. As for the present time, Karla not only gained a bunch of siblings, she gained a small clan which includes 39 nieces and nephews, not to mention cats, dogs and whatever else.

And to think, this was all because of a notation on a simple sheet of paper where it was written “8 year old girl returns thanks”.

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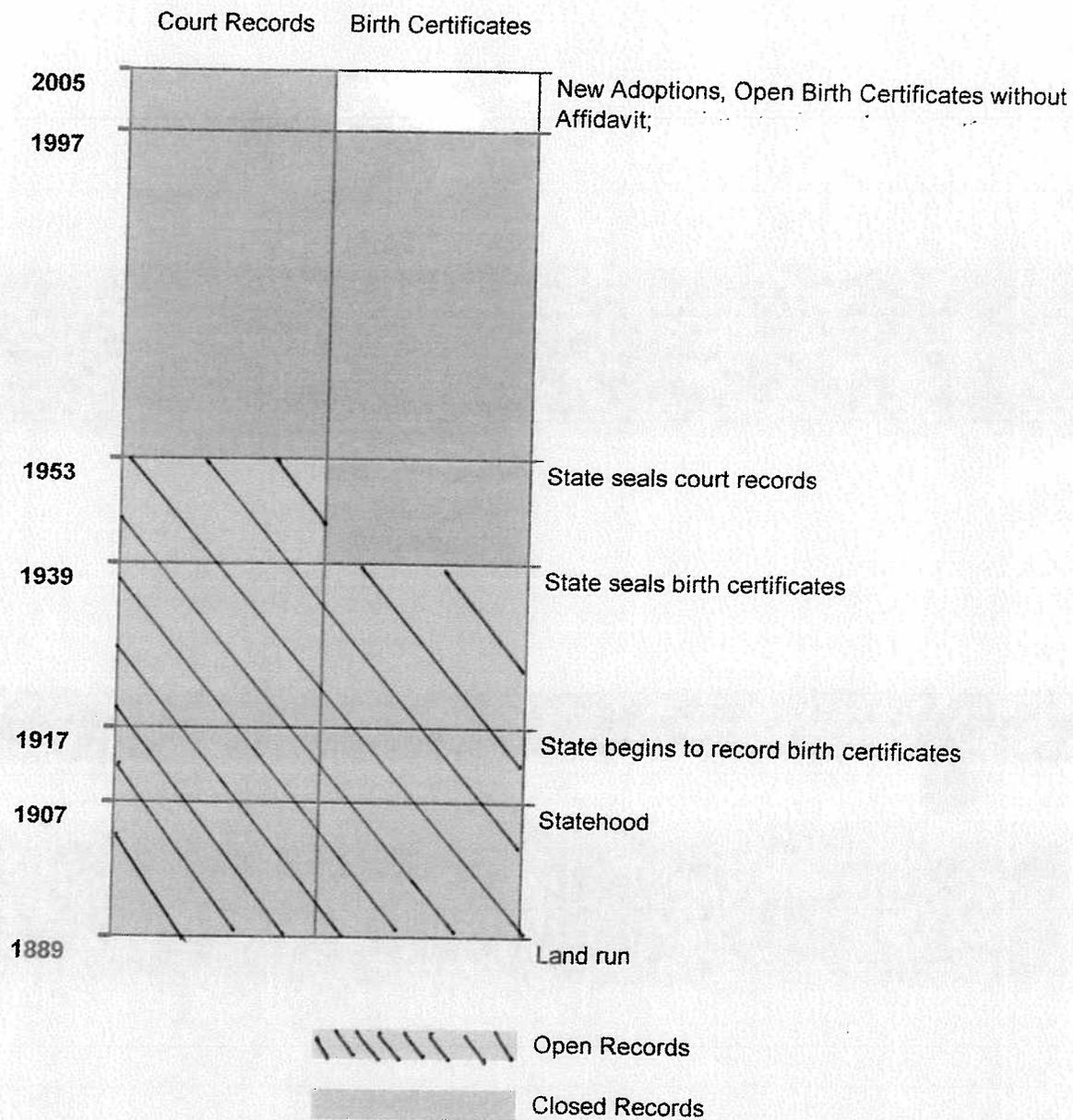
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# ADOPTION RECORDS' TIME LINE



**STATISTICS REFUTE ALLEGATIONS THAT OPEN  
RECORDS CAUSE MORE ABORTIONS  
AND LESS ADOPTIONS!**

**ALASKA AND KANSAS: ALWAYS OPEN**

Alaska and Kansas are two states that do not seal original birth certificates to the person-of-record, the adopted adult. Alaska's abortion statistics have always been well below the nation's average of abortions.

Kansas has had abortion rates typically lower than the U.S., including Oklahoma.

**ALABAMA- OPEN IN 2000.**

Alabama opened records to their adult adopted citizens unconditionally.

After the second year of open records, Alabama statistics showed:

Total abortions in 2000 (before OR)	13,553
Total abortions in 2001 (after OR)	13,383
Total abortions in 2002 (after OR)	12,249

**Change between years 2000 vs. 2002: -14% lower abortion rate!**

Source: Alabama Department of Public Health

(9 Nov. 2004)

**OREGON- ``Open in 2000**

Oregon voters gave adult adopted citizens the right to unconditionally access their original birth certificates in 1998, by Initiative Petition. It was challenged and the Oregon courts found for adult adopted citizens.

Oregon's Right to Life organization chose **NOT** to oppose Measure 58, when it was on the ballot. They took a look at the statistics and were satisfied that Measure 58 would **NOT** cause the abortion rate to go up.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE- OPEN IN 2005**

New Hampshire's legislators voted to unconditionally open original birth certificates to their adult adopted citizens, and this law went into effect in January, 2005. The legislators agreed that it was, **"THE RIGHT THING TO DO."**

**MAINE- OPEN IN 2009**

LD 1084, the adoptee rights bill, was signed into law on June 25, 2008.