

Karin Corbeil

born Carol Lee Foley

My search actually began exactly on July 26, 1982. Over the years I was dealing with 4 lines of non-identifying information giving my mother's age, her ancestry, my father's age and his ancestry and that they were both high schools students.....that's all. I knew my mother's surname was "Foley", from adoption documents my adoptive parents had, as I was named "Carol Lee Foley". Other than that I had nothing to go on.

Everything changed on June 14, 2012.

Have I Found My Birth Family? Overwhelming Circumstantial Evidence!

I believe I have found my birth family!

Last week I received some additional non-identifying information from the adoption agency that within hours led to the discovery of a FOLEY girl from Connecticut. The 3 new little clues that I received coincided with much of the information my adoptive parents told me and out of every FOLEY girl found in the 1930 and 1940 censuses, she is the only one that fits.

I have already spoken with a few of this FOLEY family's members. I believe I have a full brother, as I believe his father was also mine. We found a yearbook picture of him and the resemblance to me is unmistakable, almost shocking. I talked to him last Tuesday. He was, needless to say somewhat shocked, but receptive, and listened to my story most attentively. I think he just needs some time to absorb it all. I will give him all the time he needs.

A cousin I spoke with was ecstatic and has agreed to do a DNA test.

With this discovery, I again spoke with the adoption agency and after a little tap-dancing around, I shared with them the information....names, places, etc. Remember, we are dealing with New York State and their archaic adoption laws....no response or confirmation, except one sentence. "Perhaps confirmation isn't necessary as you seem to have done your homework."

That was good enough for me! Sometimes reading between the lines is all that it takes.

Something my cousin told me....there was a rumor years ago in the family that possibly one of the FOLEY girls from this family "lost a baby girl". My cousin always assumed that someone had a miscarriage but he and I now believe that this "lost baby girl" was ME!

Until this FOLEY family is totally comfortable with all this and/or the DNA results give us the proof, I will not identify them by name out of respect for my deceased mother who died quite young. It's apparent that this family had several tragedies over the years and I'm hoping that my existence may bring a little joy and brightness to their lives.

A special acknowledgement to all those that helped me on this journey, you know who you are...you are the best!.

Stay tuned.....much more to come, I'm sure.

DNA to the Rescue.....Finding my Mother and now my Father?

As I sit here....waiting.....waiting.....waiting. It's been over 5 weeks since my presumed 1st cousin's **DNA arrived at the labs of FamilyTreeDNA. My presumed full brother's test won't be completed for at least a few more weeks.**

Over two weeks ago the test batch my cousin is in (#474) started to post some results....that was August 10th. What's today? The 31st (Oh dear God....that's another story, I'm usually not superstitious, but that is not a good omen). So it's been 3 WEEKS!

Many people today are having their DNA tested, mostly to try and make family connections to confirm their ancestry or for health related reasons.

And then there are people like myself who, after 30 years of searching and over 60 years of wondering, just barely 11 weeks ago, identified my birth family. People I've never met and have never known. People I would like to know and share the story of my life with. People I would like to have share the stories of their life with me. People who knew my deceased mother, my deceased father and my deceased brother. People who could tell me what they were like, what they loved to do, what they hated to do. Such simple things that most everybody else takes for granted and never gives it a second thought.

My cousin's DNA test will confirm or deny my birth mother. My brother's test will confirm or deny my birth father.

The 31st? Days of loss in a life I never knew. My birth mother signed the adoption relinquishment papers for me on July 31st. She died on July 31st. And you guessed it, my father died on July 31st. Thank God today is NOT July 31st....but it's August 31st....and waiting...still waiting.

Now wouldn't you be just a tiny bit anxious if you were in my shoes???? So I pass the time writing this blog, hoping that the next time I log into my DNA account, the chromosome browser will light up like a Christmas tree. Hmmm?...Christmas in August??? Let's hope so.

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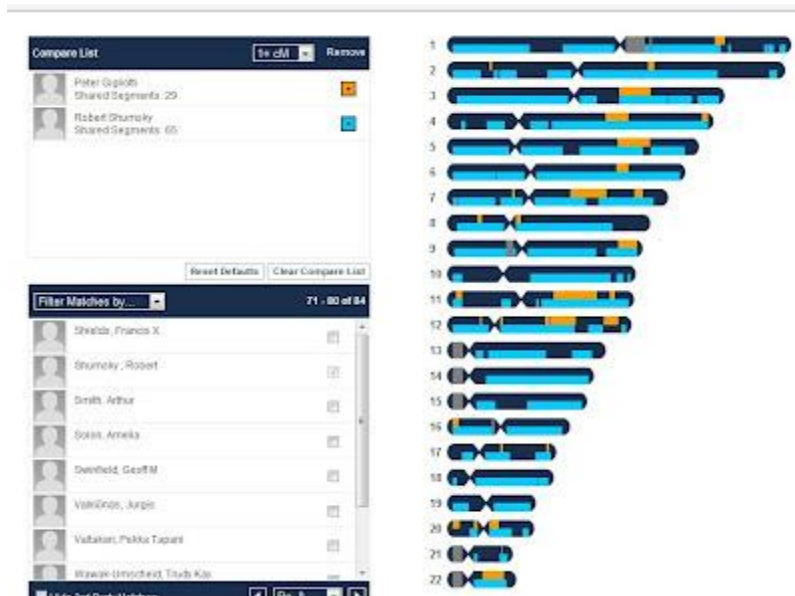
What did I finish that last entry with?

"So I pass the time writing this blog, hoping that the next time I log into my DNA account, the chromosome browser will light up like a Christmas tree. Hmmmm?...Christmas in August??? Let's hope so."

It's Christmas in August!

The minute I posted that last blog, I did go the FTDNA site and logged into Peter's (my presumed 1st cousin) account. Did I ever get the surprise of my life.....literally. Robert's (my presumed brother) DNA results were not due until late September, early October. But Robert was listed as his match! His results had posted also. My heart beating so I could hear it. I quickly logged into my own account and there was Robert listed and next to his name under "Suggested Relationships" is **FULL SIBLING**.

The chromosome browser lit up with lots of blue, showing where Robert matched me. The orange is where Peter matches me. Look at all that blue!!!! The specific numbers show a definite full sibling relationship.



I am still trying to absorb all of this. It's late and I'm exhausted. Tomorrow is a new day with a new adventure

ahead.

Thanks to all who helped me in this search and journey that began in 1982. But now.....it's another beginning.

The waiting is over,
Karin Corbeil

Where were you?

The past 24 hours have been more than overwhelming.

The horrible angst of waiting for my brother's and my cousin's DNA results; the fear and wonder, mixed with eventual joy, that proved (yes, PROVED) that we are fully related to the same parents.

As you can see by these side by side photos of Robert and me when we were both about 17 years old, the resemblance is unmistakable.



At about 5 p.m. yesterday I called the first person (other than my brother and cousin) who deserved to be on the receiving end of this outstanding news - my search angel extraordinaire. She was the one who quickly, within 2 hours, put all the pieces together for me back in June once my newly updated non-identifying information was received and sent me down the road to discovery. There are many out there like her, too numerous to mention, but you know who you are. And they provide these services for free. They don't even require a "Thank you". Their work benefits many but as she once told me, the rewards to them in return is a hundred fold.

New cutting edge technology involving DNA testing is beginning to open doors for adoptees and anyone with questions about their ancestry. I personally have seen the methodology of using DNA with a combination of good old fashioned sleuthing WORK. I know of 3 "finds" alone last week. Companies like FamilyTreeDNA (FTDNA) have given adoptees and others a true gift. There are others, like 23andme who also provide great resources but FTDNA is geared towards genealogy and in my humble opinion is #1 for this purpose. Others may disagree but I have tested at FTDNA, 23andme and AncestryDNA and in the end FTDNA is the easiest and most useful for adoptees. If you want to take advantage of the health testing at 23andme you can then have the option of uploading your raw data to the FTDNA database for a reasonable cost. Fishing in two ponds is always better than one.

Aside from the joy of my own discovery using FTDNA, it has been a real learning experience in that it has really added to my knowledge of how DNA is so randomly handed down. I also believe it will help me weed out other maternal vs. paternal matches, because Peter has a different father than Robert and I do. Anyone that matches all 3 of us with an overlap will theoretically be my maternal side. Anyone who matches me and Robert but not Peter should theoretically be my paternal side. This is also where the X chromosome matches to Robert and Peter can be

helpful.

I've gotten a little off track, but I think it is important that I mentioned it. So back to my story.....

I wasn't even hungry for dinner, my hunger lied in learning more about the parents that gave birth to me. Hubby insisted I get away from the computer and phone for a bit, go out with him to have something to eat and later make those phone calls to Robert and Peter. Upon our return I was anxious to get on the phone and share the news with Robert and Peter. I called my brother, Robert, first.

Karin: Hello, Robert?

Robert: Yesssss, who is this?

Karin: It's Karin.

Robert: Who?

Karin: Karin!!!

Robert: Who?????

Karin: IT'S YOUR SISTER! I got the DNA results back today and not only is your mother my mother but your father is my father as well. We are full siblings! (*without taking a breath*)

After much laughter and verbal jousting on both our parts the conversation turned to questions from me about his family, his wife, his children. We eventually drifted to talk about our mother. I could hear the emotion in his voice and he almost sounded like he was crying. I told him, once again, how sorry I was that he had lost our mother at such a young age. (She died at age 32 in a car accident in 1961 when he was only 13. The car went over a hidden ravine and her body was not found for two weeks subsequent.).

Robert: She was the most beautiful woman I ever knew.

Karin: She certainly was. I have wonderful pictures of her that Peter sent me.

After a moment of silence, his voice cracked.

Robert: Where were you when I needed you most?

My heart absolutely broke.

Robert: WHERE WERE YOU, KARIN?

And then I could hear him literally swallow a sob. I didn't know what to say.

Oh, dear God....is he still, after 50 years, mourning the loss of his mother?

Karin: Robert, I didn't know! I was living on Long Island and had no idea about what was going on in your life. I didn't even know you existed! But I am going to come visit you real soon. And I promise to give you the biggest hug you have ever gotten. It's all going to be okay. I'm here now!

We ended the call soon thereafter after about an hour of talking and then making plans for me to come to Connecticut.

After a little breather and another tissue to mop my face, I called my cousin Peter. No one answered so I left a message: "Peter, this is Karin. I just got back the results of our DNA tests. Call me back....quickly!"

Within minutes he called back and said, "You don't even have to tell me, I heard it all in your voice on the message. Congratulations and welcome to the family. I'm so happy for all of us - so when are you coming to Connecticut?"

We spoke for about an hour.

But I was haunted.....I think I will always be haunted....

"Where were you when I needed you most? Where were you, Karin?"



**Karin's mother
Barbara June Foley Shumsky
February 25, 1929 - July 31, 1961**



**Karin's father
Robert Joseph Shumsky
June 16, 1928 - July 31, 1985**

It all began on July 26, 1982

Below is an email I sent back in September 2012 to the adoption lists I have belonged to with thanks to all the people who were involved in my search going back some 30 years.

To all my friends:

I can tell you the exact date of when I started my search for my birth family....it was July 26, 1982, 4 days after my 37th birthday. I still have a copy of my letter and my application to ALMA. That file has grown quite a bit since then. Thirty years later on June 16, 2012 I posted the discovery of my birth mother.

Since that time, the ride to complete confirmation, has had it's ups and downs and few twists and turns.

On Friday, August 31, 2012 after 10 weeks of tortuous waiting - the results of my DNA test from FTDNA with my brother and a 1st cousin were posted. I got a double whammy - my brother, Robert, and I are FULL siblings! Actually, my brother's initial response to my request to test was somewhat of a rousing "No", but he came around (must be my charming ways!). We always "thought" Robert Shumsky was my father and even had some DNA evidence linking this family to me....but we were never quite sure. (God Bless FTDNA!).

I've blogged all the events of the last few months at Finding Foleys, an adoptee's journey of discovery (including a very touching conversation with my brother on my last entry "Where were you?"). Please feel free to add your email address there for updates as I plan to add much more, especially a "How To...." section. I want to share how WE did it and the resources available for anyone seeking lost family members. I've used the skills I've learned over the years to help others find that lost high school buddy or their old BFF, but all along I have also been helping adoptees reunite with their unknown families even while looking for my own. A new breed of search angel is now established - a DNA search angel. And I'm proud to say I have had several "finds" just in the past few months through a combination of DNA matching and good old fashioned sleuthing.

After several years of adding people to my private working family tree at Ancestry.com based on my DNA results - it went PUBLIC yesterday! I can't wait until I get a message from someone saying "Barbara Foley didn't have a daughter....who are you?"

The "WE" in the previous paragraph? (Now I know I'm going to leave someone out....but you know who you are!) Priscilla, Patty, Cece, Gaye, Rob, Richard (Hill and Slaughter), Gabriele, Diane, Marie Anderson of ALMA, everybody on the DNAadoption group, and even Bennett Greenspan and Max Blankfeld of FTDNA who I understand from Max has followed my journey - you all had a hand in this, some huge, others just because you were there and followed this all along. With the help of some awesome search angels we found my mother on June 14 in a matter of 2 hours when that updated non-id arrived. FTDNA gets all the credit for PROVING both my mother and my father.

The words "Thank you" seem so inadequate. I am indebted to you all.

I had my 67th birthday in July and never in a million years did I think I would locate my family....but it can be done. There is hope for anybody still searching....lots of it!

From my blog post at [Finding Foleys - An adoptee's journey of discovery](#)