

Steps I Take To Solve An Unknown Parentage Search

- 1) Have adoptee test at Ancestry & 23andMe. Upload for free to ftDNA, GedMatch and MyHeritage.
- 2) Gather preliminary information about the unknown person
 - Possible range for dob
 - Possible name
 - Location and date of conception of adoptee (unknown parent was there!)
- 3) Analyze DNA matches
 - Any known matches?
 - Who are maternal vs paternal?
 - What is closest match on unknown parent's side?
- 4) Separate/categorize matches into shared lines by looking at shared matches.
- 5) Determine a common ancestor between a set of shared matches shared with the closest match.
- 6) Start a tree for the common ancestor determined by looking at the trees of the group of matches who share DNA.
- 7) Add in the lines of the DNA matches who share that ancestor.
 - Notate DNA Matches in the tree (e.g. put "DNA" in front of name)
- 8) Add in all children and their spouses, grandchildren and their spouses, etc.
 - Fill in information using public records and obituaries
- 9) If necessary create a chart to visualize how the DNA matches connect to common ancestor, or use "What Are The Odds" tool. Goal is to determine all possible lines for unknown parent.
- 10) Repeat steps 5-10 for next closest unknown side match not shared with previous group.
 - This line should connect with the first line somewhere by marriage. For instance, one line may be birth parent's mother's line and the other birth parent's father's line.
- 11) Evaluate what possible parents are the right age, and in the right place at the right time.
- 12) Research to eliminate as many candidates as possible. (Using public records and newspapers you can sometimes find evidence that someone was elsewhere in the time period you are researching.)
- 13) Once you have narrowed down to a solid candidate or candidates, double check all your work.
 - Do all the DNA amounts work if that person is indeed the birth parent?
- 14) Confirm by making contact and DNA testing.
 - Adoptee should always contact birth parent themselves when possible.