

April 22, 1994

Donald J. Plefka  
8148 West 157th ST.  
Orland Park, IL 60462

Dear Mr. Plefka:

We have received your completed questionnaire. We fully understand and appreciate your need, as an adopted person, to know something about your biological heritage and the circumstances of your adoption. I am glad to be able to help you.

The Illinois Adoption Law allows the sharing of identifying information (e.g., names and addresses) only if both parties have consented in writing to the release of that information. We do not have your birth mother's permission, because we have had no contact with her since adoption consents were signed.

Our older records contain little detailed background information about birth parents. Years ago, record keeping was not as thorough as it is today. Also, at that time, people did not realize that adopted persons would, as they grew older, develop a very natural and normal curiosity about their biological heritages and the circumstances of their adoptions. In addition, most birth mothers were quite reluctant to share much information about themselves and their families because they felt a very deep need to protect their confidentiality, as single parenting did not have the social acceptance that it has today.

There is no medical information in our record. In the era when you were born, the medical community was not nearly as aware as it is now about the importance of genetics in disease processes. Thus, questions about family medical history were not asked of patients in hospitals or of birth parents. If our caseworkers were aware of any serious medical condition in birth parents or their families, they always noted it. There is no such information in our file about your birth mother. She was healthy.

Your birth mother's first name was Florence. Her middle name was Lucille. She was divorced.

This is the only information we have in our record.

Our caseworker noted that Florence had planned adoption for your future and arranged for temporary care in the newborn nursery at the hospital where you were born on May 6, 1931. It was Evangelical Deaconess Hospital at 5421 South Morgan in Chicago. This hospital later

became Christ Hospital and moved to Oak Lawn, IL, where it is now located.

Your adoptive mother contacted our agency on May 26, 1931. She was in that hospital, having delivered a premature baby who died. She stated that she knew you were in the nursery and available for adoption, and she wanted to adopt you and only you.

Arrangements were made to obtain Florence's signature on the adoption surrender. Her signature was received by Evangelical Deaconess Hospital, on June 2, 1931. Our agency had no direct, personal contact with her. That is why there is no information about her. Her surrender arrived in our office on June 5, 1931, legally freeing you to be placed with your family. Your parents came to our office to pick up a letter stating that our agency would supervise your adoption. They then went to the hospital and brought you to their home as their son.

It was typical, in fact the norm, for adoptive parents, in years past, not to talk about adoption with their children, because they wanted to protect the child from an "unknown past." They believed that the less said, the better. Their own infertility and the extreme social stigma against illegitimacy were the basic factors in their decisions not to openly deal with adoption with their children. Now, adoption is handled in a much more open and honest way, which is healthier for all concerned.

I do hope that this letter has helped you to understand better your earliest beginnings.

Sincerely,

Grace Welch  
Caseworker, Post-Adoption Services