

OriginsCanada

supporting those separated by adoption



National Inquiry

Origins Canada continues to work toward a national Inquiry similar to the Senate Inquiry which was held in Australia. The Australian inquiry tabled their recommendations on February 29, 2012 and culminated in a national apology given by the Prime Minister of Australia this past March. [Visit the Senate Committee website](#) for more information.

Once a Canadian Inquiry is secured, it would be open for submissions from all mothers, fathers, adopted persons, family members, groups, or other interested parties thereby ensuring that ALL voices in Canada would have an opportunity to be heard.

To further our cause, Origins Canada hosted a meeting with MPs in Ottawa on October 22nd, 2013 – a meeting which moved our position forward.

More info in Globe and Mail coverage below...

[Globe and Mail Editorial](#)

[Globe Article](#)

Origins in Ottawa



Origins in Ottawa October 22, 2013.



Quotes From Origins Research...

"In 1964 in Canada, the most recent year for which we have figures, 26,556 babies were born to unmarried mothers. We can safely assume that practically all of them were not wanted"

Chatelaine Magazine, March 1966, Vol. 39, No. 3. pp. 28, 79

"A Children's Aid Society official says he has seen unwed mothers discard their babies "as if they were used Kleenex".

Winnipeg Free Press, June 27, 1966.

"Chances are good that she won't make a second "mistake", her emotional scars will heal and she'll be happily married a few years later".

Mrs. G.H. Loosemore, Director, Humewood House. Toronto Star, April 22, 1963.

"Generally the most unstable want to keep their child, the more stable gives the infant for adoption"

Captain Scoville, Booth Hospital. Toronto Daily Star, March 16, 1965.

"We hope we won't have to resort to encouraging girls to keep their own children. We still can't prove that the baby gets the best of the deal when it's raised by its' own mother"

Sister St. Augustine, Director, Rosalie Hall. Toronto Star, December 20, 1965.

"Mrs. Doering reports that during a recent conversation with Children's Aid Workers she has been advised by them no longer to counsel a girl that the unselfish thing for her to do is to place her child for adoption as the Society can no longer assure placement."

Consultation on Counselling, Victor Home for Girls, June 7, 1965.

"Single girls who hang on to their babies invariably attempt to defend their position by claiming their love is so great that they cannot give the child up. Such "love" is questionable. It is a sick kind of love turned inside out – an unwholesome blend of self pity, mixed with self-destruction and a touch of martyrdom. This isn't mother love, it's smother love, with all the suffocating aspects that the word implies"

Ann Landers, Toronto Star, April 25, 1961.

"Most of the girls we have seen who are financially and intellectually able to keep their babies decide not to. It's the "other kind of girl" who is more apt to make the decision to keep her baby."

Sister St. Augustine, Director, Rosalie Hall. Toronto Star, December 20, 1965.

"The more emotionally healthy unmarried mother usually gives up her child for adoption as best for him"

Miss Gwen Davenport, Superintendent, Armagh. Globe & Mail, March 11, 1963.

News from Australia...



National Apology for Forced Adoption

The Government's response to the recommendations of the Senate Inquiry Report into Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices formed part of the national apology and included the establishment of a working group for mothers, fathers, adult adoptees and others who have been affected to provide advice to Government.

The Government has also invested \$11.5 million over the next four years in a number of related initiatives:

- \$5 million to improve access to specialist support services, peer and professional counselling and support records tracing for those affected by forced adoptions.
- \$5 million to immediately increase access to psychological services and develop guidelines and training materials to increase awareness of the issues relating to forced adoptions among health professionals
- \$1.5 million to develop a website and exhibition by the National Archives of Australia

to record the experiences of those affected by forced adoption and increase awareness and understanding of these experiences in the community.

National Archives Forced Adoption Project

<http://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/partnerships/forced-adoptions.aspx>

For more information, email forcedadoptions@fahcsia.gov.au.



Lily Arthur and Lynda Bryant

Origins Australia - New Office...



Lily Arthur, Executive Director



Student Placement

REPORTED TO ORIGINS FROM ACROSS CANADA

IN CHURCH RUN "HOMES FOR UNWED MOTHERS"

- Mothers incarcerated (listed as inmates in Provincial records) in Maternity Homes without Judge or other legal orders.
- Names changed, clothing and personal items removed
- Visitors, mail, and telephone calls restricted and censored
- Mothers locked in at night
- Fathers denied access
- Mothers exploited by doing hours of unpaid labour in these Homes
- Mothers forced to attend church services, usually twice daily
- No prenatal instruction
- Hunger reported
- No outside activities
- Mothers groomed for shame, secrecy, and adoption
- Mothers required to register with Children's Aid Society **before** admission to "Home" – thereby put on track to adoption
- Mothers to promise they would adopt out their child before admission
- Mothers subjected to psychological, verbal, physical and sexual abuse (some mothers in Catholic facilities have reported they were victims of sexual abuse when priests visited Maternity

Homes to take confession and give communion)

- Staff consistently undermined mothers' ability to parent their children; constantly suggesting mothers who kept their babies were "selfish"
- Constant reinforcement that "redemption" would be achieved by surrender
- Mothers dropped off by Maternity Home matrons at hospitals and left to labour alone

IN CANADIAN HOSPITALS (While Mothers still legal parents)

- Unmarried mothers segregated from married mothers
- Mothers verbally, physically and psychologically abused
- Mothers given physical pelvic exams by several students during one visit.
- Mothers left to labour alone
- Babies taken directly from delivery tables before third stage of labour completed – mothers never to see them
- Mothers restrained by the use of restraints on delivery tables
- Mothers forbidden eye contact with their babies by the use of sheets, pillows, adjusting of delivery room mirrors, and others means
- Mothers prevented from seeing, holding or feeding their babies
- Babies or mothers moved to remote locations to prevent mother baby contact
- Mothers told untruths about the location of their babies
- Hospital files marked clearly with "MISS" or "baby for adoption" .

- Mothers given inappropriate psychotropic medications without consent creating "twilight sleep" and other drug induced impairment
- Mothers given extensive "venereal disease" testing without consent
- Mothers given cancer causing (DES) lactation suppressants without consent
- Some mothers not told (and do not know to this day) the gender of the baby they delivered
- Some mothers told their babies died, when in fact their babies were adopted; the truth revealed when person adopted sought reunion years later
- Some mothers shown different babies by different nursery nurses then they requested to see their babies

POST PARTUM

- Mothers report systemic use of oppression, threats of incarceration, fear, duress, lies, trickery, and even physical force to obtain uninformed consents
- Not disclosing rights and resources to Caucasian mothers, while at the same time, providing them to mothers of colour
- Not advising mothers of severe long lasting psychological consequences of separation which was known at the time. (See "Mothers May Mourn a Lifetime"/Toronto Star 1966
- Mothers told by Social Workers: (quotes from mothers) "keep the secret", "you don't want to be selfish do you?", "you will forget

about this baby”, “you will be a real mother later”, “it will be like losing a puppy”, “don’t tell your future husband”, “you are used goods now, if you tell, no man will marry you”, “if you keep this baby, no one will hire you”, “don’t tell a living soul ever” etc.

- Mothers returned to the community immediately after birth, still recovering from childbirth, in shock and traumatized from the harsh treatment, and the loss of their baby, breasts bound tightly with breast binders to prevent lactation, keeping their “shameful secret” as they were told to do.
- Mothers given no counselling whatsoever.
- Mothers categorized as uncaring “breeders” with no mothers’ heart or maternal instincts towards their child
- Closed records prevented mothers from knowing the whereabouts of their children preventing the possibility of affirming reunions.

Update: The Campaign for Open Adoption Records across Canada

Currently in Canada, only four provinces and one territory have open adoption records.

The following provinces are currently investigating Open Records policies: Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick. Origins Canada is working with these provinces and has made submissions.

Quebec currently has legislation proposed in the House.

Origins will continue to advocate for adoption disclosure legislation that provides adopted adults unrestricted access to their original birth certificate, and unrestricted access to identifying information on their natural parents ; and that provides natural mothers unrestricted access to the original and amended birth certificates of their daughter or son, and provides natural parents unrestricted access to identifying information on their son or daughter.

As well, Origins Canada will continue to provide resources and support for those working for Open Adoption records across Canada.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Volunteers are needed in PEI, NB and NS and Quebec to help with letter writing campaigns, getting signatures on petitions, and other local initiatives to further the cause of Open Records in these provinces.

GET INVOLVED!!

Email: originscanada@gmail.com
or go here:

[COAR-PEI on Facebook](#)
Website: www.coarpei.com

[COAR-NS on Facebook](#)
Website: www.coarns.com

[COAR-NB on Facebook](#)
Website: www.coarnb.org

About Vetoes

Origins Canada does not support vetoes...here’s why...

- 1) No citizen in Canada should have the right in law to prevent another citizen in Canada from receiving their personal government documents, such as a birth registration, or birth certificate.
- 2) When records open, and vetoes are applied, this creates a new group of marginalized citizens since records are open to all **except** to those individuals where vetoes are filed.
- 3) Vetoes are extremely hurtful. Many mothers and adopted persons who search and find a veto at the end of their journey, are devastated with no recourse.
- 4) In provinces where records are open, eg. Ontario - less than 1% of those who had the opportunity to file vetoes actually did so.
- 5) Origins has had reports of fraud in the filing of vetoes. eg. vetoes filed by adoptive parents instead of adopted person or adopted parents having teens sign vetoes telling them they are necessary.
- 6) The administration of vetoes is costly to the taxpayer as well as ineffective, as people change and their life situation changes.

Eugenia's Story of Adoption

In 1963 at the age of 18, I gave birth to my first baby, a beautiful baby girl – a reason for happiness and celebration. However, this was not to be. I had no support - emotional, financial or spiritual from my family, the community, or the church I was attending. Instead, I was coerced, betrayed, shamed, rejected and abandoned. Not once was I asked what I wanted. I felt invisible.

My baby and I were separated. My beautiful baby girl was placed for adoption. I was coerced to sign my precious baby over to strangers with a completely different ethnic background and culture.

This has been by far, the most painful and traumatic experience of my life – manifested by lifelong depression, anxiety, sadness and grief.

When my parents found out I was pregnant, I was sent alone to my sister's home for a short time. This was a 500 mile bus trip. While there, I was told by her not to hold or look at my baby and to never let this happen again. The shame inflicted on me was horrendous. I babysat her children and helped around the apartment.

Eventually I was sent on the 500 mile bus trip back to Toronto, to Humewood House, an Anglican Home for Unwed Mothers in Toronto.

At the "home" we had to remain anonymous, rendering us invisible. We were not to share any identifying information with the other girls. We were given chores to do such as kitchen help among others.



Humewood House

Chances are good that she won't make a second "mistake", her emotional scars will heal and she'll be happily married a few years later".

**Mrs. G.H. Loosemore,
Director, Humewood House.
Toronto Star, April 22, 1963.**

We did not receive any prenatal instruction and we had to attend church services daily.

When the time came for me to go to hospital, I was taken by taxi and dropped off at the hospital. I labored alone - I recall very little of my labour, except that I was alone and terrified. No family by my side awaiting the birth of a new baby – no family by my side to give me comfort, a helping hand, or to advocate for me. No one to say "I understand".

This has been the biggest and saddest experience of my life, when in fact, it could have been the happiest, not only for me, but also for my family. I wonder what they were thinking? Not only did I lose my daughter, but they also lost a granddaughter and a niece. She was part of our family.

I did not see or hold my baby immediately after birth, after all, I was unmarried. The only information I received was that I had a girl. I have little memory of what happened next.

Eventually I did get to hold and feed my baby but I was already becoming numb, a numbness which would continue for many years – a coping strategy to be able to continue living.

I was being programmed by family, church, society, social workers, maternity home etc. I recall crying and crying my last night in the hospital. I wanted to keep my baby and bring her home – as any mother wants.

I did go on with my life.... I went into a deep fog for many years – the fog kept the pain at bay. As my life continued, I was married, and had three more children. To those on the outside my life may have looked perfect. Any happiness I had was about my children I was raising and family life as it was.

However, I never forgot my firstborn as I was told I would. My baby's birthdays were especially difficult. I remembered them in solitary silence – the tears spilled quietly. I went through episodes of depression, anxiety, repression, and denial.

Eventually I decided to find my daughter. The day we met was one of the happiest of my life. She remains close in my life and we recently celebrated her 50th birthday.

Never during the years did any member of my family express compassion, empathy, concern, or show any signs of validating and understanding my experience. My father took this to his grave. I was able to share with my mother that I found my baby, but by then she was in a nursing home suffering from dementia. She was able to express some relief, which was comforting.

My suffering has been deep and silent. To help me come to terms with all that happened I wrote to my sister to confront her about her involvement. In my letter I asked "what were you thinking?", "did our parents pressure you?", "were you ashamed of me?", "why did you not help me keep my baby?"

I asked "when I was staying with you and helping you take care of your babies, did you ever think of my baby and how I might be feeling at that time?" "did you wonder how I felt when you gave me embroidery to do for your baby while I was pregnant, at the same

time telling me not to see or hold my coming baby?", "can you see the insensitivity of that?"

I also asked her "have you given any thought over the years as to how this affected me and how my feelings of sadness and grief have affected those around me?" "Can you understand how this puts a barrier between us?"

Having validation and acknowledgment of this life trauma from my sister would help in my healing and mean so much to me. Our lives are short-lived. If we could resolve this in a compassionate way, I believe it would be healing for both of us.

However, at this point in my story, her response has been that she does not want to talk about this and that she has no remorse. This is so very sad on so many levels.

My hope is that one day we will be able to approach each other with love and compassion. Meanwhile, I continue to heal and grow in strength, independence and self worth.

Call for stories:

Are you the natural mother? A natural father? An adopted person? In each issue of our newsletter, we highlight the adoption experience of someone separated by adoption. If you have lost a family member to adoption, please email your account to newsletter@originscanada.org

UNHAPPY BIRTHDAY

There were no birth announcements
 No cigars handed out
 No newborn baby pictures
 No parent's joyous shouts
 No counting toes and fingers
 No comparing eyes and chins
 No nursery decorated
 No proud grandparent grins

Instead the day that I was born a mother silently wept.
 While in the room close to her,
 Her newborn daughter slept.
 So close we were together
 So far we're now apart
 Two lives were separated
 A love doomed from the start

And so each year since I was born,
 This day has been the same
 No one can know the sadness
 No one can know the pain
 No candles ever bright enough
 to light my darkened soul
 No happy birthday party
 No heart that can be whole.

With permission from
 Karen Belanger
 Author "Assembling Self"

ORIGINS PHILOSOPHY

The sacred bond between mother and child is of paramount importance to Origins. We seek acknowledgment of the need for healing the emotional damage caused by adoption separation and secrecy, and work towards ensuring that needless separation no longer occurs.

Aims and Objectives

SUPPORT: To provide confidential support and resources to those separated from their natural families by adoption in safe and secure environments.

HEALING: To promote the process of healing emotional damage caused by adoption separation and secrecy.

REUNION: To assist in reunion of family members separated by adoption.

AWARENESS: To promote community awareness and understanding of the lifelong consequences of family separation and secrecy.

RESEARCH: To undertake and promote research into adoption policies, practices, and consequences, past and present.

REDRESS: To seek acknowledgement, validation, accountability and redress for illegal and unethical adoption practices.

REFORM: To encourage and promote legislative, social, and administrative reforms in adoption that honour and respect the mother-child bond, support the preservation of natural families, and that meet needs of those already separated by adoption.

Origins Around the World

Origins America

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Origins Australia

Post Office Box W18 Fairfield West
NSW 2165, (02) 9604 9352,
www.originsnsw.com

Origins Healing and Recovery Project for Forgotten Australians

www.originsharp.com

Origins Scotland

www.originsscotland.org.uk

Origins International

www.origins-international.org

Affiliated Organizations:

Baby Scoop Era Research Initiative

www.babyscoopera.com

Stolen Generations Alliance

<http://www.sgalliance.org.au>

Ph: (04) 0891 7133

Alliance for Forgotten Australians

www.forgottenaustralians.org.au

Ph: (02) 6273 4885

Volunteer With Us

Origins needs volunteers across Canada:

Peer support: To welcome and give support to new members in-person, via email, or telephone, or facilitating our confidential online forum.

Computer assistance: Are you computer savvy? Origins is always looking for IT assistance with the website, mailing list, and other projects.

Researchers: To research adoption laws and policies in your province, develop law and policy reform proposals, and find resources to help families stay together.

Office Assistance: Letter writing, mailing, bookkeeping, filing, etc.

Please contact us at if you are interested in any of these areas

Contact Information

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