

The Decision

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Article Title: *The Decision to Search* on Page 6

By Thomas Brooks

Becoming a part of Black history can be as easy as being born by international parents. As adoptee Thomas Brooks discovered in researching his biological parents, seemingly ordinary people can do extraordinary things, even the act of deciding to give a child away.

I was 25 years old when I decided to search for my biological parents. Even though I had known of my adoption since I was 11 years old and had a very good relationship with my adoptive family, I had a growing need to know more about my biological background. Because I knew nothing of my biological parents and their heritage, I felt somehow that my own human identity was partially lacking. As with many African Americans whose family heritages were erased by centuries of slavery, my immediate birthright was a mystery.

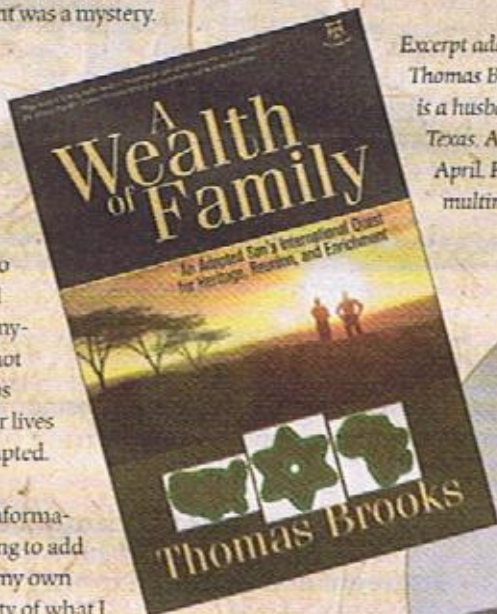
Although I am generally an optimistic person, I went into the search with low expectations. I didn't expect to actually find my biological parents. I assumed they were dead or were terrible people I would not want to befriend. Or, I imagined, if I found them, they might deny they had anything to do with me. They might not want any contact with me, perhaps because they would not want their lives with their current families interrupted.

I was taken aback to receive any information at all. It was incredibly fulfilling to add additional pieces to the puzzle of my own identity. I felt like I had the majority of what I wanted after getting the with the non-identifying information provided by the adoption agency about my biological parents.

I was multiracial. My biological mother was a White American, with Lithuanian Jewish ancestors, who gave birth to me at the age of nineteen. My biological father was Kenyan and about twenty-six years old at the time of my

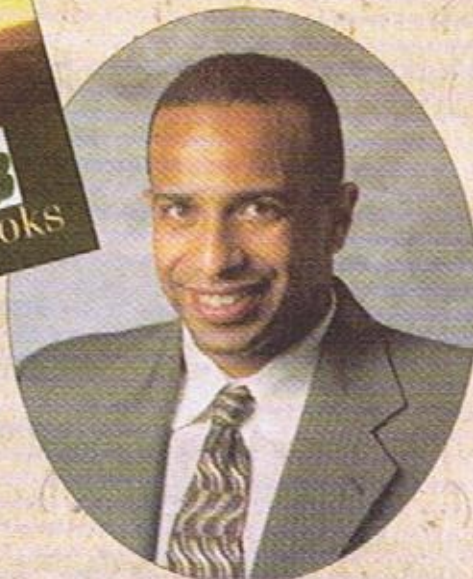
birth. I learned that both of my parents attended college. This was more information than I had ever expected to find.

My adoption report opened a portal to my bequest. And although it was only the beginning of an adventure that would take me overseas to meet my birth parents and understanding their culture, my knowledge of an ancestral link to Kenya gave me a tangible link to my African heritage.



A Wealth of Family
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Excerpt adapted from *A Wealth of Family* © 2006 Thomas Brooks. All rights reserved. Thomas Brooks is a husband and father living near Houston, Texas. *A Wealth of Family* will be released in April. For more information go to www.alpha-multimedia.com.



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