

# Baby switch: How a Mormon family dealt with the fallout of a decades old secret

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Deseret News, Parker Atkinson

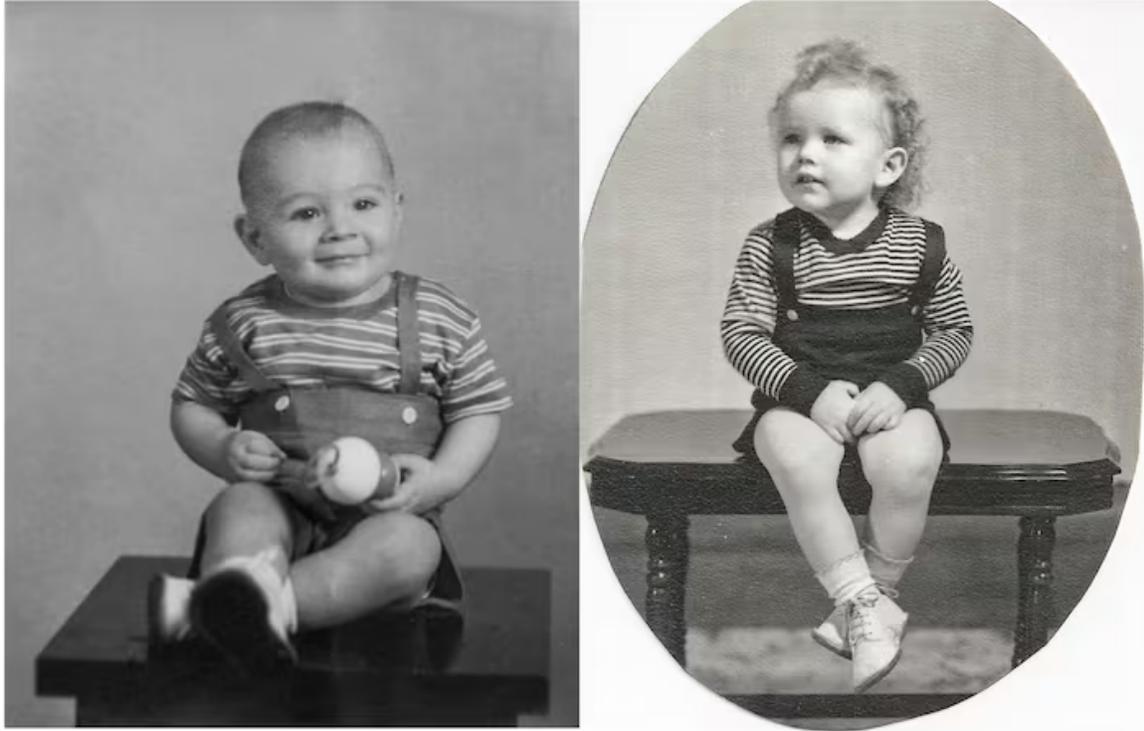
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LOGAN — A single line from the three-page typewritten letter leaped out at Maxine Fisher in July 2009. She read the words from a stranger over and over, stunned and numb with disbelief: “I have reason to believe you are my mother.”

The author of the letter, Gene Williams, wrote that there had been a mix-up in the Preston, Idaho, hospital 65 years earlier, and Maxine and another woman’s babies had been switched.



Gene Williams' letter to Maxine Fisher claimed there had been a mixup in 1944 at the Preston Hospital and that Gene, on the left, had been switched with Rod Fisher, on the right.

Maxine, now 98, still lives at home by herself on a quiet street in this northern Utah community. She is lively, sharp and fiercely independent. Although skeptical of his claim that he could be her son, she said Gene's letter still shook her to the core.

"It was so ridiculous, I just couldn't believe it," Maxine said. "Preston is a small town, and everybody knows everybody. I knew all the nurses by their first names, and I didn't think the nurses had switched my baby."

She worried at first it might be a scam but still replied in careful penmanship on a single page.





Maxine Fisher, 98, at her home on Aug. 7, 2017, in Logan, Utah

“I wish the shock of it had put me in my grave,” she wrote back to Gene. “I’m crying, I’m shaking, walking around in a daze. I’m sick to my stomach, my mind’s boggled. I can’t face it but I can’t disregard it.”

Maxine said her main concern was for her son, Rod. She’d raised him and been his mother for 65 years. If what this stranger Gene claimed in his letter was true, she didn’t want to think about the impact on the tight-knit Fisher family.

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With powerful online search engines enabling anyone with an internet connection to access countless databases and historical records, stories about adoptees finding their biological parents and others accidentally discovering long-lost relatives have become commonplace. The affordability and ease of DNA testing — requiring only a simple swab of saliva — has also provided unimpeachable evidence of someone's origins.

But none of that existed in April 1963, when Gene, then 19, was about to serve a mission to Mexico for his church. His parents, Cecil Williams and Eva Belnap, had divorced when he was only 14 months old. Gene remained with his father, who remarried and settled in Phoenix, Arizona, where Gene grew up. After receiving his mission call from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Gene and his father were driving from Arizona to Utah to drop him off in Salt Lake City for missionary training.

On the way, Gene’s father drove him through Preston to show him where he was born and visit a few family members still in the area, including his maternal grandmother, Martha Belnap. As they were leaving, she left him with a cryptic secret.

Grandma Belnap told him to look for another new missionary named Rodney Fisher, who she said would also be at missionary training the same day as Gene. She said something about Gene and this other boy Rod having been mixed up as babies at the hospital.

“She said, ‘Don’t worry about the babies being switched because I got you to the right mothers, and everything is fine,’” Gene said.

It was the first time he had ever heard anything about a baby switch.

A few days later in Salt Lake City, he met the missionary his grandmother had told him about. Among the crowd of 220 other new missionaries, he recognized Rod from a distance.



Rod Fisher, circled at left on the third row, and Gene Williams, circled on third row from top, were among met for the first time in April 1963 in Salt Lake City, Utah, as they and 220 other LDS Church missionaries prepared to leave for their assignments around the world.

“It just hit me like a bolt of lightning,” Gene said. “I remember thinking, that kid looks just like my dad.”

The two briefly exchanged pleasantries. Gene was on his way to preach in Mexico for two years, and Rod to his own mission in Canada. With that, they went their separate ways.

Some 21 months passed. Gene had three months left on his mission before he was scheduled to return home, when he had another chance-encounter at the mission home, or headquarters, in Vera Cruz, Mexico — this time with a missionary claiming to be his cousin.

Boyd Sears echoed the baby-switching story told to Gene by Grandma Belnap.

“He told me, ‘Your birth mother and my mother are sisters; you’re my first cousin,’” Gene recalled.

Gene excitedly wrote about the experience to his girlfriend — and soon-to-be wife — Joyce James.

“I told her I couldn’t wait to come home and rush up to Idaho to see if I could find my real family,” Gene recalled.

But for reasons Gene can’t explain, when he returned home from Mexico, he seemingly forgot about the whole thing.

“It just vanished,” he said. “For some reason, it wasn’t the right time because that thought never entered my mind.”

Before long, Gene had forgotten all about Rodney Fisher, his supposed-cousin Boyd Sears and the strange comment from Grandma Belnap. He wouldn’t think seriously about any of it again for more than 40 years.

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Following his initial letter, Maxine and Gene corresponded for about six months. She didn’t believe his claim to be his son, but she trusted him enough to meet.

“She wasn’t buying a word of it,” Gene said. “She didn’t want to believe it. She was just content with everything the way it was, and I can understand that because, I mean, she was 90 years old at the time.”

Maxine remembers the first time Gene and Joyce visited her, like it was yesterday.

“I went out on the porch, I was watching for them, I went out and stood there, and he said, ‘I knew, the minute I got out of the car and saw you standing there, you were my mom. There was no doubt whatsoever,’” Maxine said.

Gene brought a dozen long-stemmed yellow roses, Maxine’s favorite, as well as a collection of pictures of himself from throughout his life.



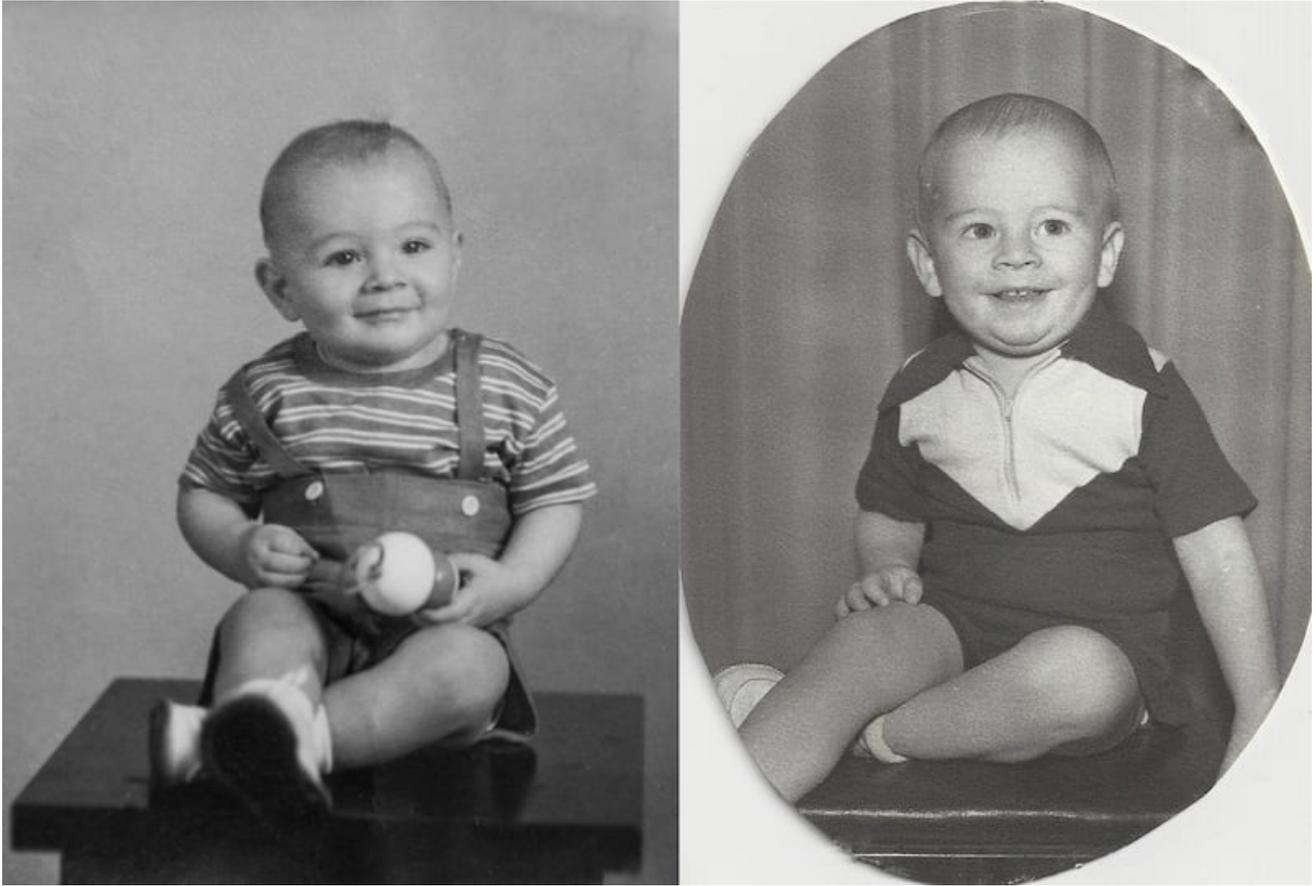
Maxine Fisher meets Gene Williams for the first time in December 2009 at her home in Logan, Utah. He brought her a dozen yellow roses, Maxine's favorite.

Maxine thought she recognized one of the pictures he showed her, thinking it was her son Bruce as a toddler.

"He said, 'That's me,' and I said, 'No it isn't, that's my son, Bruce. How'd you get this picture?'" Maxine said.

She went into the bedroom and found a picture of Bruce at a similar age and brought it out.

"They looked identical," Maxine said. "They looked like twins, and I just couldn't believe it."



Gene Williams (left) and Bruce Fisher (right) discovered they were brothers about 65 years after these baby photos were taken. Williams followed clues that he was switched at birth in a Preston, Idaho hospital in 1944.

That first visit, Gene and his wife, Joyce, stayed for several hours. There were a few more surprises during the course of the conversation.

Upon learning that Gene and Joyce lived in Herriman, Utah, Maxine told them she had a granddaughter who used to live there. Her name was Cyd Gee.

It was Gene and Joyce's turn to be surprised. They knew Cyd and her husband Bryan quite well, having attended the same church congregation.

"They stayed and stayed and talked and talked, and I argued and argued and said no; it couldn't happen, I know it couldn't happen, it's not true," Maxine said. "We just went through it all again, and over and over, and finally I was getting so upset, I said, 'You just go and talk to my son Bruce Fisher about all of this.'"

Maxine was sure Bruce would get the matter settled and help get Gene and his upsetting claims off her back.

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After divorcing Gene's father, Eva Belnap ran off to California, where she eventually remarried and had children with a new husband. Gene said he tried to reach out to her several times over the years but was never successful, and when she died in January 2006, her family asked him not to attend the funeral, though he did eventually receive a disk of pictures that were shown at the service. He sat down to watch it with his wife, and that's when they noticed something strange.

"We watched it several times, fully expecting to see some family resemblance in myself or the kids," Gene said. "But we both agreed, we couldn't see any resemblance at all."

Gene said he looked nothing like his father, Cecil, and had always guessed he took more after his mother. But after viewing the pictures, he started thinking more about what Grandma Belnap had told him. What if she really hadn't gotten those babies back to the right mothers? What if there really had been a switch?

Gene discussed the situation with his children, who urged him to pursue questions surrounding his birth, so he could stop wondering and know for sure. There was a practical reason as well; he and his children might be missing out on potentially important family medical histories.

After three years of batting it back and forth, Gene decided to get a DNA test done in June 2009.

His cousin, Robert Williams, who was also his doctor, helped collect samples for a Y chromosome test, just to put the doubts to rest.

"I did this DNA test, and remember thinking, am I really a Williams, or am I somebody else?" Gene said.

The test results, which should have indicated a shared grandfather between Gene and his cousin, were not a match. It was not the result he expected, and he had to face an undeniable truth: Gene Williams was not the son of Cecil Williams and Eva Belnap.

"Immediately I thought, who am I, who are my people, how am I ever going to know?"

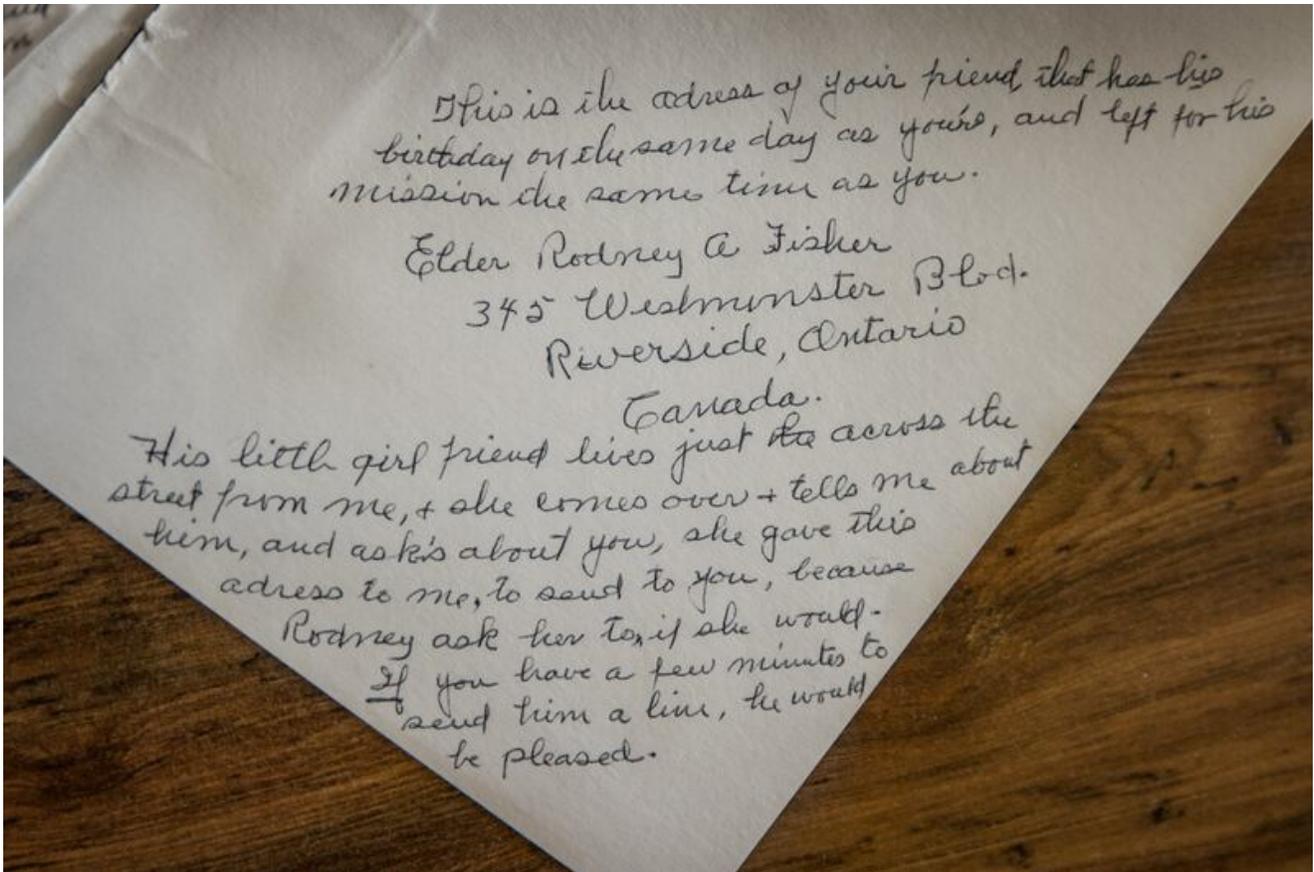
Several months of investigation turned up nothing but dead ends. Old hospital records had been lost or destroyed in a flood and other initially promising leads — such as evidence of an additional 1944 birth mix-up at the same Preston hospital — also fizzled.

Searching old newspaper notices for departing missionary notices from March or April 1963 didn't provide any answers. But when looking for local missionaries who had returned in March or April of 1965, one name appeared that seemed familiar enough that Gene asked his wife to write it down.

The name was Rodney Fisher.

Still looking for further leads, the couple pored over Gene's old mission correspondence and came across a 1963 Thanksgiving card from Grandma Belnap, who wrote this:

"This is the name of your friend that has his birthday on the same day as yours and left for his mission the same time as you."



In this 1963 Thanksgiving card Martha Belnap sent to her grandson Gene Williams while serving his mission to Mexico, she mentioned Rodney Fisher.

Again, the name was Rodney Fisher.

The note included Rod's mission address in Canada and explained that Grandma Belnap lived across the street from Rod's girlfriend at the time. The two had been sharing letters, and Rod would be pleased if Gene could write him.

They also found the letter Gene had written to Joyce about his meeting with his supposed-cousin Boyd Sears back in Mexico. When they looked Boyd up, they discovered he lived in Smithfield, Utah.

He gave Boyd a call, not knowing what to expect.

"He totally remembered me from the mission home in Vera Cruz and having that conversation and that we were birth cousins," Gene wrote in his recollections of his journey to find his family. "He told me about my family. My father, Allen Fisher, passed away in 1981.

My mother, Maxine, was 90 years old and lives in Logan.”

Gene repeated it.

“My mother is still alive and lives in Logan!”

Gene said he was overwhelmed.

“So many years had passed, I never even envisioned that my mother or my father could possibly be alive,” Gene said. “I mean, here I was, 65 years old, my dad who had raised me passed away in the early ‘80s, I just did not think it was possible for me to have any living parents.”

Boyd had news on the sibling front as well. He told Gene about an older sister, Anna Lee, a younger brother, Bruce, and a younger sister, Helen.

Gene and Joyce drove to Smithfield to visit Boyd, who showed them pictures of the Fishers. They were afraid to show up unannounced at Maxine’s house, not knowing how she’d react.

They decided the best course of action would be to write a letter explaining the situation.

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Maxine kept Gene and his explosive secret to herself for more than six months before telling anyone else.

It was the day after Christmas, in 2009, when she made a seemingly offhand remark to her son Bruce during a car ride.

“It was so bizarre that I thought I hadn’t heard her correctly,” he wrote, in his written recollection of the story. “She said something to the effect that ‘You may have a new brother other than Rod,’ or ‘Rod may not be your brother,’ or something like that.”

Soon enough, Bruce was getting more of the story from his daughter, Cyd. Gene had called her after his visit with Maxine, asking if she remembered him from their time in Herriman. He explained his suspicions about the baby switch in further detail and said he hoped she could arrange a meeting with her father, Bruce.

Bruce’s initial reaction was much like his mother’s: shock and disbelief.

“He had a pretty convincing story, but it was still hard to believe,” Bruce said.





Brothers Gene Williams, left, and Bruce Fisher, right, at Gene Williams home in Herriman, Utah, on Aug. 8, 2017.

After explaining the situation fully, Gene asked Bruce if he'd take a DNA test to confirm if they were really brothers. Bruce balked initially. But that night, after discussing the pros and cons with his wife, he changed his mind and, the next day, called Gene.

"We decided I really needed to do that to find out if what he was telling was true," Bruce said.

The two weeks waiting for the DNA results to come back were excruciating for the Fisher family — the ones that knew about it, at least. They still hadn't told the entire family about the unfolding saga, especially not Rod, who had the most to lose. Maxine, Bruce and his wife, Kathy, and some of their kids were the only ones who knew about it.

The day arrived, but the expected email hadn't come. Bruce called the company that processed the DNA test and was asked if he wanted to hear the results over the phone.

"Time seemed to stand still for a moment," Bruce wrote. "Why did I agree to this? How will I respond if she says they match? All along I'd been telling Kathy the DNA wouldn't match, that it was just too preposterous to be true."

Bruce listened carefully, thanked the woman on the other end of the line and hung up the phone.

Then he dialed Maxine.

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"I kept praying, every night, don't let it match, don't let it match," Maxine said.

The phone rang.

It was Bruce, calling with the DNA results.

"That man is really your son, and he's really my brother," Bruce said.

It was a perfect match on every indicator. Gene Williams was Maxine Fisher's son. Rodney Fisher was not.

"I dropped the phone, and I just started to sob and cry," Maxine said. "I just sat there and cried and cried."

Bruce said, looking back, that was probably the most difficult moment of the entire saga. He said she just kept repeating the same thing: Are you sure? Are you positive?

“And I was just, yes mom, yes,” Bruce said. “To hear her weeping on the other end of the phone and not be able to put my arms around her and comfort her was just...”

Bruce was at a loss for words.

Maxine was so distraught, he recommended she get a blessing of comfort from a church leader. She wanted him to call Tom Lee, who had just been released as Maxine’s bishop.

Lee recalled the emotional scene after arriving home from work.

“The stage was set, but she was so sure it was wrong, she was just so sure, and so she just kept repeating over and over again, 'How could a mother not know her baby?'" Tom said. "She would calm down a little bit and start to talk a little bit, and then it would just hit her again, she'd throw her head back, she was just unbelievably inconsolable, just hysterical, rocking and wailing."

The question on everyone’s mind? How to tell Rod.

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“We knew we had to tell him, and we had to tell him before he heard it from somebody else,” Maxine said. “We kept saying, well, how can we do it? How could I tell my son that I’m not his mother? How can Bruce tell him they’re not brothers?”

Most of all, they worried about how Rod would react to the news.

“As far as my sisters and the family was concerned, this made no difference,” Bruce said. “I’d grown up with Rod all my life; he was the only brother I’d ever known.”

But Bruce said they worried — and considered it a distinct possibility — that they might lose Rod.

“He could come back and say, ‘I don’t want to have anything to do with the family, I’m not really a Fisher, so don’t contact me, I don’t want to have anything to do with you,’” Bruce said.

Bruce called his daughter Cyd, who, after leaving Herriman, had moved to Pocatello, Idaho, the same city her uncle Rod lived in. Bruce, his wife Kathy, and Maxine arranged to spend the weekend with Cyd and her husband, and invited Rod and his wife Sue out for dinner.

They went to the Golden Corral, an all-you-can-eat family restaurant, in Pocatello.

“We had a good dinner that night, joyful and happy, but we were all sitting there knowing and thinking about it that whole night,” Maxine said. “The whole time, we were thinking, oh, we’ve got to tell him, after having such a wonderful evening talking and laughing together.”

After dinner, at Rod's suggestion, the party moved to Cyd's house, where they sat down in the living room: a mother, her two sons, their wives, and a niece and nephew.

"Then Bruce stood up and he looked down at the floor and he said, 'Rod, this isn't exactly a friendly meeting,'" Maxine recalled. "He said, 'We've got some bad news for you.'"

Maxine said Rod just sat there with his hands folded in his lap, looking down.

"Bruce told him then that I'd got a letter from Gene, and there was a baby switch, and so on," Maxine said.

Rod's wife Sue read the original letter from Gene aloud.

"So, he heard it the same way we heard it, and Sue read the letter and Rod just sat there looking down the whole time, no emotion, nothing," Maxine said.

It was a tense moment that didn't exactly go as they'd hoped.

"I think before we even got to the end of the letter, he just stood up and said, 'I've got to go,' and walked out the door," Bruce said. "He didn't say goodbye, anything, just out the door."

Maxine said they all looked at each other, tears in their eyes. Rod's wife Sue got up and silently hugged each one of them before following her husband out the door.

Bruce later wrote about calling Rod the next day, and Rod told him he had nothing. No roots, no foundation, no family. Bruce told Rod the family loved him, and nothing would change. At some point, however, he realized the line was dead. Whether Rod had hung up on him or the call had simply dropped, Bruce didn't know.

Bruce, Kathy and Maxine drove over to Rod's house and knocked on the door.

Sue opened it and said, "Rod isn't here."

He'd jumped in his pickup and driven off, saying he just wanted to be alone.

Discouraged, Maxine returned to Logan.

About 6 p.m. that evening, her phone rang.

It was Rod.

"He said, 'Mom,' and I knew his voice and I said, 'Rod! Oh Rod!'" Maxine said. "That was all I could say."

He told her he had driven his truck to the banks of the Snake River. "He got out and walked and walked and walked along the river," Maxine said. "Finally, he said he just fell down on his knees and talked to the Lord."

Maxine said she started to cry.

“He said, ‘Don’t cry, Mom. Everything’s going to be all right. Don’t worry, it’s going to be all right.’”



Maxine Fisher, 98, at her home in Logan, Utah, on Aug. 7, 2017.

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For two months, the whole family worried about Rod. Emails were sent out, phone calls were made and the extended family was finally let in on the situation.

Maxine’s main concern was keeping Rod her son, not just in this life, but in the next one, as well. As devout Mormons, the Fishers have a strong belief that family bonds are not merely earth-bound and can continue on after death, so long as the marriage of the parents is solemnized in a Mormon temple in a “sealing” ceremony. Biological children are automatically sealed to their parents and adopted children can be eternally “sealed” to their parents in separate ceremony.

The DNA evidence had presented theological questions about Rod’s eternal status with his parents and siblings, questions that only the LDS Church’s governing First Presidency could resolve.

Maxine, Rod and Gene all wrote letters into the First Presidency as did their local ecclesiastical leader, imploring approval to have Rod sealed to the Fisher family.

Maxine was in Herriman visiting Gene when the call from her Stake President Kent Wallis finally came.

“He said, ‘I got a report from the First Presidency,’ and I thought, what if it’s no, what if it’s no?” recalled Maxine. “It’s taken so long and I thought, they’re all fathers, and they’ve got sons, and if this was their story, they’d want him sealed to them, they wouldn’t give him up, no way.”

After Wallis read the answer over the phone, Maxine began to cry — for joy, this time.

Rod was sealed to Maxine and the rest of his Fisher family on July 2, 2010, almost a year to the day from when Gene had written his first letter.

Now that the son she raised was safe and securely hers, she could fully embrace and welcome her new son Gene into the family.



From left, Gene Williams, Maxine Fisher and Rod Fisher, on the day of Rod’s sealing to the Fisher family at the Logan LDS Temple in July 2010.

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As more family and friends started hearing the story, aunts, uncles and cousins from both Williams and Fishers sides claimed they had heard rumors of the baby switch before. But it's hard to pin down exactly what happened in March 1944. Most of the people involved have died. No one is exactly sure how or why it happened, or how it is that some people seemed to know and others were completely in the dark.

Maxine and Eva were the only mothers in the tiny Preston hospital that week, that much is sure. In those days, Maxine said, new mothers were usually in the hospital for at least 10 days. Babies didn't have any kind of identifying wristbands like they do now. Baby Rod and baby Gene would have been in separate little cribs, with merely a label pasted on the outside, indicating which family they belonged to.

A rumor of unknown origin but familiar to all involved suggests that Eva Belnap, Rod's birth mother, had freckles and red hair — features she apparently loathed — and vowed never to raise a red-haired, freckled child, and convinced her mother, Grandma Belnap, to switch the babies. Rod has red hair, while Gene has facial features that resemble Bruce's and Maxine's.

“The current prevailing theory is that Grandma Belnap switched those babies on purpose,” Bruce said. “But again, we don't know, it's all hearsay, and as far as we're concerned, it doesn't matter how it happened — on purpose, by accident, it doesn't matter. All we know is that somehow it happened, and it has been resolved now, and everyone is happy.”

It's clear Grandma Belnap kept tabs on Rod's whereabouts and what he was up to for at least 19 years, probably longer.

“If it was really her that did it, that grandma must have gone through hell those years, watching Rod and knowing he's hers, and not being able to tell him,” Maxine said.

Regardless of the truth, Gene is grateful Grandma Belnap told him what she did.

“I think she was very carefully planting a seed in my mind that some day you'll come to know the truth, somehow, some way,” Gene said.

He has speculated on what might have caused Eva to walk out on her young family.

“I'm not sure she was ready to be a mother, and I think she just wanted out of the Preston area,” Gene said. “In her heart of hearts, I think she knew I wasn't her son, and rather than face that for the rest of her life, I think she just said, ‘Hey, Cecil, you can have this little boy. I'm leaving, and I'm going to California.’”

Gene still isn't sure how much Cecil knew about the switch or if he knew anything at all.

“My dad never, ever even hinted at it,” Gene said. “Up until just a few years ago, I just assumed that he never even knew.”

But four or five years ago, Gene's stepmother, Cecil's second wife, had open-heart surgery.

“I was visiting her right after her surgery,” Gene said. “I knew that I wasn't a Williams. We had done the DNA; I had found out I was a Fisher. I was talking to her about this, and I said, ‘Mom, I don't think Dad ever knew anything about these babies being switched,’ and she immediately said, ‘Yes, he did.’”

Gene figures they must have thought it best to not to rock the boat for him.

“He had numerous people come to him and offer to raise me, but he didn't do it. He just said, ‘Nope, he's my responsibility,’” Gene said. “The amazing thing to me is, if he knew I wasn't his son, it would have been so easy for him to speak up, to just say, ‘This really isn't my boy,’ and he could have pawned me off to numerous family members.”

When he first learned about Gene, Bruce said he got on the internet and started to read other stories about babies that had been switched at birth.

“More often than not, these stories do not have happy endings like ours did,” Bruce said. “They involve a lot of pain and years of counseling, and come with broken families.”

Bruce attributed the Fisher family making it through the experience intact to the family's belief in God.

“The gospel is very much a central part of this story because that's how we approached it and how we were all able to heal from it, and be complete and be whole again,” Bruce said.

Gene agrees, believing there was reason why the thought of sorting out his origins didn't cross his mind for so long after coming home from Mexico.

“When I came home from my mission in 1965, everybody that was a part of this switch, these two families, these two mothers, everybody was still alive, even the grandma that told me about the whole thing,” Gene said. “I have come to the conclusion, had I gone up there directly from coming home from my mission and just turned the apple cart upside down, I think I would probably have hurt a lot of feelings, and I don't think the Lord wanted it to happen that way.”

Together, Bruce and Gene have told their story at nearly 50 church gatherings and other meetings over the past seven years, including two trips to the state prison, the most recent one about six months ago.

“We’ve just been overwhelmed with the response that we get,” Gene said. “I had one inmate come up to me and thank me three times for telling him this story. He said, ‘You’ve given me hope that maybe somehow, some way, I can reconnect with my family.’”



In September 2010, Bruce Fisher (left) and Gene Williams pictured with Maxine Fisher, at an LDS ward house where where they told their story how their families dealt with discovering Williams had been switched at birth and how he discovered his biological family.

Gene said that’s the overall emphasis they try to make when telling the story.

“Everybody has differences in their families, and we just need to realize how precious they are and do whatever we can to make sure our families are whole,” Gene said.

Bruce said his relationship with his brother Rod has also been strengthened.

“My relationship with Rod remained intact; it’s much the same as it always has been, except we are probably a little bit closer than we were before this happened, as odd as that may sound,” Bruce said.

Bruce said he and Rod were always different. While Bruce is outgoing and talkative, Rod is quiet and reserved, a man of few words. Bruce said his brother has fully accepted the truth about the baby switch, but he still doesn’t like to talk about it and probably never will. For this

story, the family requested he not be contacted. But Bruce was quick to point out how much Rod has gained as a result.

“Rod has not really lost anything because he still has the Fisher family, but he has gained the Williams family,” Bruce said.

Cecil had a daughter with his second wife, so Rod has a half-sister.

“Rod and his half-sister are very close now,” said Joyce, Gene’s wife. “They talk weekly, and he has come to accept the Williams family.”

Joyce said just a couple years ago, around Easter, the Williams family had a reunion, and Rod fit right in.

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Yet one more remarkable coincidence ties the Williams and Fishers together.

Gene said his Grandpa and Grandma Williams are buried in the Clifton cemetery. Buried right by them is his birth father, Allen Fisher. So, each time he visited the cemetery, even before he knew about the switch, he was close to family.

“We would walk to my grandma and grandpa’s headstones, and we walked right past my dad’s headstone, every time,” Gene said. “Obviously, we never knew, but we walked right by it.”

After the first big reunion with Gene and the rest of the Fishers, Rod, Gene, Bruce and their wives all went to the cemetery together.

“We went to see where Allen, my dad, was buried, and of course that’s where Maxine will be,” Gene said.

Rod remembered Gene telling him there were Williams buried there too, not just Fishers, so he wanted to see their graves.



Brothers Gene Williams, left, and Bruce Fisher, right, at Gene's home in Herriman, Utah, on Aug. 8, 2017. DNA tests proved Williams and Fisher are brothers. Williams pushed for the DNA test to resolve clues he had come across that he had been switched at birth in a Preston, Idaho, hospital in 1944.

"We all walked over, and Rod's wife made the comment, 'Oh, I've got goosebumps,'" Gene said.

Gene asked why and learned that his birth father Allen's brother, Uncle Doug, had given eight burial plots to Rod and his wife.

"They were right there beside the Williams, literally his real grandparents," Gene said. "He, of course, hadn't had any idea."

Rod gave two of the plots to Gene and his wife.

"These two boys, they got switched at birth, lived their whole lives, and now they're going to end up buried side by side, with our eternal companions right beside us," Gene said. "My headstone is going to say: Born a Williams, died a Fisher."

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