

How to find your...

# Lost Love

BY JANNA L. GRABER



Rekindled love: Childhood playmates Wally Muratori and Susan Dysel (above, in 1949, and below) reunited after losing touch as teens. In 1992, the couple wed.



**S**USAN DYSEL, 56, AND Wally Muratori, 57, grew up as neighbors in Chicago. In 1952, when he was 8 and she was 7, Wally proposed to Susan. She accepted, and they talked about living on a farm someday. Circumstances separated the two in their teens, and they eventually lost touch. Three decades after both had divorced, the two met again. Sparks flew. In 1992, the couple got married and lived on a farm for six years.


Ever wonder what happened to that special love from long ago? Many people do. The Lost Love Project, an ongoing survey of rekindled relationships, suggests that as many as 10% of Americans reconnect and fall in love again

with someone from the past. These relationships are highly successful. In fact, 67% of the couples surveyed were either engaged or married. "Returning to a past love is like returning to a former part of ourselves," says Nancy Kalish, a professor of psychology at California State University at Sacramento, who began the survey in 1993. "Those who reconnect after years apart often feel like they're picking up right where they left off."

People of all ages try to reconnect, not just those in their later years. In fact, the average age of those surveyed was 35 when they reunited. Also, 82% of the rekindled lovers were younger than 22 when they began their initial relationships. Of these, 67% said it was their very first love. "The first of anything is unforgettable, and that includes first love," says Dr. Andrea Van Steenhouse, a Denver-based psychologist. "We're not as cynical then. It's more innocent."

Reconnecting with a past love, however, may not always be wonderful. "There is always the risk of being hurt again," adds Dr. Van Steenhouse. "If your former love was uncommunicative then, he probably still is today."

And if you're married, it's best to stay away from past loves. "You don't know how powerful that former relationship can still be," says Nancy Kalish. Nearly one-third of the couples in the Lost Love Project said both people were married when they found each other.

Still, the divorce rate among reunited couples was less than 2%, which suggests that if you're single and looking for someone special, the best place to look may well be in the past. 

## Looking To Reconnect?

Few people find their lost loves by chance. Here are some avenues that could help you:

- **ASK A MUTUAL FRIEND.**
- **CHECK PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS or church records.**
- **VISIT YOUR HOMETOWN.**
- **POST A NOTE on an Internet message board (Nancy Kalish's site is [www.lostlovers.com](http://www.lostlovers.com)).**
- **CALL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL or college alumni association.**
- **SEARCH ONLINE RESOURCES, including [people.yahoo.com](http://people.yahoo.com) and [www.classmates.com](http://www.classmates.com).**