



## Through My Eyes

Presents

# **Coming Face-2-Face with Myself**

Arthur L Hathaway

Being around a person all of your life, but not really knowing that person can put you at a disadvantage. You must come face to face with that person, even if it's yourself. Look through the eyes beyond the flesh in order to understand that person from within.

“Coming Face 2 Face with Myself” is a book of non-fiction. It evolves from a historical equation based on information known and archived data gathered to create a connection from one era to the next to bring a history to life. Unless otherwise noted, the author and the publisher make no explicit guarantees as to the accuracy of the information contained in this book and in some cases names and identifying details have been changed.

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Published by Through My Eyes Enterprise

Printed by CreateSpace, an Amazon.com Company

Because of the dynamic nature of the Internet, any web addressed or links contained in this book may have changed since publication and may no longer be valid.

Editor: Alphonse McCullough of McCullough Media

Book design by Maya Hathaway and Darius Hathaway

ISBN: xxx-x-xxxx-xxxx-x

eBook ISBN: nnn-n-nnnn-nnnn-n

Visit the author's website at "ThroughMyEyes.us" more writings.

# Introduction

While walking in a crowded mall with a group of friends, I spontaneously made visual contact with others of similar features and skin color as I. This was routine for me to establish a relationship for future use. John who was accompanying me asked “why do you need to make eye contact with every black person you see?” I replied that it would be easier to understand if you could see Through My Eyes. I continued to explain that using my vision meant seeing history as I have seen it and foreseeing the future as I would have it. Those who share similar vision as I do, link us together. More time was needed to answer his question completely, so I ended it with a quick and short closure of “that’s what we do”.

Weeks had passed and our community’s annual street fair was approaching. This being a community involvement event, I volunteered to help out at one of the booths. I chose booth number ‘19’ in the food section. Not because I know how to cook, but I enjoy good food when it’s hot off the grill. I called John to invite him to the fair for some good food and entertainment. He replied everyone else had other commitments for that day except for him, so he would come by himself. I told him to meet me at booth “19”, which was at the far end of the street fair.

Remembering John’s question that I did not completely answer can be answered at the fair. What a perfect opportunity for

him to view life from a different perspective. Inviting John to our community street fair would give him a real-life situation to his question of several weeks ago.

This was the perfect location and surrounding to put John in a predicament in which he had no control. In my community, non-whites make up about 97 percent of the local population which reverses John's normal surroundings. However, stepping out of our community into the city, the county, the state or even the nation, the demographics would be around 12 percent for blacks. We fight among ourselves within our own community, but once beyond our borders, we tend to look for support, recognition and relationship of those with similar backgrounds.<sup>1</sup>

The day of the fair was packed with families and friends enjoying the community's exhibits of good food, entertainment and fellowship. Around three that afternoon, I saw John from a distance walking toward our booth. His body language portrayed a defensive person looking for a connection or relationship of some kind. Once he noticed me, he quickens his pace toward me as if I were a long-lost brother.

After eating, we walked through the streets of the fair. I couldn't help but notice his demeanor as he encountered different people and viewed displays of different cultures. He quietly acknowledged others of his race with the unnoticeable eye contact. This reminded me when my wife broke her ankle. It was a serious break in three places that needed surgery. After coming home with a

wrapped ankle, it was a while before she could move around or travel. Once able to get around in her wheelchair, she would recognize and acknowledge every person confined to a wheelchair.

Before her leg injury, those people were partially invisible to her. But now she shared history among others of like injury which gave them a relationship. It seemed clear that people with visual similarities will recognize that first and acknowledge one another through eye contact or hand gesture.

Later that afternoon, we had dinner at a restaurant in the downtown district. The ratio was back to John's comfort level of a white majority. You could see the body movements were more relaxed and open. I brought up his earlier question he had asked a few weeks ago of why Black people needed recognition from others with similar history. I asked, "After visiting my local community fair, can you now answer your own question?" My friend, looking puzzled, replied "I do not understand".

I explained to him he had walked in my shoes and looked through my eyes at a different world without realizing it. What better way to answer his earlier question than for him to answer it. Being placed in unfamiliar surroundings, with people you do not identify with, puts added pressure on any relationship. Fortunately, you will always find comfort while in a different cultural environment when seeing a familiar face in the crowd. Making visual contact with another person with similar features, a history is shared and a relationship established without saying one word.

It may seem that everyone that looks different is different, but looks can sometimes be deceiving. Before you prejudge a person, look at the history from that person's' perspective to understand how it could change you, if you were in those shoes. Recognizing the history he have evolved from and look past his physical being will enable you to know him. You will not just tolerate him, but know him as you know yourself.

At that point we can live in and out of one another lives through an established relationship of understanding. Instead of just looking through me, we will need to look at each other eye to eye to form a true relationship. But before I face you, I must first come face to face with myself. And to truly see me, I must step into my parents past and know them even before they knew themselves.

So I welcome you to direct your vision through my eyes as we take a journey from within to view American history from an African American perspective. To find myself and understand how history has affected, me not only as a person but also as a people is the goal for this journey. You will never know who you are until you know who you were. Keeping in mind that our findings can be positive and negative, but understand that positive events can be built upon and the negative ones can be a lesson to learn from.

## **A Vision through My Eyes**

Let me take you on a journey into a past.  
And as your guide, you will view history through my eyes  
You may have seen this history many times,  
But never have you seen it through my eyes

Your world and my world in reality are the same.  
We share the same history, but looking through my eyes  
will give you a different point of view.  
Having a different perspective will determine what you will see.

Your outlook will be changed when you have seen  
through My Eyes

Take this journey with me, so you will KNOW!

# Chapter 1

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## *Living through Daddy*

This one African man (1838--1918) was born somewhere in the western part of Africa. As an adolescent he became a captive of neighboring tribesmen and eventually traded to a merchant for other goods. After being transported to Virginia at the age of twelve, he became the property of an Englishman named Hathaway who was a plantation owner in Tennessee. Given the name of "James", he became a servant to his owner in exchange for room, board, and eventually freedom. Prior to the Civil War, a verbal agreement was relayed to the servant of how many years must be served before that