



# Through My Eyes

presents

## Do You Really Know

## The Hathaway's

by

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As the blood of life continues to flow through this tree of life, we must not forget the roots that are hidden, the branches that are extended and the flowers that display the beauty of new life.

We want to keep the memories of our past family members within ourselves as we strive in this present day toward the future.

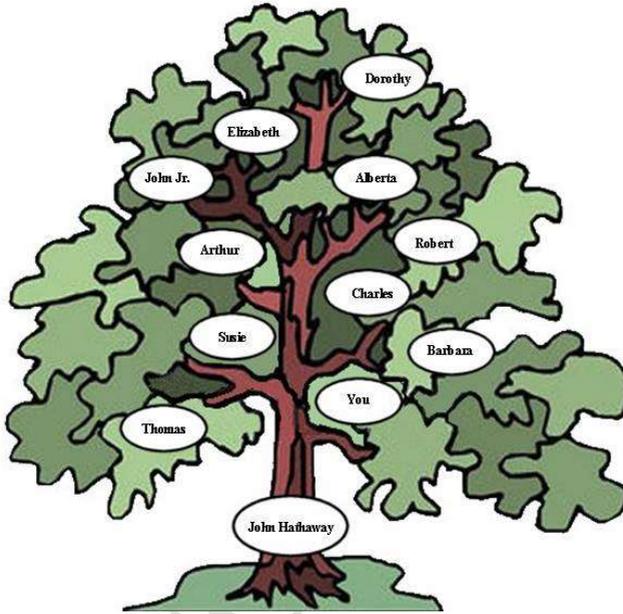
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# JOHN AND CORA'S TREE

Who are you and where are you on your tree of life.



**John Hathaway**



**Cora Peoples**

## ***BEFORE JOHN HATHAWAY***

This one African man (1838—1918) born somewhere in the western part of Africa became a captive of neighboring tribesmen. And as an adolescent he became a part of a trade 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 relayed to the servant stating how many years a slave must serve before that person is freed. Depending on the agreement made, the servant could be free after ten to twenty years. James Hathaway was my great-great-grandfather.

In 1865, the Civil War ended with the Union declaring victory. President Abraham Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865, which declared that all slaves were emancipated. So, after eleven years of slavery, James became a free man. Considered a “Free Person of Color”, gave James the liberty to move freely about the country.

Although he was free, he had no rights as a citizen and the only thing he knew was the plantation and its surrounding area. Venturing too far away from the area could cost him his life if approached by the wrong people. Upset by the loss, many people in the south didn’t adhere to the law. After weighing his options, James stayed in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and work under contract as a sharecropper for his former slave owner.

James met Emma who worked on a local plantation became husband and wife under James' former slave owner's surname of Hathaway. They would have seven children from this marriage: Augustus, Charley, Mary, Ben, James, Lucy, and Elizabeth.

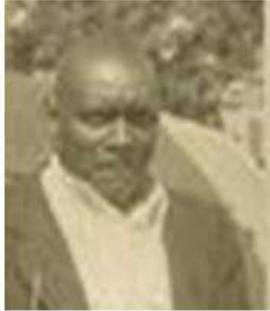
The sons of James continued sharecropping after his death in 1918. They had to continue because of the debt that had acquired over the years. Of the harvest, 50 percent of the corn, peas, and potatoes would go to the landowner, and all the harvested cotton would go to the landowner. A bad year of harvest did not mean a price reduction for them. They had to pay the same each time or owe the difference. In the original contract, the females agreed to the washing, ironing, and other necessary housework as requested by the landowner. All family members agreed to attend to the feeding of the cattle and the milking of cows belonging to the landowner.

The son, Ben married Mary Beckton having three children all born in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. John Lee, was the firstborn in 1899, followed by his brother, George then sister, Lucy. Mary had another child, William (Will) Walker, from a previous relationship.

When the boys became older, they worked the land with their father. But John and his brothers began to question the amount of work needed to farm the land in relation to the amount of pay received. Convinced that the agriculture life was not their future, they decided to accept the invitation from their uncle to come north to Louisville, Kentucky. Their uncle mentioned the available jobs with the railroad industry in the area. They were ready to leave the countryside to find a better life in the city. In 1917, Will at twenty and John at eighteen decided

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to leave Murfreesboro for the northern destination of Louisville, Kentucky with their Uncle Gus and look for work.



**Gus Hathaway**

Augustus "Gus" Hathaway was the major reason for the Hathaway's moving to Louisville, Kentucky. He established himself as a resident in Louisville to support his daughter and for any relatives looking to move north.

Gus the third son of James and Emma born in 1838, heard of opportunities in Louisville, but could not see himself separated from his only daughter. He married to Isadora Peoples, and they had the one child, Mary Augusta Hathaway born November of 1905. After a rocky marriage, they separated with Mary staying with Isadora. Although having visiting right, he was denied "shared custody" of their daughter.

Because of the love of his daughter, he wanted her with him. One evening when he thought Isadora was not around, he came to the house to take her. He had talked Mary out of the house. Mary at eleven knew she did not suppose to leave the house while her mother was away. However, her upbringing taught her to trust and respect her father. Gus talked her

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into coming outside and walk down the road to load a watermelon into his wagon.

As they got closer to the wagon, Isadora walking from the barn, saw the two of them near his wagon. She yelled at her to come back to the house. Wasting no time Gus dropped the watermelon, picked up Mary and hurried into the wagon. They rode in a one horse buggy to Louisville, Kentucky, where in 1916 they started their new life. That was the last time Mary would see her mother alive.



**Mary Jackson in 1964**

Gus and his daughter became permanent residents of Louisville. After settling down on some land, they ask other family members to join them. They were the support team of others wanting a new start.

Will and John followed their Uncle Gus to Louisville looking for a new start. A short while after arriving, they found work at the “Louisville and Nashville” (L&N) railroad depot. The railroad trained the two brothers as porters at the Louisville depot. Porters assisted passengers with their baggage and other belongings. Although they worked long hours

with little salary, lacked job security, and exposed to verbal abuse, they had steady work and a regular paycheck, plus tips.

After becoming established in the city of Louisville, they sent letters home to let everyone know of the opportunities available. John also sent a personal letter to Cora, asking her to join him. So accompanied by John's sister, Lucy, Cora arrived in Louisville to start a new life with John. They initially stayed with their Uncle Gus while they established themselves in the area.

Cora Mae Peoples born in Murfreesboro, Tennessee on April 16, 1902 was the daughter of a Cherokee Blackfoot. Her parents, John Henry Ray Yournk Corke Bird Peoples and Alice Peoples had linkage to the Eastern Band of Cherokee tribe. She had four sisters: Sue, Emma, Leona, and Ora, with Ora being Cora's twin sister.

John and Cora later moved to 1819 Eddy Alley in the inner-city Black section of Louisville, on the west side of town. They became members of the "Church of the Living God," located near them at 18th and Walnut streets. It was there in 1920 that they exchanged marriage vows and started a new life as one. The two would volunteer at the church on a regular basis, and John served on the Deacon Board of the church.

Cora gave birth to the first of their ten children in 1921, when she was eighteen and John was twenty-one. The children were about two years apart. Their youngest was born in 1940. This new generation of Hathaway's was the first to be born and raised in an urban environment.

## ***JOHN AND CORA'S CHILDREN***

The passing of John initiated the passing of the torch to capable carriers. He left a mark for his children to follow. As a man of God, a husband and a father, John showed his love through hard work and sacrifices while providing for his family. The adult sons and daughters of John became the new torchbearers. They lead and inspired the next generation to continue the work toward that common goal. That goal has always been the uplifting, educating and passing down of a great family heritage.

With that said, I want to praise the children of John and Cora Hathaway for an exceptional job: Susie, Arthur, John Jr, Elizabeth, Dorothy, Alberta, Charley, Robert, and Barbara. Their oldest son Thomas Lee left home for Illinois at an early age. He returned several times to visit, but keep no connection with his family after his last visit.

*Do You Really Know John Hathaway*

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John Jr., Arthur, Robert, Charley (1985)  
(Thomas, not shown)



Elizabeth Susie Alberta Barbara (1991)  
(Dorothy, deceased-not shown)

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