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### A Perspective of Our African American History

Where you live determines your exposure to the amount of black history you learn. I lived in Washington, D.C. for about 13 years. When I was younger assumed that all blacks were alike and we had the same perspective about our history and view of the white world. The minute I went to the east coast, I had the shock of my life. Blacks were so drastically different than the blacks I knew back home in California. There was no closeness that I felt at home in California, just cliques. In Atlanta, I felt that the blacks were about 20 years behind times, they were just like I had seen in movies, subservient. They seem like they were just right out of a book.

As black people we have a tendency to not know black history. It is because we were not formally taught it in school, however, it is also because we were taught through slavery that we were not important and therefore, from that experience we have a left over mentality that our history is not important either. As a result most do not want to know anything about our slave experience and or other aspects of our history. The whole concept of Malcolm X during the time I was growing up was one of two perspectives. One, that you disassociated yourself from his thinking or you embraced it. Many disassociated with his thinking because he was too radical, but he had many valid points about our history and our lives that we chose not to relate to because of his radical views. So many psychologically divorce themselves from him and his perspective.

We are ignorant about our history in general and it is very sad. However, like I said partly because we have not been formally given the history through the educational system and also because we have been brainwashed to believe that we and our history are not important. If you ask the average black on the street about various historical figures or events in our history, most do not know who or what you are talking about.

My own experience is that I had to break free from the mentality that our history is not important and that was a major struggle on various levels. It was easy for me to identify with my pioneer black heritage experience because of Nicodemus and my connection to it, however, other aspects of our history slavery especially, I stayed away from until I started to research my genealogy as it related to Nicodemus and the pioneers that settled there, then I opened a new chapter in our American past that was so rich that I regret that it took me so long to come to grips with it. You have to be brave enough to look slavery in the eye and really look at it with an open and receptive and non-judgemental mind. Our anger about it prevents us from looking closer at it and what happen not only in states where they grew cotton and had large plantations, but in states like Kentucky who had less than 5% of the white population owning slaves. Slavery takes on a different bent when the slave master ratio changes.