

The New World

By Jamesetta Taylor

The America that I heard of in Liberia was not the America I discovered after arriving in this country. What people boasted about America is not the way I see it now. The land I dreamt of did not look the same way I expected it to. Many things are different from what I heard. I'm from a large city called Westpoint, located in Liberia. I came to the United States in 2012 seeking opportunity and a better life.

Moving to America was important because there was war in my country. During the war there were a lot of struggles between the president and the citizens. Rebels took over the entire country. They killed people, including kids, and sometimes they even raped children, no matter how old they were. The rebels were so scary that people would run for their lives and the safety of their family. People were killed in our country or damaged. When the presidents during that time tried to stop the rebels, they could also kill them. Even now, my country is left with lots of pollution. People don't have homes, people are not given the proper care, and some are being looked down on. With all of this, we still try to make the best of life and we look forward to the better future of our generation to come.

Many years after the war, I got sick and was in the hospital. I had to stay in the hospital for many months, and when I finally got well I was asked to go home. The same day we got home, my neighbor's house was burned down. Many people say it was a witch that burned the house down. It was actually caused by a candle lit by the lady's son.

My dad used to play the DV lottery (a chance you take that allows you to come to the United States). One day he won, so he and my mom got a chance to come to the United States. When we got the news, I was very thrilled and tearful at the same time because my sisters and I were not going with them. There was a time limit on the DV lottery saying that you had to get

your tickets or you would not be able to enter the United States. My dad started to cry because there was no money to buy the tickets. Luckily, my grandma owned a refrigerator, and she sold it so that my parents could have the chance to travel to the United States.

When my parents left, it was really difficult for them to send money for us because at that time, they were living with my aunt and things were hard for them. Before I came to America, I spent five years living with my grandma. One evening I heard that my parents had finally succeeded with my coming to the United States. Unfortunately, my younger sister had to stay back in Liberia with my grandma. I felt very unhappy leaving her, but at the same time I was delighted to be able to reunite with my mom and dad. Before I left, my grandma commented, “Don’t forget your suitcase and jacket. You’ll get cold if you do, and say hi to your parents for me,” she continued.

“When is the plane going to come?” I complained in the airport.

“Just a minute longer,” the lady replied.

“It’s so cold in here,” I responded, “but I can’t wait to see my parents.”

When I left Liberia, I had joy in my heart. Leaving my friends was the saddest experience I have ever had to face, yet what I expected ahead of me was more difficult than I ever thought. People make it seem easy and simple to comprehend. I did not know that there were going to be a lot of challenges ahead of me. I didn’t get any education or any types of training to prepare me for the challenges I was about to face. I only believed what I heard from others.

When I was back in Liberia, people boasted about the many interesting things about America, and I wanted to see those things for myself. People stated that there are trees standing in the middle of the road with money hanging on them. This was not what I saw when I came to the United States; what I saw was people working very hard to earn money.

People also exclaimed that everything would be prepared for me when I got to America. Instead, when I came to America everything was not prepared for me like they explained. I had to work hard to get what I wanted. For example, I had to learn to speak American English, and I had to fit in at school. When I started school, I didn't feel confidence all the time. It was difficult because sometimes I felt like the students were laughing at me.

One day the weather was so cold that I had to wear a jacket just to get on the bus. Teachers were tough on me; they wanted me to understand everything quickly. I started to get frustrated because I was not understanding my teachers, and I felt like they didn't know what I was going through. Sometimes they would get mad at me, and I would start to cry.

"This is really hard for me," I stated to my teacher.

"You will get it soon," she replied.

"I can't believe I didn't know these answers," I complained in anguish.

"Everything will be fine," she replied. "Just do your best."

As I learned, things became easier for me, and I started thinking of all the things that people in my country told me. Based on what they told me, I can now see what America is really like and make my own decisions on what I see.

My journey to America was important because there was war in my country and I wanted to see my parents again after five years of not being together. Another reason why it was important is that I had wanted to come to the United States since I was a little girl, to be able to speak American English, and to get an education. I learned to be confident in myself and work hard to the best of my ability. I also learned that America is not the way it was described to me and that everything is different from my country, but if I can believe in myself, I can accomplish anything that life throws at me.

About the Author

Jamesetta was born in Liberia, Africa, and grew up in Westpoint. She came to the United States by herself in 2012 when she was 12 years old. She's a sophomore at Davies High School, and she loves English, science, math and music. When she's older she wants to visit the United Kingdom, and she also wants to sing in front of a large group of people. Her favorite sport is basketball. She wants to go back to her homeland in the future.

