

# I AM AN AMERICAN

By Raymond K.

Bates

*"Ich bin ein Berliner."* These words, "I am a Berliner," were spoken in 1963 by then President John F. Kennedy. The crowds of West Berlin citizens' city and country were divided and occupied by four foreign powers who defeated them nearly two decades earlier.

These words were his and America's commitment and challenge to stand with the West until all East and West Berliners were no longer separated by the physical wall that divided their city. He challenged them to believe that one day their country would be united. History records the results.

The following narrative is not a political statement. It is meant to be reflective and contemplative in character for ALL who read it. I served my country proudly and honorably as many thousands of others did then and since. Sometimes met with scorn, and many times thanks, late in the day. I have No Regrets and make No Apology to anyone when I say today,

**"I AM AN AMERICAN!"**

\*I am more than a MICROCHIP or test tube. I am LIFE. I thank my birth mother and father for giving me life, that I might grow and live. For those who raised me and shaped my ethics and character, which reflects my values in actions and speech, I can say, **I am an American;**

\*I am not a hyphenated American, **I am first and only an American;**

\*I am more than my sexual preference, sexual orientation, or gender identification, **I am an American;**

\*I am more than my race, culture, or ethnic inheritance, **I am an American;**

\*I am more than my religion, faith, or belief system, **I am an American;**

\*I am more than my social, political, or class status, **I am an American;**

\*I am more than my I.Q. or education status, **I am an American;**

\*I am more than my place of residence, income, material possessions, and circumstances, **I am an American!**

*"The WHOLE is greater than the sum of its parts." --Aristotle*

I am more than one.

I am more than part of a family.

I am part of a whole, larger than myself: a part that makes me a sum of the greater whole. Together. The "I" in UNITY becomes "WE." WE are

AMERICANS.

E PLURIBUS UNUM: Out of MANY--"ONE."

We becomes ONE NATION UNDER GOD!

Every person with different talents, skills, purposes, practices and beliefs, united. That each one may pursue the goals we each dream. With dignity, we understand the greatness of what it means to be able to live and say proudly,

"I AM AN AMERICAN!"