
GANZ NOTES - TNS 12, 2 - FREDERICK DOUGLASS (1818-1895) 28 FEBRUARY 2023

Version: 14, 15, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 February 2023

THE (NEGRO) SPIRITUALS

See: <https://spirituals-database.com/>.

“Here’s One”, sung by John Wesley Wright, on *The Spirituals* by American Spiritual Ensemble (2007)

“Deep River” and “**Go Down, Moses**” sung by Paul Robeson, on *Ballad for Americans* (originally released in 1939; Apple Music version, 1993).

As is common in spirituals, the song discusses freedom, referring both to the freedom of the Israelites, and that of runaway enslaved people. As a result of these messages, this song was outlawed by many enslavers.

David W. Blight - And later, he [Douglass] seemed richly aware of an insight advanced by modern scholars of the slave songs: that the sacred and the secular mingled in a single worldview among American slaves. **Douglass understood that the dehumanizing character of slavery had to be answered, tamed, and controlled by the weapon of words, in the music of song, or of oratory. He struggled mightily to embrace confidence about language itself, whether in prose, or in the tone surrounding a song’s revisiting of an Old Testament metaphor.** [Blight, David W. *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (p. 33). Simon & Schuster. Kindle Edition.]

“Oh! Let My People Go” (This became the first spiritual to be recorded in sheet music (1862) that is known of.)

When Israel was in Egypt's land
Let my people go
Oppress'd so hard they could not stand
Let my people go!

Refrain

Go down, Moses
Way down in Egypt's land
Tell old Pharaoh
Let my people go!

David W. Blight - Whether they sang about work and its rhythms, about the God welcomed into every aspect of daily life, about their masters or their intimate companions, or about animals through which they might imagine their own travail, slaves, Douglass argued, gave voice to their sorrow, not their contentment. “Sorrow and desolation have their songs,” wrote Douglass, “as well as joy and peace. Slaves sing more to make themselves happy, than to express their happiness.”²⁸ Absolution, redemption, survival? Slave songs were made out of the stuff of oppression, not merely found or anticipated in the hereafter. A boy could learn a lot on allowance day. Whether in the form of moans or shouts, in spontaneous lyrics, or in the stanzas and refrains of a spiritual, slaves were always making their own balm in Gilead. [Blight, David W. *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (p. 33). Simon & Schuster. Kindle Edition.]

“Summertime” and “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child” and “Take My Hand, Precious Lord” - Mahalia Jackson, *Bless This House* (1956)

From: https://www.ultimate-guitar.com/articles/features/spirituals_the_songs_of_freedom-62011

Best definition of spirituals came with W. E. B. Du Bois', *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903): “The Negro folk song, the rhythmic cry of a slave, stands today not simply as the soul of American music, but as the most beautiful expression of the human experience born this side of the seas. It has been neglected, it has been, and is, half despised, and above all it has been persistently mistaken and misunderstood; but notwithstanding, it remains still as the singular spiritual heritage of the nation and the greatest gift of the Negro people.”

Today we think about spirituals as if it is an art form, like classical music or jazz. But it is not. **It was a way for the slaves to communicate with one another, a way to heal their pain, record their history. It was a way to tell a story for those who were not allowed to speak their language, those had to be silent and quiet all the time and were forbidden to express their emotions.** In Africa the foundation for the music was the beat of the drums. The beat by itself could tell people from Africa a story (if someone was sick, if someone is getting married, etc.). In America the drums were not an option for them either. **But they found a way they could express the pain that they were feeling through a moan and a groan. And the substitute for the drum rhythm was the beat of their hearts transferred down to their heels (stomping).**

A collective term *The Underground Railroad* stands for the underground resistance that helped slaves escape by foot at night to the free land in Northern states and Canada around 1800 to 1860. **Slaves used to encode instructions for escape in their songs.** For example, 'The Drinking Gourd' song was used to encode escape instructions and a map. These directions then enabled fleeing slaves to make their way north to the Ohio River and freedom. The 'drinking gourd' refers to the hollowed-out gourd used by slaves as a water dipper. But here it is used as a code name for the Big Dipper star formation, which points to Polaris and North. **The line 'The dead trees show the way' refers to the trees and other landmarks near the Tombigbee River marked with charcoal or mud of the outline of a human left foot and a round spot in place of the right foot by Peg Leg Joe.** And so on and so on.

QUOTATIONS

New World Encyclopedia - One of his favorite quotations was, "I would unite with anybody to do right and with nobody to do wrong."

From Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (5 July 1852) - But such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought light and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn."

From Alan Paton, *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1940)¹ – “Cry, the beloved country, for the unborn child that's the inheritor of our fear. Let him not love the earth too deeply. Let him not laugh too gladly when the water runs through his fingers, nor stand too silent when the setting sun makes red the veld with fire. Let him not be too moved when the birds of his land are singing. Nor give too much of his heart to a mountain or a valley. For fear will rob him if he gives too much.” And from the same book, “There is not much talking now. A silence falls upon them all. This is no time to talk of hedges and fields, or the beauties of any country. Sadness and fear and hate, how they well up in the heart and mind, whenever one opens pages of these messengers of doom. Cry for the broken tribe, for the law and the custom that is gone. Aye, and cry aloud for the man who is dead, for the woman and children bereaved. Cry, the beloved country, these things are not yet at an end. The sun pours down on the earth, on the lovely land that man cannot enjoy. He knows only the fear of his heart.”

From Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) -

To Trust Our Sadness

Consider whether great changes have not happened deep inside your being in times when you were sad. The only sadnesses that are unhealthy and dangerous are those we carry around in public in order to drown them out. Like illnesses that are treated superficially, they only recede for a while and then break out more severely. Untreated they gather strength inside us and become the rejected, lost, and unlived life that we may die of. If only we could see a little farther than our knowledge reaches and a little beyond the borders of our intuition, we might perhaps bear our sorrows more trustingly than we do our joys. For they are the moments when something new enters us, something unknown. Our feelings grow mute in shy embarrassment, they take a step back, a stillness arises, and the new thing, which no one knows, stands in the midst of it all and says nothing.

*Borgeby gård, Sweden, August 12, 1904
Letters to a Young Poet*

¹ Alan Stewart Paton (11 January 1903 – 12 April 1988) was a South African writer and anti-apartheid activist. His works include the novels *Cry, the Beloved Country*, *Too Late the Phalarope* and the narrative poem *The Waste Land*.

John Steinbeck (1902-1968)² – “A writer out of loneliness is trying to communicate like a distant star sending signals. He isn't telling or teaching or ordering. Rather he seeks to establish a relationship of meaning, of feeling, of observing. We are lonesome animals. We spend all life trying to be less lonesome.”

DATES

“The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro” (5 July 1852) delivered by Frederick Douglass, age 34-years old.

The *Fugitive Slave Act* of 18 September 1850 provides for the return to their owners of slaves brought to free states. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is published in 1852. The Republican Party is found in Ripon, WI on 28 February 1854 (remember that the Democratic Party was the party of slavery). The US Supreme Court's *Dred Scott Decision* on 6 March 1857 – a slave moved to a free State never ceases to be a slave despite his or her residing in a free State, is denied citizenship and is denied the right to sue.³

RESOURCES

David W. Blight, *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*.

Publisher: Simon & Schuster; 1st edition (October 16, 2018)

Language: English

Hardcover: 912 pages

² *Wikipedia* - **John Ernst Steinbeck Jr. (February 27, 1902 – December 20, 1968)** was an American writer and the 1962 Nobel Prize in Literature winner “for his realistic and imaginative writings, combining as they do sympathetic humor and keen social perception.” He has been called “a giant of American letters.”

³ From the United States Census Bureau:
https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/fast_facts/1850_fast_facts.html.

ISBN-10: 1416590315

ISBN-13: 978-1416590316

David W. Blight, Yale University Class of 1954, Professor of American History, and Director of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition was awarded a 2019 Pulitzer Prize in the history category for his new biography on Frederick Douglass, the escaped slave who became a prominent activist, author, and public speaker. Titled *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*, Blight's book was lauded for being "a breathtaking history that demonstrates the scope of Frederick Douglass' influence through deep research on his writings, his intellectual evolution and his relationships."

The Smithsonian Museums – National Museum of African American History and Culture: <https://nmaahc.si.edu/>.

David Blight, Professor of History at Yale University, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of the best biography of Frederick Douglass – an Interview on NPR's *Fresh Air* program - <https://wamu.org/story/22/02/25/frederick-douglass-biographer-traces-the-rise-of-a-legendary-abolitionist-and-orator/>.

Authoritative editions of Douglass' work in the distinguished series *Library of America*, see number 358, edited by David W. Blight. About this volume: "Edited by Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer David W. Blight, this *Library of America* edition is the largest single-volume selection of Frederick Douglass's writings ever published, presenting the full texts of thirty-four speeches and sixty-seven pieces of journalism. (A companion *Library of America* volume, *Frederick Douglass: Autobiographies*, gathers his three memoirs.) With startling immediacy, these writings chart the evolution of Douglass's thinking about slavery and the U.S. Constitution; his eventual break with William Lloyd Garrison and many other abolitionists on the crucial issue of disunion; the course of his complicated relationship with Abraham Lincoln; and his deep engagement with the cause of women's suffrage."

The Frederick Douglass Project at the University of Rochester – <https://rbscp.lib.rochester.edu/2494>

STATISTICS

There were almost 700 thousand slaves in the US in 1790, which equated to approximately 18 percent of the total population, or roughly one in every six people. **By**

1860, the final census taken before the American Civil War, there were four million slaves in the South, compared with less than 0.5 million free African Americans in all of the US. Of the 4.4 million African Americans in the US before the [Civil] War, almost four million of these people were held as slaves; meaning that for all African Americans living in the US in 1860, there was an 89 percent chance that they lived in slavery.... Trans-Atlantic slavery began in the early sixteenth century, when the Portuguese and Spanish forcefully brought captured African slaves to the New World, in order to work for them. **The British Empire introduced slavery to North America on a large scale, and the economy of the British colonies there depended on slave labor, particularly regarding cotton, sugar, and tobacco output.** In the seventeenth and eighteenth century the number of slaves being brought to the Americas increased exponentially, and at the time of American independence it was legal in all thirteen colonies. Although slavery became increasingly prohibited in the north, the number of slaves remained high during this time as they were simply relocated or sold from the north to the south. **It is also important to remember that the children of slaves were also viewed as property, and (apart from some very rare cases) were born into a life of slavery.** [<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1010169/black-and-slave-population-us-1790-1880/>]

THE DRED SCOTT (A SLAVE) DECISION OF THE US SUPREME COURT (1857)

Britannica - "The *Dred Scott* decision was the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on March 6, 1857, that having lived in a free state and territory did not entitle an enslaved person, Dred Scott, to his freedom. In essence, the decision argued that, **as someone's property**, Scott was not a citizen and could not sue in a federal court. **The majority opinion by Chief Justice Roger B. Taney also stated that Congress had no power to exclude slavery from the territories (thus invalidating the Missouri Compromise [1820]) and that African Americans could never become U.S. citizens.**"

About **Lincoln's Address (February 1860)** see:

<https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution/historic-document-library/detail/abraham-lincoln-cooper-institute-address-1860>.

Ellen Tucker summarizing what was at stake for Lincoln in this speech: "In the midst of this fraught political situation, New York Republicans invited Lincoln to give a speech in February 1860. Lincoln believed that if Steven Douglas [a

Democrat] became president, slavery would spread throughout the nation. To keep slavery local and on the path of ultimate extinction, he had to beat Douglas. But to beat Douglas, he needed first to win the Republican nomination for president; and to do that he needed the support of eastern Republicans. The consequences of Lincoln's speech could not have been greater – for him and for the country."

Abraham Lincoln's Cooper Institute Address (1860) about which the Constitution Center summarizes in this way: "**Arguably the most important speech in American political and constitutional history, Abraham Lincoln delivered this address on February 27, 1860, at the Cooper Institute in New York City.** Lincoln's speech, with its criticism of the Supreme Court's proslavery decision in *Dred Scott*, reinvigorated Lincoln's political prospects and likely secured his nomination as the Republican presidential candidate. This placed Lincoln in the presidency at one of the most critical moments in American history. Unlike his predecessor, James Buchanan, Lincoln refused to accept secession. Instead, he fought a war to save the Union, eventually turning the Union cause towards abolition. His Emancipation Proclamation freed the enslaved behind enemy lines and welcomed black soldiers into the Union army (thereby securing their claim to all the rights of citizenship). Finally, in the weeks before his assassination, Lincoln convinced the House of Representatives to hold a second (and, this time, successful) vote on the proposed Thirteenth Amendment. These ends are glimpsed in this beginning. In his Cooper Union speech, Lincoln embraced Webster's nationalist theory of the Union, insisted that slavery was wrong, and declared that Congress had both the moral duty and constitutional power to exclude slavery from the territories. By declaring otherwise in *Dred Scott*, Lincoln insisted, the Supreme Court had made an "obvious mistake.""

Some of Lincoln's words from that speech: "The Court have substantially said, it is your Constitutional right to take slaves into the federal territories, and to hold them there as property. When I say the decision was made in a sort of way, I mean it was made in a divided Court, by a bare majority of the Judges, and they not quite agreeing with one another in the reasons for making it; that it is so made as that its avowed supporters disagree with one another about its meaning, and that it was mainly based upon a mistaken statement of fact – the statement in the opinion that "the right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution." ... To show all this, is easy and certain. When this obvious mistake of the Judges shall be brought to their notice, is it not reasonable to expect that they will withdraw the mistaken statement, and reconsider the conclusion based upon it?"

His famous closing lines: "Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the government nor of dungeons to ourselves. LET US HAVE FAITH THAT RIGHT

MAKES MIGHT, AND IN THAT FAITH, LET US, TO THE END, DARE TO DO OUR DUTY AS WE UNDERSTAND IT."

Garrison Keillor in *A Writer's Almanac* writes: "That evening, the great hall was filled with 1,500 New Yorkers, curious to see this candidate, a lawyer who had very little formal education, a man whom they knew something of from his series of highly publicized debates with Douglas. One eyewitness remarked: "When Lincoln rose to speak, I was greatly disappointed. He was tall, tall, — oh, how tall! and so angular and awkward that I had, for an instant, a feeling of pity for so ungainly a man." Once Lincoln began to speak, however, "his face lighted up as with an inward fire; the whole man was transfigured. I forgot his clothes, his personal appearance, and his individual peculiarities. Presently, forgetting myself, I was on my feet like the rest, yelling like a wild Indian, cheering this wonderful man." Lincoln's law partner, William Herndon, was not present, but had read the speech beforehand; it was, he said, "constructed with a view to accuracy of statement, simplicity of language, and unity of thought. In some respects like a lawyer's brief, it was logical, temperate in tone, powerful — irresistibly driving conviction home to men's reasons and their souls."

FROM FREDERICK DOUGLASS, "WHAT TO THE SLAVE IS THE FOURTH OF JULY?" (5 JULY 1852)

Harvard University - Frederick Douglass delivered his famous speech "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" in 1852, drawing parallels between the Revolutionary War and the fight to abolish slavery. He implored the Rochester, N.Y., audience to think about the ongoing oppression of Black Americans during a holiday celebrating freedom. "Whether we turn to the declarations of the past, or to the professions of the present, the conduct of the nation seems equally hideous and revolting. America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future," Douglass said.

Time magazine - When the Ladies Anti-Slavery Society of Rochester, N.Y., invited Douglass to give a July 4 speech in 1852, Douglass opted to speak on July 5 instead. Addressing an audience of about 600 at the newly constructed Corinthian Hall, he started out by acknowledging that the signers of the Declaration of Independence were "brave" and "great" men, and that the way they wanted the Republic to look was in the right spirit. But, he said, speaking more than a decade before slavery was ended nationally, a lot of work still needed to be done so that all citizens can enjoy "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Above "your national, tumultuous joy" — the July 4th celebrations

of white Americans – were the “mournful wails of millions” whose heavy chains “are, today, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them.”

The *Fugitive Slave Act* of 18 September 1850 provides for the return to their owners of slaves brought to free states. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is published in 1852. The Republican Party is found in Ripon, WI on 28 February 1854 (remember that the Democratic Party was the party of slavery). The US Supreme Court’s *Dred Scott Decision* on 6 March 1857 – a slave moved to a free State never ceases to be a slave despite his or her residing in a free State, is denied citizenship and is denied the right to sue.⁴

[I have lifted quotes from Douglass’ speech]

But such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. **The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity, and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought light and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me.**

This Fourth July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony. Do you mean, citizens, to mock me, by asking me to speak to-day? If so, there is a parallel to your conduct. And let me warn you that it is dangerous to copy the example of a nation whose crimes, towering up to heaven, were thrown down by the breath of the Almighty, burying that nation in irrevocable ruin!

He then quotes from Psalm 137 –

Song of the exiles^a

¹ By the rivers of Babylon
we sat and wept at the memory of Zion.*
² On the poplars there

⁴ From the United States Census Bureau:
https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/fast_facts/1850_fast_facts.html.

* Ezk 3:15; Lm 3:48

we had hung up our harps.*

³ For there our gaolers had asked us
to sing them a song,
our captors^b to make merry,
'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.'

⁴ How could we sing a song of Yahweh
on alien soil?

⁵ If I forget you, Jerusalem,
may my right hand wither!^{c*}

⁶ May my tongue remain stuck to my palate
if I do not keep you in mind,
if I do not count Jerusalem*
the greatest of my joys. ⁵

I can to-day take up the plaintive lament of a peeled and woe-smitten people!.... Fellow-citizens, above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions! whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are, to-day, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them. If I do forget, if I do not faithfully remember those bleeding children of sorrow this day, "may my right hand forget her cunning, and may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!" To forget them, to pass lightly over their wrongs, and to chime in with the popular theme, would be treason most scandalous and shocking, and would make me a reproach before God and the world. My subject, then, fellow-citizens, is American slavery. I shall see this day and its popular characteristics from the slave's point of view....

Whether we turn to the declarations of the past, or to the professions of the present, the conduct of the nation seems equally hideous and revolting. America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future....

There are seventy-two crimes in the State of Virginia which, if committed by a black man (no matter how ignorant he be), subject him to the punishment of death; while only two of the same crimes will subject a white man to the like punishment. What is

* Is 24:8; Jr 25:10; Lm 5:14

* Jr 51:50

* 122:1a

⁵ [*The New Jerusalem Bible*](#) (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 1990), Ps 137:1-6.

this but the acknowledgment that the slave is a moral, intellectual, and responsible being? The manhood of the slave is conceded. It is admitted in the fact that Southern statute books are covered with enactments forbidding, under severe fines and penalties, the teaching of the slave to read or to write....

There is not a man beneath the canopy of heaven that does not know that slavery is wrong for him....

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. O! had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, to-day, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced....

What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are, to Him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy -- a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States, at this very hour.

PROCLAMATIONS

New World Encyclopedia at "American Civil War" -

The watershed event of United States history was the **American Civil War (1861-1865)**, fought in North America within the territory of the United States of America, between 24 mostly northern states of the Union and the Confederate States of America, a coalition of eleven southern states that declared their independence and claimed the right of secession from the Union in 1860-1861. The war produced more than 970,000 casualties (3.09 percent of the population), which included approximately 560,300

deaths (1.78 percent), a loss of more American lives than any other conflict in history. Its protagonists on both sides, Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee, were men of exceptional character and among the most storied figures in American history.... **The Union victory resulted in the abolition of slavery and consolidation of the Union. Yet full equality for African Americans would wait another century, until the fruits of the Civil Rights Movement.**

American Slavery as a legal Institution in the United States from 1619-1865.

EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION (1 JANUARY 1863)

About the **Emancipation Proclamation (1 January 1863)** from the US National Archives - <https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/emancipation-proclamation> -

President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, as the nation approached its third year of bloody civil war. The proclamation declared "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforward shall be free."

Despite this expansive wording, the Emancipation Proclamation was limited in many ways. **It applied only to states that had seceded from the United States, leaving slavery untouched in the loyal border states. It also expressly exempted parts of the Confederacy (the Southern secessionist states) that had already come under Northern control. Most important, the freedom it promised depended upon Union (United States) military victory.**

Although the Emancipation Proclamation did not end slavery in the nation, it captured the hearts and imagination of millions of Americans and fundamentally transformed the character of the war. After January 1, 1863, every advance of federal troops expanded the domain of freedom. *Moreover, the Proclamation announced the acceptance of black men into the Union Army and Navy, enabling the liberated to become liberators.* By the end of the war, almost 200,000 black soldiers and sailors had fought for the Union and freedom.

From the first days of the Civil War, **slaves had acted to secure their own liberty.** The Emancipation Proclamation confirmed their insistence that the war for the Union **must become a war for freedom.** It added moral force to the Union cause and strengthened the Union both militarily and politically. As a milestone

along the road to slavery's final destruction, the Emancipation Proclamation has assumed a place among the great documents of human freedom.

BILL OF RIGHTS - THE 13TH AMENDMENT

The Thirteenth Amendment (in the Bill of Rights) to the US Constitution - https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/amendments-11-27?_ga=2.169634722.2047145335.1677601949-325462633.1677601949 -

AMENDMENT XIII

Passed by Congress January 31, 1865. Ratified December 6, 1865.

Note: A portion of Article IV, section 2, of the Constitution was superseded by the 13th amendment.

Section 1.

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS, *NARRATIVE OF MY LIFE* (1845) (33-YEARS OLD)

1845 - Works on Autobiography. Reveals full details about his background for the first time at American Anti-Slavery Society meeting in New York on 6 May 1845. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written By Himself* is published by the Anti-Slavery Office in Boston in mid-May 1845 and sells 4,500 copies by September 1845. Worries that the disclosure of his identity has endangered his freedom. Meets Susan B. Anthony, then a schoolteacher in Rochester, while on a speaking tour of New York. Begins extended speaking tour of Ireland, Scot, and England, sailing from Boston on 16 August 1845 on the Cunard steamer Cambria, while Anna (his wife) remains in

Lynn with the children (she will support the family with sewing and with money from sales of the Narrative).⁶

Susan B. Anthony in *New World Encyclopedia*: **Susan Brownell Anthony (February 15, 1820 - March 13, 1906)** was a prominent American women's leader and abolitionist. Anthony invested fifty years of her life advocating for the social and legal equality of women, specifically for the attainment of women's suffrage in the United States. Anthony co-founded with Elizabeth Cady Stanton the National Woman's Suffrage Association and served as its vice president and later president. **Anthony's lifelong efforts were rewarded posthumously with the ratification of the Nineteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920, guaranteeing women's right to vote.** The first woman to be honored on circulating U.S. coinage, Susan B. Anthony remains an important symbol of equality before the law, whose efforts exemplify selfless dedication, and whose activism effected major social change in the United States.

What follows is my close reading of this, the first of Douglass' Autobiographies, with my annotations, and extracting passages that struck me.

The best version of these texts is:

Frederick Douglass: Autobiographies: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave [1845] / My Bondage and My Freedom / Life and Times of Frederick Douglass (Library of America) Hardcover - February 1, 1994, by Frederick Douglass (Author), Henry Louis Gates (Editor)

Publisher: Library of America (February 1, 1994)

Language: English

Hardcover: 1126 pages

ISBN-10: 0940450798

ISBN-13: 978-0940450790

⁶ This chronological entry from the Library of America, *Frederick Douglass, Autobiographies* (1994). Volume edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

CHAPTER 1

1818 – Born in February at Holme Hill Farm, near Tuckahoe Creek, in Talbot County on the eastern shore of Maryland, the son of Harriet Bailey, a slave, and a white father (about whom he never learned) and named **Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey**.

1819-1823 – Raised on Holme Hill Farm by his Grandmother Betsey Bailey, who lives in a cabin separate from the slave quarters, making and selling seine nets and working as a midwife for pay. Frederick rarely sees his mother, who works as a field hand on farm for tenants of Aaron Anthony, overseer of the Wye River plantation but also as General Overseer for all the Lloyd Estates (married to Ann Catherine Skinner).

1824 – Taken as just five-years old to live on the Lloyd plantation on the Wye River, 12 miles away from the Holme Hill Farm, where he learns for the first time that he has three older siblings there.

NO KNOWLEDGE OF HIS BIRTHDAY - I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot County, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. **By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell his birthday.** They seldom come nearer to it than planting-time, harvest-time, cherry-time, spring-time, or fall-time. A want of information concerning my own was a source of unhappiness to me even during childhood.⁷

MOTHER AND SON SEPARATED – My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant—before I knew her as my mother. It is a common custom, in the part of Maryland from which I ran away, to part children from their mothers at a very early age. Frequently, before the child has reached its twelfth month, its mother is taken from it and hired out on some farm a considerable distance off, and the child is placed under the care of an old woman, too old for field labour. **For what this separation is done, I do not know, unless it be to hinder the development of the child's affection toward**

⁷ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 9.

its mother, and to blunt and destroy the natural affection of the mother for the child. This is the inevitable result.⁸

DESCENDANTS OF HAM – Whether this prophecy is ever fulfilled or not, **it is nevertheless plain that a very different-looking class of people are springing up at the south, and are now held in slavery, from those originally brought to this country from Africa;** and if their increase will do no other good, it will do away the force of the argument that God cursed Ham, and therefore American slavery is right. If the lineal descendants of Ham are alone to be scripturally enslaved, it is certain that slavery at the south must soon become unscriptural; for thousands are ushered into the world, annually, who, like myself, owe their existence to white fathers, and those fathers most frequently their own masters.⁹

WATCHING FOR THE FIRST TIME A BEATING – Master, however, was not a humane slaveholder. It required extraordinary barbarity on the part of an overseer to affect him. **He was a cruel man, hardened by a long life of slaveholding. He would at times seem to take great pleasure in whipping a slave. I have often been awakened at the dawn of day by the most heart-rending shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist, and whip upon her naked back till she was literally covered with blood.** No words, no tears, no prayers, from his gory victim, seemed to move his iron heart from its bloody purpose. The louder she screamed, the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran fastest, there he whipped longest. He would whip her to make her scream and whip her to make her hush; and not until overcome by fatigue, would he cease to swing the blood-clotted cowskin. I remember the first time I ever witnessed this horrible exhibition. I was quite a child, but I well remember it. **I never shall forget it whilst I remember any thing.¹⁰ [about his Aunt Hester] I was so terrified and horror-stricken at the sight, that I hid myself in a closet, and dared not venture out till long after the bloody transaction was over.** I expected it would be my turn next. It was all new to me. I had never seen any thing like it before. I had always lived with my grandmother on the outskirts of the plantation, where she was put to raise the children

⁸ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 10.

⁹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 12.

¹⁰ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 13.

of the younger women. I had therefore been, until now, out of the way of the bloody scenes that often occurred on the plantation.¹¹

CHAPTER 2 (LATE SUMMER 1824 – 5-YEARS OLD)

COLONEL LLOYD'S PLANTATION WHERE I SPENT TWO YEARS – My master's family consisted of two sons, Andrew, and Richard; one daughter, Lucretia [**Lucretia Anthony Auld, 20-year old daughter of Aaron Anthony, the Overseer**], and her husband, Captain Thomas Auld. **They lived in one house, upon the home plantation of Colonel Edward Lloyd. My master [Aaron Anthony] was Colonel Lloyd's clerk and superintendent. He was what might be called the overseer of the overseers.** I spent two years of childhood on this plantation, in my old master's family. It was here that I witnessed the bloody transaction recorded in the first chapter; and as I received my first impressions of slavery on this plantation, I will give some description of it, and of slavery as it there existed. The plantation is about twelve miles north of Easton, in Talbot County, and is situated on the border of Miles River. **The principal products raised upon it were tobacco, corn, and wheat.** These were raised in great abundance; so that with the products of this and the other farms belonging to him, he was able to keep in almost constant employment a large sloop, in carrying them to market at Baltimore. This sloop was named *Sally Lloyd*, in honour of one of the Colonel's daughters. My master's son-in-law, Captain Auld, was master of the vessel; she was otherwise manned by the colonel's own slaves. Their names were Peter, Isaac, Rich, and Jake. These were esteemed very highly by the other slaves and looked upon as the privileged ones of the plantation; for it was no small affair, in the eyes of the slaves, to be allowed to see Baltimore.¹²

THE VASTNESS OF THE LLOYD PLANTATIONS – **Colonel Lloyd kept from three to four hundred slaves on his home plantation and owned a large number more on the neighbouring farms belonging to him.** The names of the farms nearest to the home plantation were Wye Town and New Design. Wye Town was under the overseership of a man named Noah Willis. New Design was under the overseership of a Mr. Townsend. **The overseers of these, and all the rest of the farms, numbering over twenty, received advice and direction from the managers of the home plantation. This was the great business place. It was the seat of government for the whole twenty farms.** All

¹¹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 14.

¹² Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 15.

disputes among the overseers were settled here. If a slave was convicted of any high misdemeanor, became unmanageable, or evinced a determination to run away, he was brought immediately here, severely whipped, put on board the sloop, carried to Baltimore, and sold to Austin Woolfolk, or some other slave-trader, as a warning to the slaves remaining.¹³

MISTER SEVERE – Mr. Severe was rightly named: he was a cruel man. I have seen him whip a woman, causing the blood to run half an hour at the time; and this, too, in the midst of her crying children, pleading for their mother's release. He seemed to take pleasure in manifesting his fiendish barbarity. Added to his cruelty, he was a profane swearer. It was enough to chill the blood and stiffen the hair of an ordinary man to hear him talk. Scarce a sentence escaped him but what was commenced or concluded by some horrid oath. The field was the place to witness his cruelty and profanity. His presence made it both the field of blood and blasphemy. From the rising till the going down of the sun, he was cursing, raving, cutting, and slashing among the slaves of the field, in the most frightful manner.¹⁴

THE GREAT HOUSE FARM – The home plantation of Colonel Lloyd wore the appearance of a country village. All the mechanical operations for all the farms were performed here. The shoemaking and mending, the blacksmithing, cartwrighting, coopering, weaving, and grain-grinding, were all performed by the slaves on the home plantation. The whole place wore a business-like aspect, very unlike the neighbouring farms. The number of houses, too, conspired to give it advantage over the neighbouring farms. It was called by the slaves the *Great House Farm*, Few privileges were esteemed higher, by the slaves of the out-farms, than that of being selected to do errands at the Great House Farm. It was associated in their minds with greatness. A representative could not be prouder of his election to a seat in the American Congress, than a slave on one of the out-farms would be of his election to do errands at the Great House Farm.¹⁵
.... **The competitors for this office sought as diligently to please their overseers, as the office-seekers in the political parties seek to please and deceive the people. The same**

¹³ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 15–16.

¹⁴ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 17.

¹⁵ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 18.

traits of character might be seen in Colonel Lloyd's slaves, as are seen in the slaves of the political parties.¹⁶

THE SINGING OF THE SLAVES ON "ALLOWANCE DAY" – The slaves selected to go to the Great House Farm, **for the monthly allowance for themselves and their fellow-slaves**, were peculiarly enthusiastic. While on their way, they would make the dense old woods, for miles around, reverberate with their wild songs, revealing at once the highest joy and the deepest sadness. They would compose and sing as they went along, consulting neither time nor tune. The thought that came up came out – if not in the word, in the sound – and as frequently in the one as in the other. They would sometimes sing the most pathetic sentiment in the most rapturous tone, and the most rapturous sentiment in the most pathetic tone. Into all of their songs they would manage to weave something of the Great House Farm.¹⁷.... **I have sometimes thought that the mere hearing of those songs would do more to impress some minds with the horrible character of slavery, than the reading of whole volumes of philosophy on the subject could do.** I did not, when a slave, understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs. I was myself within the circle; so that I neither saw nor heard as those without might see and hear. **They told a tale of woe which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension: they were tones loud, long, and deep; they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. The hearing of those wild notes always depressed my spirit and filled me with ineffable sadness.** I have frequently found myself in tears while hearing them. The mere recurrence to these songs, even now, afflicts me; and while I am writing these lines, an expression of feeling has already found its way down my cheek. **To those songs I trace my first glimmering conceptions of the dehumanizing character of slavery.** I can never get rid of that conception. Those songs still follow me, to deepen my hatred of slavery, and quicken my sympathies for my brethren in bonds.¹⁸

THE SINGING WERE ABOUT MISERY AND SADNESS – **I have often been utterly astonished, since I came to the north, to find persons who could speak of the singing among slaves, as evidence of their contentment and happiness.** It is impossible to conceive of a greater mistake. **Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy.** The

¹⁶ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 18–19.

¹⁷ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 19.

¹⁸ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 19–20.

songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears. At least, such is my experience. I have often sung to drown my sorrow, but seldom to express my happiness. ¹⁹

CHAPTER 3

COLONEL LLOYD'S HORSES – This establishment was under the care of two slaves – Old Barney and young Barney – father and son. To attend to this establishment was their sole work. **But it was by no means an easy employment; for in nothing was Colonel Lloyd more particular than in the management of his horses.** The slightest inattention to these was unpardonable and was visited upon those under whose care they were placed, with the severest punishment; no excuse could shield them, if the colonel only suspected any want of attention to his horses – a supposition which he frequently indulged, and one which, of course, made the office of Old and Young Barney a very trying one. *They never knew when they were safe from punishment.* They were frequently whipped when least deserving and escaped whipping when most deserving it. **Everything depended upon the looks of the horses, and the state of Colonel Lloyd's own mind when his horses were brought to him for use.** ²⁰

A THOUSAND SLAVES – To describe the wealth of Colonel Lloyd would be almost equal to describing the riches of Job. He kept from ten to fifteen house-servants. He was said to own a thousand slaves, and I think this estimate quite within the truth. Colonel Lloyd owned so many, that he did not know them when he saw them; nor did all the slaves of the out-farms know him. ²¹

HOW A SLAVE THINKS OF THE MASTER – **It is partly in consequence of such facts, that slaves, when inquired of as to their condition and the character of their masters, almost universally say they are contented, and that their masters are kind. The slaveholders have been known to send in spies among their slaves, to ascertain their views and feelings in regard to their condition.** The frequency of this has had the effect to establish among the slaves the maxim, that **a still tongue makes a wise head.** They suppress the truth rather than take the consequences of telling it, and in so doing prove

¹⁹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 20.

²⁰ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 21-22.

²¹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 23.

themselves a part of the human family. **If they have any thing to say of their masters, it is generally in their master's favour, especially when speaking to an untried man.** I have been frequently asked, when a slave, if I had a kind master, and do not remember ever to have given a negative answer; nor did I, in pursuing this course, consider myself as uttering what was absolutely false: for I always measured the kindness of my master by the standard of kindness set up among slaveholders around us. Moreover, slaves are like other people, and imbibe prejudices quite common to others. They think their own better than that of others. Many, under the influence of this prejudice, think their own masters are better than the masters of other slaves; and this, too, in some cases when the very reverse is true.²²... They seemed to think that the greatness of their masters was transferable to themselves. It was considered as being bad enough to be a slave; but to be a poor man's slave was deemed a disgrace indeed.²³

CHAPTER 4

MISTER GORE – Mr. Gore was proud, ambitious, and persevering. He was artful, cruel, and obdurate. He was just the man for such a place, and it was just the place for such a man. It afforded scope for the full exercise of all his powers, and he seemed to be perfectly at home in it. He was one of those who could torture the slightest look, word, or gesture, on the part of the slave, into impudence, and would treat it accordingly. There must be no answering back to him; **no explanation was allowed a slave**, showing himself to have been wrongfully accused. Mr. Gore acted fully up to the maxim laid down by slaveholders, – “It is better that a dozen slaves suffer under the lash, than that the overseer should be convicted, in the presence of the slaves, of having been at fault.” No matter how innocent a slave might be – it availed him nothing, when accused by Mr. Gore of any misdemeanor. **To be accused was to be convicted, and to be convicted was to be punished; the one always following the other with immutable certainty.**²⁴.... He was just proud enough to demand the most debasing homage of the slave, and quite servile enough to crouch himself at the feet of the master. He was ambitious enough to be contented with nothing short of the highest rank of overseers and persevering enough to reach the height of his ambition. **He was cruel enough to**

²² Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 24.

²³ Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 25.

²⁴ Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 25–26.

inflict the severest punishment, artful enough to descend to the lowest trickery, and obdurate enough to be insensible to the voice of a reproving conscience. He was, of all the overseers, the most dreaded by the slaves. His presence was painful; his eye flashed confusion; and seldom was his sharp, shrill voice heard, without producing horror and trembling in their ranks.²⁵... He spoke but to command and commanded but to be obeyed; he dealt sparingly with his words, and bountifully with his whip, never using the former where the latter would answer as well. When he whipped, he seemed to do so from a sense of duty **and feared no consequences.** He did nothing reluctantly, no matter how disagreeable; always at his post, never inconsistent. He never promised but to fulfil. He was, in a word, a man of the most inflexible firmness and stone-like coolness. His savage barbarity was equaled only by the consummate coolness with which he committed the grossest and most savage deeds upon the slaves under his charge.²⁶... He was asked by Colonel Lloyd and my old master, why he resorted to this extraordinary expedient. His reply was, (as well as I can remember,) that Demby had become unmanageable. He was setting a dangerous example to the other slaves, – one which, if suffered to pass without some such demonstration on his part, would finally lead to the total subversion of all rule and order upon the plantation. **He argued that if one slave refused to be corrected, and escaped with his life, the other slaves would soon copy the example; the result of which would be, the freedom of the slaves, and the enslavement of the whites.** Mr. Gore's defence was satisfactory. He was continued in his station as overseer upon the home plantation. His fame as an overseer went abroad.²⁷

KILLING WITH IMPUNITY – At any rate, this whole fiendish transaction was soon hushed up. There was very little said about it at all, and nothing done. It was a common saying, even among little white boys, that it was worth a half-cent to kill a “nigger,” and a half-cent to bury one.²⁸

CHAPTER 5

²⁵ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 26.

²⁶ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 26.

²⁷ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 27.

²⁸ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 29.

FRIEND OF DANIEL LLOYD – The most I had to do was to drive up the cows at evening, keep the fowls out of the garden, keep the front yard clean, and run of errands for my old master’s daughter, **Mrs. Lucretia Auld**. The most of my leisure time I spent in helping Master Daniel Lloyd in finding his birds, after he had shot them. **My connexion with Master Daniel was of some advantage to me. He became quite attached to me and was a sort of protector of me.** He would not allow the older boys to impose upon me and would divide his cakes with me.²⁹

HOW HE LIVED ON THE PLANTATION – I was seldom whipped by my old master, and suffered little from any thing else than hunger and cold. **I suffered much from hunger, but much more from cold. In hottest summer, and coldest winter, I was kept almost naked – no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trowsers, nothing on but a coarse tow linen shirt, reaching only to my knees. I had no bed.** I must have perished with cold, but that, the coldest nights, I used to steal a bag which was used for carrying corn to the mill. I would crawl into this bag, and there sleep on the cold, damp, clay floor, with my head in and feet out. **My feet have been so cracked with the frost, that the pen with which I am writing might be laid in the gashes.**³⁰

HE WAS TO BE SENT TO BALTIMORE – I was probably between seven or eight years old [1825 or 1826] when I left Colonel Lloyd’s plantation. I left it with joy. **I shall never forget the ecstasy with which I received the intelligence that my old master (Anthony) had determined to let me go to Baltimore, to live with Mr. Hugh Auld, brother to my old master’s son-in-law, Captain Thomas Auld.** I received this information about three days before my departure. They were three of the happiest days I ever enjoyed. I spent the most part of all these three days in the creek, washing off the plantation scruff, and preparing myself for my departure.³¹

GETTING CLEAN AND WITH TROUSERS – Mrs. Lucretia had told me that I must get all the dead skin off my feet and knees before I could go to Baltimore; for the people in Baltimore were very cleanly and would laugh at me if I looked dirty. Besides, she was going to give me a pair of trowsers, which I should not put on unless I got all the dirt off me. The thought of owning a pair of trowsers was great indeed! It was almost a

²⁹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 29–30.

³⁰ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 30.

³¹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 30–31.

sufficient motive, not only to make me take off what would be called by pig-drover's the mange, but the skin itself. **I went at it in good earnest, working for the first time with the hope of reward.**³²

SLAVERY'S DESTRUCTION OF FAMILY TIES – The ties that ordinarily bind children to their homes were all suspended in my case. I found no severe trial in my departure. My home was charmless; it was not home to me; on parting from it, I could not feel that I was leaving any thing which I could have enjoyed by staying. My mother was dead, my grandmother lived far off, so that I seldom saw her. **I had two sisters and one brother, that lived in the same house with me; but the early separation of us from our mother had well nigh blotted the fact of our relationship from our memories.** I looked for home elsewhere and was confident of finding none which I should relish less than the one which I was leaving. If, however, I found in my new home hardship, hunger, whipping, and nakedness, I had the consolation that I should not have escaped any one of them by staying.³³

ON THE SHIP TO BALTIMORE (March 1826) – We sailed out of Miles River for Baltimore on a Saturday morning, I remember only the day of the week, for at that time I had no knowledge of the days of the month, nor the months of the year. On setting sail, I walked aft, and gave to Colonel Lloyd's plantation what I hoped would be the last look. **I then placed myself in the bows of the sloop, and there spent the remainder of the day in looking ahead, interesting myself in what was in the distance rather than in things near by or behind.**³⁴

ON MEETING SOPHIA AULD OF BALTIMORE (March 1826) – We arrived at Baltimore early on Sunday morning, landing at Smith's Wharf, not far from Bowley's Wharf. We had on board the sloop a large flock of sheep; and after aiding in driving them to the slaughterhouse of Mr. Curtis on Loudon Slater's Hill, I was conducted by Rich, one of the hands belonging on board of the sloop, to my new home in Allciana Street, near Mr. Gardner's ship-yard, on Fell's Point.... Mr. and Mrs. Auld were both at home and met me at the door with their little son, Thomas, to take care of whom I had been given. And here I saw what I had never seen before; it was a white face beaming with the most kindly emotions; it was the face of my new mistress, Sophia Auld. I wish I could describe the rapture that flashed through my soul as I beheld it. It

³² Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 31.

³³ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 31.

³⁴ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 32.

was a new and strange sight to me, brightening up my pathway with the light of happiness. Little Thomas [he was 2-years old; Frederick was 8-years old] was told, there was his Freddy; and I was told to take care of little Thomas; and thus I entered upon the duties of my new home with the most cheering prospect ahead.³⁵

DIVINE PROVIDENCE FELT FOR THE FIRST TIME – I look upon my departure from Colonel Lloyd’s plantation as one of the most interesting events of my life. It is possible, and even quite probable, that but for the mere circumstance of being removed from that plantation to Baltimore, I should have to-day, instead of being here seated by my own table in the enjoyment of freedom and the happiness of home, writing this Narrative, been confined in the galling chains of slavery. **Going to live at Baltimore laid the foundation and opened the gateway to all my subsequent prosperity. I have ever regarded it as the first plain manifestation of that kind Providence, which has ever since attended me, and marked my life with so many favours. I regarded the selection of myself as being somewhat remarkable.** There were a number of slave children that might have been sent from the plantation to Baltimore. There were those younger, those older, and those of the same age. I was chosen from among them all, and was the first, last, and only choice.³⁶

THE GIFT OF HOPE – From my earliest recollection, I date the entertainment of a deep conviction that slavery would not always be able to hold me in its foul embrace; and in the darkest hours of my career in slavery, **this living word of faith and spirit of hope departed not from me, but remained, like a ministering angel, to cheer me through the gloom. This good spirit was from God, and to him I offer thanksgiving and praise.**³⁷

CHAPTER 6 – TO BALTIMORE (ARRIVES MARCH 1826 AT 8-YEARS OLD; TO LIVE WITH HUGH AND SOPHIA AULD FOR 7 YEARS)

SOPHIA AULD – My new mistress proved to be all she appeared when I first met her at the door, – a woman of the kindest heart and finest feelings. **She had never had a slave under her control previously to myself, and prior to her marriage she had been**

³⁵ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 32–33.

³⁶ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 33.

³⁷ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 34.

dependent upon her own industry for a living. She was by trade a weaver; and by constant application to her business, she had been in a good degree preserved from the blighting and dehumanizing effects of slavery. I was utterly astonished at her goodness. I scarcely knew how to behave towards her. *She was entirely unlike any other white woman I had ever seen.* I could not approach her as I was accustomed to approach other white ladies. **My early instruction was all out of place. The crouching servility, usually so acceptable a quality in a slave, did not answer when manifested towards her.** Her favour was not gained by it; she seemed to be disturbed by it. She did not deem it impudent or unmannerly for a slave to look her in the face. The meanest slave was put fully at ease in her presence, and none left without feeling better for having seen her. Her face was made of heavenly smiles, and her voice of tranquil music.³⁸... But alas! this kind heart had but a short time to remain such. **The fatal poison of irresponsible power** was already in her hands, and gradually commenced its infernal work. That cheerful eye, under the influence of slavery, eventually became red with rage; that voice made all of sweet accord, changed to one of harsh and horrid discord; and that angelic face gave place to that of a demon. *Thus, is slavery the enemy of both the slave and the slaveholder.*³⁹

REVELATION: HOW TO BECOME FREE: EDUCATION (1827 – 9-years old) – Very soon after I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, she very kindly commenced to teach me the A, B, C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters. **Just at this point of my progress, Mr. Auld found out what was going on, and at once forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read.** To use his own words, further, he said, “If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master – to do as he is told to do. **Learning would spoil the best nigger in the world.** Now,” said he, “if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy.” These words sank deep into my heart, stirred up sentiments within that lay slumbering, and called into existence an entirely new train of thought. It was a new and special revelation, explaining dark and mysterious things, with which my youthful understanding had struggled, but struggled in vain. **I now understood what had been to me a most perplexing difficulty – to wit, the white**

³⁸ Frederick Douglass, [Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 34–35.

³⁹ Frederick Douglass, [Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 35.

man's power to enslave the black man. It was a grand achievement, and I prized it highly. From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom. It was just what I wanted, and I got it at a time when I the least expected it.⁴⁰

GOAL: TO LEARN TO READ – Though conscious of the difficulty of learning without a teacher, I set out with high hope, and a fixed purpose, at whatever cost of trouble, to learn how to read. The very decided manner with which he spoke and strove to impress his wife with the evil consequences of giving me instruction, served to convince me that he was deeply sensible of the truths he was uttering. It gave me the best assurance that I might rely with the utmost confidence on the results which, he said, would flow from teaching me to read. What he most dreaded, that I most desired. What he most loved, that I most hated. **That which to him was a great evil, to be carefully shunned, was to me a great good, to be diligently sought; and the argument which he so warmly urged against my learning to read, only served to inspire me with a desire and determination to learn. In learning to read, I owe almost as much to the bitter opposition of my master, as to the kindly aid of my mistress. I acknowledge the benefit of both.**⁴¹

APPEARING TO BE A GOOD SLAVEHOLDER – A city slave is almost a freeman, compared with a slave on the plantation. He is much better fed and clothed and enjoys privileges altogether unknown to the slave on the plantation. **There is a vestige of decency, a sense of shame, that does much to curb and check those outbreaks of atrocious cruelty so commonly enacted upon the plantation.** He is a desperate slaveholder, who will shock the humanity of his non-slaveholding neighbours with the cries of his lacerated slave. **Few [Baltimore slaveholders] are willing to incur the odium attaching to the reputation of being a cruel master; and above all things, they would not be known as not giving a slave enough to eat.** Every city slaveholder is anxious to have it known of him, that he feeds his slaves well; and it is due to them to say, that most of them do give their slaves enough to eat. There are, however, some painful exceptions to this rule.⁴²

⁴⁰ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 35–36.

⁴¹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 36.

⁴² Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 36–37.

THE TRANSFORMATION BY SLAVERY OF SOPHIA AULD – I lived in Master Hugh’s family about seven years. **During this time, I succeeded in learning to read and write. In accomplishing this, I was compelled to resort to various stratagems. I had no regular teacher.** My mistress, who had kindly commenced to instruct me, had, **in compliance with the advice and direction of her husband, not only ceased to instruct, but had set her face against my being instructed by any one else.** It is due, however, to my mistress to say of her, that she did not adopt this course of treatment immediately. **She at first lacked the depravity indispensable to shutting me up in mental darkness. It was at least necessary for her to have some training, in the exercise of irresponsible power, to make her equal to the task of treating me as though I were a brute...** My mistress was, as I have said, a kind and tender-hearted woman; and in the simplicity of her soul she commenced, when I first went to live with her, to treat me as she supposed one human being ought to treat another. In entering upon the duties of a slaveholder, she did not seem to perceive that I sustained to her the relation of a mere chattel, and that for her to treat me as a human being was not only wrong, but dangerously so. *Slavery proved as injurious to her as it did to me.* When I went there, she was a pious, warm, and tender-hearted woman. There was no sorrow or suffering for which she had not a tear. She had bread for the hungry, clothes for the naked, and comfort for every mourner that came within her reach. **Slavery soon proved its ability to divest her of these heavenly qualities.** ⁴³... Nothing seemed to make her more angry than to see me with a newspaper. She seemed to think that here lay the danger. I have had her rush at me with a face made all up of fury, and snatch from me a newspaper, in a manner that fully revealed her apprehension. **She was an apt woman; and a little experience soon demonstrated, to her satisfaction, that education and slavery were incompatible with each other.**⁴⁴

FRIENDSHIP AND EDUCATION – **The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these as I could, I converted into teachers.** With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places, **I finally succeeded in learning to read.** When I was sent of errands, I always took my book with me, and by going one part of my errand quickly, I found time to get a lesson before my return. I

⁴³ Frederick Douglass, [Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 38.

⁴⁴ Frederick Douglass, [Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 39.

used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome; for I was much better off in this regard than many of the poor white children in the neighbourhood. **This bread I used to bestow on the hungry little urchins, who, in return would give me the more valuable bread of knowledge.**⁴⁵

THE COLUMBIAN ORATOR (1831-1832) – **I was now about twelve years old**, and the thought of being *a slave for life* began to bear heavily upon my heart. Just about this time, I got hold of a book entitled “The Columbian Orator.” Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book. Among much of other interesting matter, I found in it a dialogue between a master and his slave. The slave was represented as having run away from his master three times. The dialogue represented the conversation which took place between them, when the slave was retaken the third time. In this dialogue, the whole argument in behalf of slavery was brought forward by the master, all of which was disposed of by the slave. The slave was made to say some very smart as well as impressive things in reply to his master – things which had the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master.⁴⁶

About *The Columbian Orator* (1797) written by Caleb Bingham, A.M.; Bicentennial Edition (1998) edited by David W. Blight and with new Introduction

A 1797 publication of Enlightenment era thought, read by virtually every American schoolboy in the early 19th century

First published in 1797, *The Columbian Orator* helped shape the American mind for the next half century, going through some 23 editions and totaling 200,000 copies in sales. **The book was read by virtually every American schoolboy in the first half of the 19th century.** As a slave youth, Frederick Douglass owned just one book, and read it frequently, referring to it as a "gem" and his "rich treasure."

The Columbian Orator presents 84 selections, most of which are notable examples of **oratory on such subjects as nationalism, religious faith, individual liberty, freedom, and slavery, including pieces by Washington, Franklin, Milton, Socrates, and Cicero, as well as heroic poetry and dramatic dialogues.**

⁴⁵ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 39.

⁴⁶ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 40.

Augmenting these is an essay on effective public speaking which influenced Abraham Lincoln as a young politician.

FINDING THE WORDS AND THOUGHTS FOR HIS EXPERIENCE – In the same book, I met with one of Sheridan’s mighty speeches on and in behalf of Catholic emancipation. These were choice documents to me. I read them over and over again with unabated interest. **They gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of utterance.** *The moral which I gained from the dialogue was the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder.* What I got from Sheridan was a bold denunciation of slavery, and a powerful vindication of human rights. **The reading of these documents enabled me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery; but while they relieved me of one difficulty, they brought on another even more painful than the one of which I was relieved. The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers.** I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men.⁴⁷

THE SEARING BIRTH OF HIS AWAKENED SOUL – As I read and contemplated the subject, behold, **that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing.** It had given me a view of my wretched condition without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, **I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast. I preferred the condition of the meanest reptile to my own. Any thing, no matter what, to get rid of thinking!** It was this everlasting thinking of my condition that tormented me. There was no getting rid of it. It was pressed upon me by every object within sight or hearing, animate or inanimate. **The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more for ever.** It was heard in every sound and seen in everything. It was ever present to torment me with a sense of my wretched condition. I saw nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it, and felt

⁴⁷ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 40–41.

nothing without feeling it. It looked from every star, it smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in every storm.⁴⁸

I am reminded of the interior experience of Jeremiah, the Prophet, at **Jeremiah 20:7-11** –

Selections from the ‘Confessions’ of Jeremiah *

⁷You have seduced me, Yahweh, and I have let myself be seduced;

you have overpowered me: you were the stronger.^a

I am a laughing-stock all day long,
they all make fun of me.

⁸For whenever I speak, I have to howl
and proclaim, ‘Violence and ruin!’

For me, Yahweh’s word has been the cause
of insult and derision all day long.

⁹I would say to myself, ‘I will not think about him,
I will not speak in his name any more,’
but then there seemed to be a fire burning in my heart,
imprisoned in my bones.

The effort to restrain it wearied me,
I could not do it.*

¹⁰I heard so many disparaging me,
‘Terror on every side!’^b

Denounce him! Let us denounce him!’
All those who were on good terms with me
watched for my downfall,
‘Perhaps he will be seduced into error.
Then we shall get the better of him
and take our revenge!’*^c

¹¹But Yahweh is at my side like a mighty hero;
my opponents will stumble, vanquished,
confounded by their failure;

⁴⁸ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 41–42.

* 15:10d

* 23:29; Jb 32:19–20; Ps 39:3

* IPs 31:13

everlasting, unforgettable disgrace will be theirs. ⁴⁹

MY EXCURSUS - CHARLES LAWSOM, SPIRITUAL FATHER (1831-1832)

It was in his 12th and 13th years that Douglass met a black drayman who lived near where the Auld's lived. About this profound "angel" in his life:

The *Oxford English Dictionary* at "**dray**" - "A low cart without sides used for carrying heavy loads: esp. that used by brewers."

"In this state of mind, "religiously seeking knowledge," he met an old man, **Charles Lawson**, who quickly became his deepest influence. A drayman who worked for the owner of a ropewalk on Fell's Point, **Lawson exuded a spirituality Frederick had never before encountered.** Lawson lived only a short walk from Hugh Auld's house; the elder and the youth developed a cherished relationship. **Douglass called Lawson alternately "uncle" and "Father."** Above all, he was Frederick's teacher. To the young, despairing slave with a curious, if imprisoned, mind, Lawson was a holy man living in a hovel who prayed constantly, while walking the streets or even in the midst of conversations. **Frederick listened to Lawson and loved him.** They became spiritual companions, spending all available hours "singing, praying, and glorifying God." Lawson could read only a little, but he could interpret biblical metaphor, symbolism, and story as Frederick recited the words. For the young Douglass, slavery and life were his schools; but here he received a tutorial like no other at the feet of the tattered, prayerful old man. "I could teach him 'the letter,'" wrote Douglass, "but he could teach me 'the spirit.'" Perhaps in their readings and recitations, he and Lawson stopped in Paul's letter to the Romans, as Douglass learned that for believers "the law" (natural rights) was "written in their hearts."¹² **Fred Bailey gained a lifelong fascination for Paul, the prisoner prophet. Lawson gave Douglass two priceless gifts. One was faith; the other was the insatiable desire for knowledge through a love of words.** Lawson instilled in the youth a belief about which Douglass wrote intensely. God "had a great work for me to do," he recalled as Lawson's charge, and the impressionable youth made a spiritual surrender to faith. **His slavery was not permanent, Lawson helped him hope and believe. In thus nurturing Frederick's hope, Lawson prompted a craving for ideas, for books, for knowledge of the human**

⁴⁹ [*The New Jerusalem Bible*](#) (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 1990), Je 20:7-11.

morass in the Baltimore streets as well as in the wide world beyond. From Lawson, Douglass took the challenge that “I must go on reading and studying the scriptures.” The praying drayman, like any of God’s humble messengers in the Bible, had “fanned my already intense love of knowledge into a flame.” **Lawson was a Jesus figure of a kind for Douglass at a time when he desperately needed one.** [Blight, David W. *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (pp. 53-54). Simon & Schuster. Kindle Edition.]

LEARNING WHAT “ABOLITION” MEANT FOR THE FIRST TIME (December 1831; 23-years old) – **I often found myself regretting my own existence and wished myself dead; and but for the hope of being free, I have no doubt but that I should have killed myself, or done something for which I should have been killed.** While in this state of mind, I was eager to hear any one speak of slavery. *I was a ready listener.* Every little while, I could hear something about the *abolitionists*. It was sometime before I found what the word meant. It was always used in such connections as to make it an interesting word to me. If a slave ran away and succeeded in getting clear, or if a slave killed his master, set fire to a barn, or did anything very wrong in the mind of a slaveholder, it was spoken of as the fruit of *abolition*. **Hearing the word in this connexion very often, I set about learning what it meant. The dictionary afforded me little or no help. I found it was “the act of abolishing;” but then I did not know what was to be abolished.** Here I was perplexed. I did not dare to ask any one about its meaning, for I was satisfied that it was something they wanted me to know very little about. After a patient waiting, I got one of our city papers, containing an account of the number of petitions from the North, praying for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and of the slave trade between the States. **From this time, I understood the words *abolition* and *abolitionist*, and always drew near when that word was spoken, expecting to hear something of importance to myself and fellow-slaves.**⁵⁰

THE IDEA OF ESCAPING SLAVERY AND THE NEED TO LEARN HOW TO WRITE - When we had finished, one of them came to me and asked me if I were a slave. I told him I was. He asked, “Are ye a slave for life?” I told him that I was. The good Irishmen seemed to be deeply affected by the statement. He said to the other that it was a pity so fine a little fellow as myself should be a slave for life. He said it was a shame to hold me. **They both advised me to run away to the North; that I should find friends there, and that I should be free.** I pretended not to be interested in what they said and treated them as if I did not understand them; for I feared they might be treacherous. **White men have been known to encourage slaves to escape, and then to get the reward, catch them and return them to their masters.** I was afraid that these seemingly good men

⁵⁰ Frederick Douglass, [Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 42.

might use me so; but *I nevertheless remembered their advice*, and from that time I resolved to run away. I looked forward to a time at which it would be safe for me to escape. **I was too young to think of doing so immediately; besides, I wished to learn how to write, as I might have occasion to write my own pass. I consoled myself with the hope that I should one day find a good chance. Meanwhile, I would learn to write.**⁵¹

TEACHING HIMSELF TO WRITE – **During this time my copy-book was the board fence, brick wall, and pavement; my pen and ink was a lump of chalk. With these, I learned mainly how to write.** I then commenced and continued copying the italics [I think that he means learning “cursive” handwriting] in *Webster’s Spelling Book*, until I could make them all without looking on the book. By this time, my little Master Thomas [Auld; six years his junior] had gone to school, and learned how to write, and had written over a number of copy-books. These had been brought home, and shown to some of our near neighbours, and then laid aside. My mistress used to go to class-meeting at the Wilk-street meetinghouse every Monday afternoon and leave me to take care of the house. **When left thus, I used to spend the time in writing in the spaces left in Master Thomas’s copy book, copying what he had written. I continued to do this, until I could write a hand very similar to that of Master Thomas. Thus, after a long, tedious effort for years, I finally succeeded in learning how to write.**⁵²

CHAPTER 8

REQUIRED TO RETURN TO LLOYD ESTATE TO BE TALLIED AS PROPERTY – I was immediately sent for, to be valued with the other property. **Here again my feelings rose up in detestation of slavery. I had now a new conception of my degraded condition. Prior to this, I had become, if not insensible to my lot, at least partly so. I left Baltimore with a young heart overborne with sadness, and a soul full of apprehension.** I took passage with Captain Rowe, in the schooner Wild Cat, and after a sail of about twenty-four hours, I found myself near the place of my birth. I had now been absent from it almost, if not quite, five years. I, however, remembered the place very well. **I was only about five years old when I left it to go and live with my old master on Colonel Lloyd’s plantation; so that I was now between ten and eleven**

⁵¹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 42–43.

⁵² Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 44.

years old.... We were all ranked together at the valuation. Men and women, old and young, married and single, were ranked with horses, sheep, and swine. **There were horses and men, cattle and women, pigs and children, all holding the same rank in the scale of being, and all were subjected to the same narrow examination.** Silvery-headed age and sprightly youth, maids and matrons had to undergo the same indelicate inspection. *At this moment, I saw more clearly than ever the brutalizing effects of slavery upon both slave and slaveholder.*⁵³

SLAVERY AS DIRECT THREAT TO HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS – Our fate for life was now to be decided. We had no more voice in that decision than the brutes among whom we were ranked. A single word from the white men was enough – against all our wishes, prayers, and entreaties – to sunder for ever the dearest friends, dearest kindred, and strongest ties known to human beings. In addition to the pain of separation, there was the horrid dread of falling into the hands of Master Andrew. He was known to us all as being a most cruel wretch, – a common drunkard, who had, by his reckless mismanagement and profligate dissipation, already wasted a large portion of his father’s property.⁵⁴

LUCRETIA’S PORTION; HIS GOOD FORTUNE – **Thanks to a kind Providence, I fell to the portion of Mrs. Lucretia, and was sent immediately back to Baltimore, to live again in the family of Master Hugh.** Their joy at my return equalled their sorrow at my departure. It was a glad day to me. I had escaped a worse than lion’s jaws. I was absent from Baltimore, for the purpose of valuation and division, just about one month, and it seemed to have been six.⁵⁵

HIS GRANDMOTHER’S LOT – **If any one thing in my experience, more than another, served to deepen my conviction of the infernal character of slavery, and to fill me with unutterable loathing of slaveholders, it was their base ingratitude to my poor old grandmother.** She had served my old master faithfully from youth to old age. She had been the source of all his wealth; she had peopled his plantation with slaves; she had become a great-grandmother in his service. She had rocked him in infancy, attended him in childhood, served him through life, and at his death wiped from his icy brow the cold death-sweat, and closed his eyes for ever. **She was nevertheless left a slave – a slave for life – a slave in the hands of strangers; and in their hands she saw**

⁵³ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 45.

⁵⁴ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 45–46.

⁵⁵ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 46.

her children, her grandchildren, and her great-grandchildren divided, like so many sheep, without being gratified with the small privilege of a single word as to their or her own destiny.⁵⁶

A CONVICTION TO RUN AWAY – My determination to run away was again revived. I resolved to wait only so long as the offering of a favourable opportunity. When that came, I was determined to be off.⁵⁷

CHAPTER 9

DEPARTURE FROM BALTIMORE - I have now reached a period of my life when I can give dates. I left Baltimore, and went to live with Master Thomas Auld, at St. Michael's, in March 1832 [24-years old]. It was now more than seven years since I lived with him in the family of my old master, on Colonel Lloyd's plantation. We of course were now almost entire strangers to each other. He was to me a new master, and I to him a new slave. I was ignorant of his temper and disposition; he was equally so of mine. A very short time, however, brought us into full acquaintance with each other. **I was made acquainted with his wife not less than with himself. They were well matched, being equally mean and cruel.** I was now, for the first time during a space of more than seven years, made to feel the painful gnawings of hunger – a something which I had not experienced before, since I left Colonel Lloyd's plantation.⁵⁸

THOMAS & ROWENA AULD AT ST. MICHAEL'S, MARYLAND – I have said Master Thomas was a mean man. He was so. **Not to give a slave enough to eat is regarded as the most aggravated development of meanness, even among slaveholders.** The rule is, no matter how coarse the food, only let there be enough of it. This is the theory; and in the part of Maryland from which I came, it is the general practice, – though there are many exceptions. Master Thomas gave us enough of neither coarse nor fine food.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 47.

⁵⁷ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 49.

⁵⁸ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 50.

⁵⁹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 50.

THE RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY OF THE AULD HOUSEHOLD – A great many times have we, poor creatures, been nearly perishing with hunger, when food, in abundance lay mouldering in the safe and smoke-house, **and our pious mistress was aware of the fact; and yet that mistress and her husband would kneel every morning and pray that God would bless them in basket and store!**⁶⁰

PORTRAIT OF THOMAS AULD – Bad as all slaveholders are, we seldom meet one destitute of every element of character commanding respect. My master was one of this rare sort. I do not know of one single noble act ever performed by him. The leading trait in his character was meanness; and if there were any other element in his nature, it was made subject to this. He was mean; and like most other mean men, he lacked the ability to conceal his meanness. Captain Auld was not born a slaveholder. He had been a poor man, master only of a Bay craft. **He came into possession of all his slaves by marriage; and of all men, adopted slaveholders are the worst.** He was cruel, but cowardly. He commanded without firmness. In the enforcement of his rules, he was at times rigid, and at times lax. At times, he spoke to his slaves with the firmness of Napoleon, and the fury of a demon; at other times, he might well be mistaken for an inquirer who had lost his way. He did nothing of himself. He might have passed for a lion, but for his ears. In all things noble which he attempted, his own meanness shone most conspicuous. His airs, words, and actions were the airs, words, and actions of born slaveholders, and, being assumed, were awkward enough. **He was not even a good imitator.** He possessed all the disposition to deceive but wanted the power. **Having no resources within himself, he was compelled to be the copyist of many, and being such, he was forever the victim of inconsistency; and of consequence he was an object of contempt and was held as such even by his slaves.** The luxury of having slaves of his own to wait upon him was something new and unprepared for. **He was a slaveholder without the ability to hold slaves. He found himself incapable of managing his slaves either by force, fear, or fraud.** We seldom called him “master;” we generally called him “Captain Auld,” and were hardly disposed to title him at all. I doubt not that our conduct had much to do in making him appear awkward, and of consequence fretful. Our want of reverence for him must have perplexed him greatly. He wished to have us call him master but lacked the firmness necessary to command us to do so. His wife used to insist upon our calling him so, but to no purpose.⁶¹

THE AULD’S GET RELIGION – In August 1832, my master attended a Methodist camp-meeting, held in the Bayside, Talbot county, and there experienced religion. I

⁶⁰ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 51.

⁶¹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 51–52.

indulged a faint hope that his conversion would lead him to emancipate his slaves, and that if he did not do this, it would, at any rate, make him more kind and humane. I was disappointed in both these respects. It neither made him to be humane to his slaves, nor to emancipate them. **If it had any effect on his character, it made him more cruel and hateful in all his ways; for I believe him to have been a much worse man after his conversion than before. Prior to his conversion, he relied upon his own depravity to shield and sustain him in his savage barbarity; but after his conversion, he found religious sanction and support for his slaveholding cruelty. He made the greatest pretensions to piety. His house was the house of prayer. He prayed morning, noon, and night.** He very soon distinguished himself among his brethren and was soon made a class-leader and exhorter. His activity in revivals was great, and he proved himself an instrument in the hands of the church, in converting many souls. **His house was the preachers' home. They used to take great pleasure in coming there to put up; for while he starved us, he stuffed them.**⁶²

HENNY THE SLAVE GIRL – Master would keep this lacerated young woman tied up in this horrid situation four or five hours at a time. I have known him to tie her up early in the morning, and whip her before breakfast; leave her, go to his store, return at dinner, and whip her again, cutting her in the places already made raw with his cruel lash. **The secret of master's cruelty toward Henny is found in the fact of her being almost helpless. When quite a child, she fell into the fire, and burned herself horribly. Her hands were so burnt that she never got the use of them. She could do very little but bear heavy burdens. She was to master a bill of expense; and as he was a mean man, she was a constant offence to him.** He seemed desirous of getting the poor girl out of existence.⁶³

HIS "USELESSNESS" TO THOMAS AULD – Master Thomas at length said he would stand it no longer. **I had lived with him nine months, during which time he had given me a number of severe whippings, all to no good purpose. He resolved to put me out, as he said, to be broken; and for this purpose, he let me for one year to a man named Edward Covey. Mr. Covey was a poor man, a farm-renter. He rented the place upon which he lived, as also the hands with which he tilled it. Mr. Covey had acquired a very high reputation for breaking young slaves, and this reputation was of immense value to him. It enabled him to get his farm tilled with much less expense to himself, than he could have had it done without such a reputation.** Some slaveholders thought it not much loss to allow Mr. Covey to have their slaves one year,

⁶² Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 52–53.

⁶³ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 53–54.

for the sake of the training to which they were subjected, without any other compensation. He could hire young help with great ease, in consequence of this reputation. **Added to the natural good qualities of Mr. Covey, he was a professor of religion – a pious soul – a member and a class-leader in the Methodist church. All of this added weight to his reputation as a “nigger-breaker.”**⁶⁴

CHAPTER 10

TO COVEY’S FARM ON 1 JANUARY 1833 (15-years old) – I left Mr. Thomas’s house, and went to live with Mr. Covey on the 1st of January 1833. **I was now for the first time in my life, a field hand.** In my new employment, I found myself even more awkward than a country boy appeared to be in a large city. I had been at my new home but one week, before Mr. Covey gave me a very severe whipping, cutting my back, causing the blood to run, and raising ridges on my flesh as large as my little finger.⁶⁵

THE INCIDENT OF THE OXEN – Just as I got into the woods, he came up and told me to stop my cart, and that he would teach me how to trifle away my time, and break gates. He then went to a large gum-tree, and with his axe cut three large switches, and, after trimming them up neatly with his pocket-knife, he ordered me to take off my clothes. I made him no answer but stood with my clothes on. He repeated his order. I still made him no answer, nor did I move to strip myself. Upon this he rushed at me with the fierceness of a tiger, tore off my clothes, and lashed me till he had worn out his switches, cutting me so savagely as to leave the marks visible for a long time after. This whipping was the first of a number just like it, and for similar offences.⁶⁶

THE WAY LIFE WAS WITH COVEY – I lived with Mr. Covey one year. During the first six months of that year, scarce a week passed without his whipping me. I was seldom free from a sore back. My awkwardness was almost always his excuse for whipping me. We were worked fully up to the point of endurance.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 54–55.

⁶⁵ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 55–56.

⁶⁶ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 57.

⁶⁷ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 57.

COVEY, "THE SNAKE" – He was a hard-working man. He knew by himself just what a man or a boy could do. There was no deceiving him. His work went on in his absence almost as well as in his presence; **and he had the faculty of making us feel that he was ever present with us. This he did by surprising us. He seldom approached the spot where we were at work openly, if he could do it secretly. He always aimed at taking us by surprise. Such was his cunning, that we used to call him, among ourselves, "the snake."** When we were at work in the corn-field, he would sometimes crawl on his hands and knees to avoid detection, and all at once he would rise nearly in our midst, and scream out, "Ha, ha! Come, come! Dash on, dash on!" This being his mode of attack, it was never safe to stop a single minute. His comings were like a thief in the night. He appeared to us as being ever at hand. He was under every tree, behind every stump, in every bush, and at every window on the plantation. ⁶⁸

THE RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY OF COVEY – **Mr. Covey's fort consisted in his power to deceive. His life was devoted to planning and perpetrating the grossest deceptions.** Every thing he possessed in the shape of learning or religion, he made conform to his disposition to deceive. He seemed to think himself equal to deceiving the Almighty. **He would make a short prayer in the morning, and a long prayer at night; and, strange as it may seem, few men would at times appear more devotional than he.** The exercises of his family devotions were always commenced with singing, and as he was a very poor singer himself, the duty of raising the hymn generally came upon me. He would read his hymn and nod at me to commence. I would at times do so; at others, I would not. **My noncompliance would almost always produce much confusion.** To show himself independent of me, he would start and stagger through with his hymn in the most discordant manner.⁶⁹

DOUGLASS (16-years old) BROKEN BY COVEY – If at any one time of my life more than another, I was made to drink the bitterest dregs of slavery, that time was during the first six months of my stay with Mr. Covey. We were worked in all weathers. It was never too hot or too cold; it could never rain, blow, hail, or snow too hard for us to work in the field. Work, work, work was scarcely more the order of the day than of the night. The longest days were too short for him, and the shortest nights too long for him. **I was somewhat unmanageable when I first went there, but a few months of this discipline tamed me. Mr. Covey succeeded in breaking me. I was broken in body, soul, and spirit. My natural elasticity was crushed, my intellect languished, the disposition to**

⁶⁸ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 58.

⁶⁹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 58-59.

read departed, the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died; the dark night of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a man transformed into a brute.⁷⁰

THE SAILING SHIPS ON CHESAPEAKE BAY – Our house stood within a few rods of the Chesapeake bay, whose broad bosom was ever white with sails from every quarter of the habitable globe. **Those beautiful vessels robed in purest white, so delightful to the eye of freemen, were to me so many shrouded ghosts, to terrify and torment me with thoughts of my wretched condition.** I have often in the deep stillness of a summer's Sabbath, stood all alone upon the lofty banks of that noble bay, and traced, with saddened heart and tearful eye, the countless number of sails moving off to the mighty ocean. **The sight of these always affected me powerfully.**⁷¹

HOW A SLAVE WAS MADE A MAN – I have already intimated that my condition was much worse during the first six months of my stay at Mr. Covey's than in the last six. The circumstances leading to the change in Mr. Covey's course toward me form an epoch in my humble history. **You have seen how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man.**⁷²

AUGUST 1833 – COVEY'S BEATING & THOMAS AULD'S RESPONSE – **He would then walk the floor and seek to justify Covey by saying he expected I deserved it.** He asked me what I wanted. I told him to let me get a new home; that as sure as I lived with Mr. Covey again, I should live with but to die with him; that Covey would surely kill me – he was in a fair way for it. **Master Thomas ridiculed the idea that there was any danger of Mr. Covey's killing me, and said that he knew Mr. Covey; that he was a good man, and that he could not think of taking me from him; that should he do so, he would lose the whole year's wages; that I belonged to Mr. Covey for one year, and that I must go back to him, come what might; and that I must not trouble him with any more stories, or that he would himself get hold of me.** After threatening me thus, he gave me a very large dose of salts, telling me that I might remain in St. Michael's that night, (it being quite late,) but that I must be off back to Mr. Covey's early in the

⁷⁰ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 59–60.

⁷¹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 60.

⁷² Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 61–62.

morning; and that if I did not, he would *get hold of me*, which meant that he would whip me.⁷³

ALL OUT PHYSICAL FIGHT WITH COVEY – Mr. Covey seemed now to think he had me and could do what he pleased; but at this moment – from whence came the spirit I don't know – **I resolved to fight**; and suiting my action to the resolution, I seized Covey hard by the throat; and as I did so, I rose. He held on to me, and I to him. My resistance was so entirely unexpected, that Covey seemed taken all aback. He trembled like a leaf. This gave me assurance, and I held him uneasy, causing the blood to run where I touched him with the ends of my fingers.⁷⁴

DOUGLASS REBORN – **The whole six months afterwards, that I spent with Mr. Covey, he never laid the weight of his finger upon me in anger.** He would occasionally say, he didn't want to get hold of me again. "No," thought I, "you need not; for you will come off worse than you did before." **This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self-confidence and inspired me again with a determination to be free.** The gratification afforded by the triumph was a full compensation for whatever else might follow, even death itself. **He only can understand the deep satisfaction which I experienced, who has himself repelled by force the bloody arm of slavery. I felt as I never felt before. It was a glorious resurrection from the tomb of slavery to the heaven of freedom. My long-crushed spirit rose, cowardice departed, bold defiance took its place; and I now resolved that, however long I might remain a slave in form, the day had passed for ever when I could be a slave in fact.** I did not hesitate to let it be known of me, that the white man who expected to succeed in whipping, must also succeed in killing me.⁷⁵

END HIS SERVICE WITH COVEY – It was for a long time a matter of surprise to me, why Mr. Covey did not immediately have me taken by the constable to the whipping-post, and there regularly whipped for the crime of raising my hand against a white man in defence of myself. And the only explanation I can now think of does not entirely satisfy me; but such as it is, I will give it. Mr. Covey enjoyed the most unbounded reputation for being a first-rate overseer and negro-breaker. It was of considerable

⁷³ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 64.

⁷⁴ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 66.

⁷⁵ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 67–68.

importance to him. That reputation was at stake; and had he sent me – a boy about sixteen years old – to the public whipping-post, his reputation would have been lost; so, to save his reputation, he suffered me to go unpunished. **My term of actual service to Mr. Edward Covey ended on Christmas day, 1833.**⁷⁶

CHRISTMAS AT THE SERVICE OF SLAVEHOLDERS – But by far the larger part engaged in such sports and merriments as ball-playing, wrestling, running foot-races, fiddling, dancing, and drinking whiskey: and this latter mode of spending the time was by far the most agreeable to the feelings of our masters. A slave who would work during the holidays was considered by our masters as scarcely deserving them. He was regarded as one who rejected the favor of his master. It was deemed a disgrace not to get drunk at Christmas; and he was regarded as lazy indeed, who had not provided himself with the necessary means, during the year, to get whiskey enough to last him through Christmas. **From what I know of the effect of these holidays upon the slave, I believe them to be among the most effective means in the hands of the slaveholder in keeping down the spirit of insurrection. Were the slaveholders at once to abandon this practice, I have not the slightest doubt it would lead to an immediate insurrection among the slaves.** These holidays serve as conductors, or safety-valves, to carry off the rebellious spirit of enslaved humanity.⁷⁷

DEGRADING SLAVES DURING CHRISTMAS WITH THEIR OWN DISSIPATION – **The holidays are part and parcel of the gross fraud, wrong, and inhumanity of slavery.** They are professedly a custom established by the benevolence of the slaveholders; but I undertake to say it is the result of selfishness, and one of the grossest frauds committed upon the down-trodden slave. They do not give the slaves this time, because they would not like to have their work during its continuance, but because they know it would be unsafe to deprive them of it. **This will be seen by the fact, that the slaveholders like to have their slaves spend those days just in such a manner as to make them as glad of their ending as of their beginning. Their object seems to be, to disgust their slaves with freedom, by plunging them into the lowest depths of dissipation.** For instance, the slaveholders not only like to see the slave drink of his own accord but will adopt various plans to make him drunk.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 68.

⁷⁷ Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 69.

⁷⁸ Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 69–70.

GETTING SLAVES DISGUSTED WITH THE BENEFIT OF FREEDOM – I have said that this mode of treatment is a part of the whole system of fraud and inhumanity of slavery. It is so. *The mode here adopted to disgust the slave with freedom, by allowing him to see only the abuse of it, is carried out in other things.*⁷⁹

TO MISTER FREELAND – On the 1st of January, 1834, I left Mr. Covey, and went to live with Mr. William Freeland, who lived about three miles from St. Michael's. **I soon found Mr. Freeland a very different man from Mr. Covey. Though not rich, he was what would be called an educated southern gentleman. Mr. Covey, as I have shown, was a well-trained negro-breaker and slave-driver.** The former (slaveholder though he was) seemed to possess some regard for honour, some reverence for justice, and some respect for humanity. The latter seemed totally insensible to all such sentiments. **Mr. Freeland had many of the faults peculiar to slaveholders, such as being very passionate and fretful; but I must do him the justice to say, that he was exceedingly free from those degrading vices to which Mr. Covey was constantly addicted.**⁸⁰

THE WORST OF ALL: RELIGIOUS SLAVEHOLDERS –

Another advantage I gained in my new master was, he made no pretensions to, or profession of religion; and this, in my opinion, was truly a great advantage. **I assert most unhesitatingly, that the religion of the south is a mere covering for the most horrid crimes, – a justifier of the most appalling barbarity, – a sanctifier of the most hateful frauds, – and a dark shelter, under which the darkest, foulest, grossest, and most infernal deeds of slaveholders find the strongest protection.** Were I to be again reduced to the chains of slavery, next to that enslavement, **I should regard being the slave of a religious master the greatest calamity that could befall me.** For, of all slaveholders with whom I have ever met, religious slaveholders are the worst. **I have ever found them the meanest and basest, the most cruel and cowardly of all others.** It was my unhappy lot not only to belong to a religious slaveholder, but to live in a community of such religionists.⁸¹

LIFE AND WORK WITH MISTER FREELAND – But to return to Mr. Freeland, and to my experience while in his employment. He, like Mr. Covey, gave us enough to eat; but, unlike Mr. Covey, he also gave us sufficient time to take our meals. He worked us hard;

⁷⁹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 70.

⁸⁰ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 71.

⁸¹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 71–72.

but always between sunrise and sunset. He required a good deal of work to be done; but gave us good tools with which to work. His farm was large; but he employed hands enough to work it, and with ease, compared with many of his neighbours. My treatment, while in his employment, was heavenly, compared with what I experienced at the hands of Mr. Edward Covey.⁸²

HE BEGINS TO TEACH FREELAND'S TWO SLAVES TO READ – Henry and John were quite intelligent, and in a very little while after I went there, **I succeeded in creating in them a strong desire to learn how to read. This desire soon sprang up in the others also. They very soon mustered up some old spelling books, and nothing would do but that I must keep a Sabbath school. I agreed to do so, and accordingly devoted my Sundays to teaching these my loved fellow-slaves how to read.** Neither of them knew his letters when I went there. Some of the slaves of the neighbouring farms found what was going on and also availed themselves of this little opportunity to learn to read. It was understood, among all who came, that there must be as little display about it as possible. It was necessary to keep our religious masters at St. Michael's unacquainted with the fact, that, instead of spending the Sabbath in wrestling, boxing, and drinking whiskey, **we were trying to learn how to read the will of God; for they had much rather see us engaged in those degrading sports, than see us behaving like intellectual, moral, and accountable beings.**⁸³

HIS JOY AT TEACHING FELLOW SLAVES TO READ – I held my Sabbath-school at the house of a free colored man, whose name I deem it imprudent to mention; for should it be known, it might embarrass him greatly, though the crime of holding the school was committed ten years ago. **I had at one time over forty scholars, and those of the right sort, ardently desiring to learn. They were of all ages, though mostly men and women.** I look back to those Sundays with an amount of pleasure not to be expressed. **They were great days to my soul. The work of instructing my dear fellow-slaves was the sweetest engagement with which I was ever blessed. We loved each other, and to leave them at the close of the Sabbath was a severe cross indeed.** When I think that these precious souls are to-day shut up in the prison-house of slavery, my feelings overcome me, and I am almost ready to ask, "Does a righteous God govern the universe? and for what does he hold the thunders in his right hand, if not to smite the oppressor, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the spoiler?" These dear souls came not to Sabbath-school because it was popular to do so, nor did I teach them because it was reputable to be thus engaged. **Every moment they spent in that school,**

⁸² Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 73.

⁸³ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 74.

they were liable to be taken up and given thirty-nine lashes. They came because they wished to learn. Their minds had been starved by their cruel masters.⁸⁴

HIS DEEP LOVE OF FELLOW SLAVES – The year passed off smoothly. It seemed only about half as long as the year which preceded it. I went through it without receiving a single blow. **I will give Mr. Freeland the credit of being the best master I ever had, till I became my own master.** For the ease with which I passed the year, **I was, however, somewhat indebted to the society of my fellow-slaves. They were noble souls; they not only possessed loving hearts, but brave ones. We were linked and interlinked with each other. I loved them with a love stronger than any thing I have experienced since. It is sometimes said that we slaves do not love and confide in each other. In answer to this assertion, I can say, I never loved any or confided in any people more than my fellow-slaves, and especially those with whom I lived at Mr. Freeland's. I believe we would have died for each other.** We never undertook to do any thing of any importance, without a mutual consultation. We never moved separately. We were one; and as much so by our tempers and dispositions, as by the mutual hardships to which we were necessarily subjected by our condition as slaves.⁸⁵

HE PLANS IN ERNEST TO RUN AWAY – At the close of the year 1834, Mr. Freeland again hired me of my master, for the year 1835. But, by this time, I began to want to live *upon free land*, as well as *with Freeland*; **and I was no longer content, therefore, to live with him or any other slaveholder.** I began, with the commencement of the year, to prepare myself for a final struggle, which should decide my fate one way or the other. My tendency was upward. **I was fast approaching manhood, and year after year had passed, and I was still a slave. These thoughts roused me – I must do something. I therefore resolved that 1835 should not pass without witnessing an attempt on my part to secure my liberty.** But I was not willing to cherish this determination alone. My fellow-slaves were dear to me. I was anxious to have them participate with me in this, my life-giving determination.⁸⁶

WHAT THEY FACED IN AN ESCAPE – The case sometimes stood thus: At every gate through which we were to pass, we saw a watchman – at every ferry, a guard – on every bridge, a sentinel – and in every wood, a patrol. **We were hemmed in upon every side.** Here were the difficulties, real or imagined – the good to be sought, and the evil to

⁸⁴ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 74–75.

⁸⁵ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 75–76.

⁸⁶ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 76.

be shunned. **On the one hand, there stood slavery, a stern reality, glaring frightfully upon us, – its robes already crimsoned with the blood of millions, and even now feasting itself greedily upon our own flesh. On the other hand, away back in the dim distance, under the flickering light of the north star, behind some craggy hill or snow-covered mountain, stood a doubtful freedom – half frozen – beckoning us to come and share its hospitality.** This, in itself, was sometimes enough to stagger us; but when we permitted ourselves to survey the road, we were frequently appalled.⁸⁷

TO ESCAPE OR DIE TRYING – In coming to a fixed determination to run away, we did more than Patrick Henry, when he resolved upon liberty or death. **With us it was a doubtful liberty at most, and almost certain death if we failed. For my part, I should prefer death to hopeless bondage.**⁸⁸

BETRAYED ESCAPE BUT AN UNEXPECTED RETURN TO BALTIMORE – I was now left to my fate. I was all alone, and within the walls of a stone prison. But a few days before, and I was full of hope. **I expected to have been safe in a land of freedom; but now I was covered with gloom, sunk down to the utmost despair. I thought the possibility of freedom was gone.** I was kept in this way about one week, at the end of which Captain Auld, my master, to my surprise and utter astonishment, came up and took me out, with the intention of sending me, with a gentleman of his acquaintance, into Alabama. **But, from some cause or other, he did not send me to Alabama, but concluded to send me back to Baltimore, to live again with his brother Hugh, and to learn a trade. Thus, after an absence of three years and one month, I was once more permitted to return to my old home at Baltimore.** My master sent me away, because there existed against me a very great prejudice in the community, and he feared I might be killed.⁸⁹

THE HELP OF HUGH AULD – **Master Hugh, for once, was compelled to say this state of things was too bad.** Of course, it was impossible to get any white man to volunteer his testimony in my behalf, and against the white young men. Even those who may have sympathised with me were not prepared to do this. **It required a degree of courage unknown to them to do so; for just at that time, the slightest manifestation of humanity towards a colored person was denounced as abolitionism, and that name subjected its bearer to frightful liabilities. The watchwords of the bloody-minded in**

⁸⁷ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 77–78.

⁸⁸ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 78.

⁸⁹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 84.

that region, and in those days, were, “D— — n the abolitionists!” and “D— — n the niggers!” There was nothing done, and probably nothing would have been done if I had been killed. Such was, and such remains the state of things in the Christian city of Baltimore.⁹⁰

THE MINDSET OF THE “CONTENTED” SLAVE – When in Mr. Gardner’s employment, I was kept in such a perpetual whirl of excitement, I could think of nothing scarcely, but my life; and in thinking of my life, I almost forgot my liberty. I have observed this in my experience of slavery, – that whenever my condition was improved, instead of its increasing my contentment, it only increased my desire to be free, and set me to thinking of plans to gain my freedom. **I have found that, to make a contented slave, it is necessary to make a thoughtless one. It is necessary to darken his moral and mental vision, and, as far as possible, to annihilate the power of reason. He must be able to detect no inconsistencies in slavery; he must be made to feel that slavery is right; and he can be brought to that only when he ceases to be a man.**⁹¹

THE SLAVEHOLDER AS PIRATE – I was now getting, as I have said, one dollar and fifty cents per day. I contracted for it; I earned it; it was paid to me; it was rightfully my own; yet, upon each returning Saturday night, I was compelled to deliver every cent of that money to Master Hugh. **And why? Not because he earned it, – not because he had any hand in earning it, – not because I owed it to him, – nor because he possessed the slightest shadow of a right to it; but solely because he had the power to compel me to give it up. The right of the grim-visaged pirate upon the high seas is exactly the same.**⁹²

CHAPTER 11

AN NECESSARY “EDITING” OF HIS ESCAPE NARRATIVE – I now come to that part of my life during which I planned and finally succeeded in making my escape from slavery. **But before narrating any of the peculiar circumstances, I deem it proper to make known my intention *not* to state all the facts connected with the transaction.**

⁹⁰ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 88.

⁹¹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 89.

⁹² Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 89.

My reasons for pursuing this course may be understood from the following: First, were I to give a minute statement of all the facts, it is not only possible, but quite probable, that others would thereby be involved in the most embarrassing difficulties. **Secondly, such a statement would most undoubtedly induce greater vigilance on the part of slaveholders, than has existed heretofore among them, which would, of course, be the means of guarding a door whereby some dear brother bondman might escape his galling chains.** I deeply regret the necessity that impels me to suppress any thing of importance connected with my experience in slavery.⁹³

THE ILL-CONCEIVED ANNOUNCEMENT OF “UNDERGROUND RAILROAD” – I have never approved of the publicity which some of the western abolitionists have given to their system of assisting fugitives in their flight to Canada. **They call it *the underground railroad*; but by their open declarations it has ceased to be a secret to any body.** I honor those good men and women for their noble daring, and applaud them for subjecting themselves to bloody persecution, by openly avowing their participation in the escape of slaves. **I, however, can see very little good resulting from such a course, either to themselves or the slaves escaping; while, upon the other hand, I see and feel assured that those open declarations are a positive evil to the slaves remaining, who are seeking to escape. They do nothing towards enlightening the slave, whilst they do much towards enlightening the master. They stimulate him to greater watchfulness and enhance his power to capture his slave.**⁹⁴

KEEPING SLAVEHOLDERS IN THE DARK – I would keep the merciless slaveholder profoundly ignorant of the means of flight adopted by the slave. I would leave him to imagine himself surrounded by myriads of invisible tormentors, ever ready to snatch from his infernal grasp his trembling prey. **Let him be left to feel his way in the dark; let darkness commensurate with his crime hover over him; and let him feel that at every step he takes in pursuit of the flying bondsman, he is running the frightful risk of having his hot brains dashed out by an invisible agency. Let us render the tyrant no aid; let us not hold the light by which he can trace the footprints of our flying brother.** But enough of this. I will now proceed to the statement of those facts, connected with my escape, for which I am alone responsible, and for which no one can be made to suffer but myself.⁹⁵

⁹³ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 90.

⁹⁴ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 90-91.

⁹⁵ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 91.

MAKING MONEY WHILE PAYING MASTER HUGH AULD – Rain or shine, work or no work, at the end of each week the money must be forthcoming, or I must give up my privilege. **This arrangement it will be perceived, was decidedly in my master’s favour. It relieved him of all need of looking after me. His money was sure. He received all the benefits of slaveholding without its evils; while I endured all the evils of a slave and suffered all the care and anxiety of a freeman. I found it a hard bargain. But hard as it was, I thought it better than the old mode of getting along.** It was a step towards freedom, to be allowed to bear the responsibilities of a freeman, and I was determined to hold on upon it. I bent myself to the work of making money. I was ready to work at night as well as day, and by the most untiring perseverance and industry, I made enough to meet my expenses, and lay up a little money every week. I went on thus from May till August.⁹⁶

THE BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP VS ESCAPE – **I had a number of warm-hearted friends in Baltimore, – friends that I loved almost as I did my life, – and the thought of being separated from them for ever was painful beyond expression.** It is my opinion that thousands would escape from slavery, who now remain, but for **the strong cords of affection that bind them to their friends.** The thought of leaving my friends was decidedly the most painful thought with which I had to contend. The love of them was my tender point and shook my decision more than all things else. Besides the pain of separation, the dread and apprehension of a failure exceeded what I had experienced at my first attempt. **The appalling defeat I then sustained returned to torment me. I felt assured that if I failed in this attempt, my case would be a hopeless one – it would seal my fate as a slave for ever.**⁹⁷

3 SEPTEMBER 1838 (20-years old) – ESCAPE TO NEW YORK – **The wretchedness of slavery and the blessedness of freedom were perpetually before me. It was life and death to me. But I remained firm, and according to my resolution, on the third day of September 1838, I left my chains, and succeeded in reaching New York without the slightest interruption of any kind.** How I did so, – what means I adopted, – in what direction I travelled, and by what mode of conveyance, – I must leave unexplained, for the reasons before mentioned.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 93.

⁹⁷ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 95.

⁹⁸ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 96.

“TRUST NO MAN” – I was yet liable to be taken back, and subjected to all the tortures of slavery. This in itself was enough to damp the ardor of my enthusiasm. **But the loneliness overcame me. There I was in the midst of thousands, and yet a perfect stranger; without home and without friends, in the midst of thousands of my own brethren – children of a common Father, and yet I dared not unfold to any one of them my sad condition. I was afraid to speak to any one, for fear of speaking to the wrong one,** and thereby falling into the hands of money-loving kidnappers, whose business it was to lie in wait for the panting fugitive, as the ferocious beasts of the forest lie in wait for their prey. **The motto which I adopted when I started from slavery was this – “Trust no man!” I saw in every white man an enemy, and in almost every colored man cause for distrust.** It was a most painful situation; and, to understand it, one must needs experience it, or imagine himself in similar circumstances.⁹⁹

MISTER DAVID RUGGLES – Thank Heaven, I remained but a short time in this distressed situation. I was relieved from it by the humane hand of Mr. David Ruggles, whose vigilance, kindness, and perseverance I shall never forget. I am glad of an opportunity to express, as far as words can, the love and gratitude I bear him.¹⁰⁰

MARRIAGE TO ANNA MURRAY IN NEW YORK on 15 September 1838 – I thought of going to Canada; but he decided against it, **and in favor of my going to New Bedford [Massachusetts], thinking I should be able to get work there at my trade.** At this time, Anna, my intended wife, came on; for I wrote to her immediately after my arrival at New York, (notwithstanding my homeless, houseless, and helpless condition,) informing her of my successful flight, and wishing her to come on forthwith. **In a few days after her arrival, Mr. Ruggles called in the Rev. J. W. C. Pennington, who, in the presence of Mr. Ruggles, Mrs. Michaels, and two or three others, performed the marriage ceremony, and gave us a certificate,** of which the following is an exact copy: “This may certify, that I joined together in holy matrimony Frederick Johnson [!] and Anna Murray, as man and wife, in the presence of Mr. David Ruggles and Mrs. Michaels¹⁰¹

CLAIMING HIS (NEW) NAME – We now began to feel a degree of safety, and to prepare ourselves for the duties and responsibilities of a life of freedom. On the morning after our arrival at New Bedford, while at the breakfast-table, the question

⁹⁹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 96–97.

¹⁰⁰ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 97.

¹⁰¹ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 98.

arose as to what name I should be called by. **The name given me by my mother was, "Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey." I, however, had dispensed with the two middle names long before I left Maryland, so that I was generally known by the name of "Frederick Bailey."** I started from Baltimore bearing the name of "Stanley." When I got to New York, I again changed my name to "Frederick Johnson," and thought that would be the last change. But when I got to New Bedford, I found it necessary again to change my name. The reason of this necessity was, that there were so many Johnsons in New Bedford, it was already quite difficult to distinguish between them. **I gave Mr. Johnson the privilege of choosing me a name but told him he must not take from me the name of "Frederick." I must hold on to that, to preserve a sense of my identity. Mr. Johnson had just been reading the "Lady of the Lake," and at once suggested that my name be "Douglass." From that time until now I have been called "Frederick Douglass;" and as I am more widely known by that name than by any of the others, I shall continue to use it as my own.**¹⁰²

STARTLED BY THE WEALTH AND HEALTHINESS OF THE PEOPLE OF NEW BEDFORD - Added to this, almost every body seemed to be at work, but noiselessly so, compared with what I had been accustomed to in Baltimore. There were no loud songs heard from those engaged in loading and unloading ships. I heard no deep oaths or horrid curses on the labourer. I saw no whipping of men; but all seemed to go smoothly on. **Every man appeared to understand his work and went at it with a sober yet cheerful earnestness, which betokened the deep interest which he felt in what he was doing, as well as a sense of his own dignity as a man. To me this looked exceedingly strange.** From the wharves I strolled around and over the town, gazing with wonder and admiration at the splendid churches, beautiful dwellings, and finely-cultivated gardens; evincing an amount of wealth, comfort, taste, and refinement, such as I had never seen in any part of slaveholding Maryland.... **Every thing looked clean, new, and beautiful. I saw few or no dilapidated houses, with poverty-stricken inmates; no half-naked children and barefooted women, such as I had been accustomed to see in Hillsborough, Easton, St. Michael's, and Baltimore. The people looked more able, stronger, healthier, and happier than those of Maryland.** I was for once made glad by a view of extreme wealth, without being saddened by seeing extreme poverty. **But the most astonishing as well as the most interesting thing to me was the condition of the colored people, a great many of whom, like myself, had escaped thither as a refuge from the hunters of men. I found many who had not been seven years out of their**

¹⁰² Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 99-100.

chains, living in finer houses, and evidently enjoying more of the comforts of life, than the average of slaveholders in Maryland.¹⁰³

FINALLY WORKING ON HIS OWN AND FOR HIS OWN FUTURE – I found employment, the third day after my arrival, in stowing a sloop with a load of oil. It was new, dirty, and hard work for me; but I went at it with a glad heart and a willing hand. **I was now my own master. It was a happy moment, the rapture of which can be understood only by those who have been slaves. It was the first work, the reward of which was to be entirely my own. There was no Master Hugh standing ready, the moment I earned the money, to rob me of it.** I worked that day with a pleasure I had never before experienced. I was at work for myself and my newly-married wife. It was to me the starting-point of a new existence.¹⁰⁴

THREE YEARS IN NEW BEDFORD – There was no work too hard – none too dirty. I was ready to saw wood, shovel coal, carry the hod, sweep the chimney, or roll oil casks, – **all of which I did for nearly three years in New Bedford before I became known to the anti-slavery world.**¹⁰⁵

WENDESDAY & THURSDAY, 11-12 AUGUST 1841 (23-years old) – HIS FIRST ANTI-SLAVERY SPEECH – I had not long been a reader of the *Liberator*, before I got a pretty correct idea of the principles, measures, and spirit of the anti-slavery reform. I took right hold of the cause. I could do but little; but what I could I did with a joyful heart, and never felt happier than when in an anti-slavery meeting. I seldom had much to say at the meetings, because what I wanted to say was said so much better by others. **But while attending an anti-slavery convention at Nantucket on the 11th of August 1841, I felt strongly moved to speak, and was at the same time much urged to do so by Mr. William C. Coffin, a gentleman who had heard me speak in the colored people's meeting at New Bedford. It was a severe cross, and I took it up reluctantly. The truth was, I felt myself a slave, and the idea of speaking to white people weighed me down.** I spoke but a few moments, when I felt a degree of freedom, and said what I desired with considerable ease. From that time until now, I have been engaged in

¹⁰³ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 101-102.

¹⁰⁴ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 102-103.

¹⁰⁵ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 103.

pleading the cause of my brethren – with what success, and with what devotion, I leave those acquainted with my labors to decide.¹⁰⁶

[HERE IS CONCLUDED THE NARRATIVE]

DAVID BLIGHT'S ACCOUNT OF DOUGLASS' FIRST SPEECH (10-12 AUGUST 1841;
33-YEARS OLD)

David W. Blight, *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*.

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David W. Blight, page 99 - No record exists of what he actually said on August 12 at Nantucket, but over time, as Douglass's fame grew, many witnesses competed to describe and take credit for his "discovery." Samuel J. May recollected that Douglass was "called upon," and after "much hesitation" and "embarrassment" at speaking before such an august gathering of white people, "he gave evidence of such intellectual power – wisdom as well as wit – that all present were astonished." Pillsbury too remembered Douglass's initial "embarrassment," but that he "gained self-possession" and rose to the "dignity of his theme." **Douglass apparently held his auditors entranced with a personalized version of a slave's travail. Whichever stories from his youth he used to bare his heart, he held the hearts of the convention audience in his gesturing hands; the crowd, caught in the beauty and agony of the performance, could hardly have known that this young man had been practicing his new craft for some years.** Douglass "spoke with great power," wrote one witness. "Flinty hearts were pierced, and cold ones melted by his eloquence. Our best pleaders for the slave held their breath for fear of interrupting him."

...

¹⁰⁶ Frederick Douglass, [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#), Sixth Edition. (London: H. G. Collins, 1851), 104.

David W. Blight, pp. 99-100 - Garrison may have left the most telling testimony of all about Douglass's sudden emergence those two days on Nantucket. In his endorsement of Douglass's *Narrative* in 1845, Garrison described a singular moment in abolition history: "I shall never forget his first speech at the convention – the extraordinary emotion it excited in my own mind – the powerful impression it created upon a crowded auditory.... I think I never hated slavery so intensely as at that moment." Garrison was so moved by Douglass's debut that he saw it with biblical resonance as well as within the tradition of American civil religion. **Drawing from Psalms 8:5, Garrison believed they had found "one in intellect richly endowed – in natural eloquence a prodigy – in soul manifestly 'created but a little lower than the angels.'"** Then he compared Douglass's effort to "Patrick Henry, of revolutionary fame," and described the fugitive slave's speech as "more eloquent" in the "cause of liberty" than any by the founders.

New World Encyclopedia at - **William Lloyd Garrison (December 12, 1805 - May 24, 1879)** was a prominent United States abolitionist, journalist, and social reformer. He is best known as the editor of the radical abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator*, and as one of the founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society. A controversial figure, Garrison was outspoken and uncompromising in his stance against slavery, famously declaring, "I am in earnest - I will not equivocate - I will not excuse - I will not retreat a single inch - AND I WILL BE HEARD!" ... Garrison appeared strident in an era when slavery was widely accepted, and institutional racism and the degrading conditions of blacks undermined the recognition of their inherent human equality and civil rights. **While many liberal reformers favored more gradualist approaches, Garrison boldly demanded the immediate emancipation of slaves and often turned his rhetoric on Northerners who disagreed with him, accusing them of "moral lapses."** Garrison saw the U.S. Constitution as inherently flawed because of its equivocation on slavery, and his stridency, in the minds of many reformers, was tactically counterproductive.

BIOGRAPHICAL

The New World Encyclopedia: "New World Encyclopedia writers and editors rewrote and completed the *Wikipedia* article in accordance with New World Encyclopedia standards."

New World Encyclopedia – Frederick Douglass, born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, (February 14, 1818 – February 20, 1895) was an American abolitionist, newspaper publisher, orator, author, statesman, and reformer. Called "The Sage of Anacostia" and "The Lion of Anacostia," Douglass was among the most prominent African Americans of his time, and one of the most influential lecturers and authors in American history.

Wikipedia at “**Anacostia**” – “Anacostia /æˈnɑːkɒstiə/ is a historic neighborhood in Southeast Washington, D.C. Its downtown is located at the intersection of Good Hope Road and Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue. It is located east of the Anacostia River, after which the neighborhood is named.”

New World Encyclopedia – As slaves, a mother and her children were often separated. Slave owners knew that breaking the family bonds was integral to breaking the slave's spirits. Therefore, this practice was often followed. In later life, Frederick would often recount the times his mother walked 12 miles at night to spend half an hour with him. He wrote that "a true mother's heart was hers" and "I take few steps in life without feeling her presence." She died when Frederick was nine years old. He never knew anything about the identity of his father, other than that he was a white man, although some believe that his master, Captain Aaron Anthony, was his father.

New World Encyclopedia – When Frederick was ten (1828), Hugh Auld's wife, Sophia, broke the law by teaching him to read. When Mr. Auld discovered this, he strongly disapproved, saying that if a slave learns to read, he would become dissatisfied with his condition and desire freedom; Frederick later referred to this as the first anti-abolitionist speech he had ever heard. **Another turning point in his young life happened when he purchased a copy of the book *The Columbian Orator*, by Caleb Bingham, A.M. It was the first book he ever owned. Frederick also studied and memorized classic speeches by the Roman orator Cicero in order to find his own voice.**

New World Encyclopedia – Hugh Auld rented Frederick out to a farmer named Edward Covey, a "slave breaker" of extraordinary cruelty. **Sixteen-year-old Frederick (1832) was indeed nearly broken psychologically by his ordeal under Covey, but finally rebelled against the beatings and fought back. Covey lost out on a confrontation with Frederick and never tried to beat him again.** This incident was kept under wraps possibly because Covey was afraid the news of Frederick's victory would ruin his reputation as a "slave breaker," or he was simply ashamed of his defeat.

New World Encyclopedia – By 1837, Frederick was back in Fells Point and had joined the East Baltimore Mental Improvement Society, a debating club of free blacks. Frederick was the only slave there. **Through the society, he met a free African American housekeeper, Anna Murray. Anna Murray sold a poster bed to buy sailor's papers**

needed for Frederick's escape. On September 3, 1838, Frederick boarded a train in Baltimore on his way to freedom from slavery, dressed in a sailor's uniform and carrying identification papers provided by a free black seaman. Though he did not match the physical description in the papers, the conductor gave them only a casual glance. From Baltimore, Frederick made his way to Wilmington, Delaware. He had to continue north, as both Maryland and Delaware were slave states. He went through Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and then onto New York City. **He wrote to Anna Murray from there and they were married on September 15, 1838. They were warned that New York was not safe for runaways, so they moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts.** This was by no means one of the most creative escapes of a slave; Henry "Box" Brown mailed himself (as a parcel) from Virginia to Philadelphia in a journey taking 26 hours. It was at this time that Frederick (Bailey) changed his name to Frederick Douglass, adopting the name of a heroic character in Sir Walter Scott's novel *The Lady of the Lake*.

Wikipedia on "The Lady of the Lake" – **The Lady of the Lake** is a narrative poem by Sir Walter Scott, first published in 1810. Set in the Trossachs region of Scotland, it is composed of six cantos, each of which concerns the action of a single day. There are voluminous antiquarian notes. The poem has three main plots: the contest among three men, Roderick Dhu, James Fitz-James, and Malcolm Graeme, to win the love of Ellen Douglas; the feud and reconciliation of King James V of Scotland and James Douglas; and a war between the Lowland Scots (led by James V) and the Highland clans (led by Roderick Dhu of Clan Alpine). The poem was tremendously influential in the nineteenth century and inspired the Highland Revival.

New World Encyclopedia – In 1843 [25-years old], Douglass participated in the American Anti-Slavery Society's Hundred Conventions project, a six-month tour of meeting halls throughout the East and Midwest of the United States. Not everyone appreciated his speaking; an angry mob beat Douglass and broke his hand in Pendleton, Indiana, in September 1844. In 1845 [27-years old], he published his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave*. The popularity of his book forced him out of the country. By 1847, he was back in the States and settled in Rochester, New York. **In 1848 [30-years old], he participated in the Seneca Falls Convention, the birthplace of the American feminist movement, and was a signatory of its Declaration of Sentiments.** Douglass later became the publisher of a series of newspapers: *The North Star*, *Frederick Douglass Weekly*, *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, *Douglass' Monthly*, and *New National Era*. **The motto of *The North Star* was "Right is of no sex – Truth is of no color – God is the Father of us all, and we are all Brethren."**

New World Encyclopedia – In March 1860 [42-years old], Douglass' youngest daughter, Annie, died at age eleven in Rochester, New York, while he was still in England. Upon learning of this, Douglass returned immediately. **He arrived the following month,**

taking the northern route through Canada to avoid detection. The Douglass' home was close to the Canadian border and one of the last stops on the Underground Railroad.



New World Encyclopedia – The Underground Railroad was a network of clandestine routes by which African slaves in the nineteenth-century United States attempted to escape to free states (states where slavery was illegal), or as far north as Canada, with the aid of abolitionists. Other routes led to Mexico and overseas. It is estimated that at its height between 1810 and 1850, 30,000 to 100,000 people escaped enslavement via the Underground Railroad, though U.S. Census figures only account for 6,000. The Underground Railroad has captured public imagination as a symbol of freedom, and figures prominently in African American history. **It was a means for white and colored men and women of conscience to work together to conduct their oppressed black brethren from slavery to freedom. These men and women of principle were prepared to break unjust laws to combat a social and political evil. Almost wholly a non-violent movement, the Underground Railroad often referred to as UGRR can be seen as a precursor of the civil rights activism of the following century.**

New World Encyclopedia – Douglass conferred with President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 on the treatment of black soldiers, and later with President Andrew Johnson on the subject of black suffrage. **Douglass was in Rochester when he heard of Lincoln's assassination and said, "President Lincoln died as the father of his people and would be mourned by them as long as one remained in America who had been a slave."** Mary Todd Lincoln gave Douglass the President's favorite cane as a token of their enduring friendship.

New World Encyclopedia – **Douglass' most well-known work is his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave*, which was published in 1845.** Critics frequently attacked the book as inauthentic, not believing that an uneducated black man could possibly have produced so eloquent a piece of literature. **Except for his brief tutelage under Sophia Auld, Douglass was completely self-taught.** The book was an immediate bestseller and received overwhelmingly positive critical reviews. Within three years of its publication, it had been reprinted nine times with 11,000 copies circulating in the United States; it was also translated into the French and Dutch.

New World Encyclopedia – Douglass and Anna had five children; two of them, Charles and Rossetta, helped produce his newspapers. Charles and another son, Lewis, served as soldiers during the Civil War.

New World Encyclopedia – **By the time of the Civil War, Douglass was one of the most famous black men in the country, known for his oratories on the condition of the black race, and other issues such as women's rights. He was the first black man to visit a president on equal footing.** Whenever President Lincoln saw him, he would say, "Here is my friend, Frederick Douglass." The President once kept Governor Buckingham of Connecticut waiting because he wanted a long talk with Douglass. **During the last two years of the war about 200,000 African Americans served in Union regiments. When given the chance to fight, blacks proved as brave as anyone. More than 30,000 died fighting for freedom and the Union.**

New World Encyclopedia – In 1868, Douglass supported the presidential campaign of Ulysses S. Grant. **The Klan Act and the Enforcement Act were signed into law by President Grant. Grant used their provisions vigorously, suspending *habeas corpus* in South Carolina and sending troops there and into other states; under his leadership, over 5,000 arrests were made and the Ku Klux Klan was dealt a serious blow.** Grant's vigor in disrupting the Klan made him unpopular among many whites, but Frederick Douglass praised him. An associate of Douglass wrote of Grant that African Americans "will ever cherish a grateful remembrance of his name, fame and great services." **The conflict was not limited to the KKK. Racist groups like the Knights of the White Camellia and the White League also played a part. From 1869**

until 1893, Douglass served as an important official (and the only black) in the inauguration of every Republican president.

New World Encyclopedia – **After the disappointments of Reconstruction, many African Americans, known as Exodusters, moved to Kansas to form all-black towns. Douglass spoke out against the movement, urging blacks to stick it out. He was condemned and booed widely by black audiences.** In 1881, Douglass was appointed Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia. **His wife, Anna Murray Douglass, died in 1882, which left him in a state of depression.** His association with the activist Ida B. Wells brought meaning back into his life. **In 1884, Douglass married Helen Pitts, a white feminist from Honeoye, New York. Pitts was the daughter of Gideon Pitts, Jr., an abolitionist colleague and friend of Douglass.** A graduate of Mount Holyoke College (at that time Mount Holyoke Female Seminary), Pitts had worked on a radical feminist publication named Alpha while living in Washington, D.C.

New World Encyclopedia – **He spoke about the growth of lynching: "Men talk of the race problem. There is no Negro problem. The problem is whether the American people have loyalty enough, honor enough, patriotism enough, to live up to their own Constitution."** Douglass was not indifferent to the sight of injustice anywhere. The outrageous way in which the Chinese were treated made him speak up on their behalf. He did the same for Native Americans, Mexicans, and Indians (from India), **finding racism a product of ignorance and a host of other factors, encompassing selfishness, arrogance, aggression, and greed.**

New World Encyclopedia – On February 20, 1895 [77-years old], Douglass attended a meeting of the National Council of Women in Washington, D.C. During that meeting, he was brought to the platform and given a standing ovation by the audience. Shortly after he returned home, Frederick Douglass died of a massive heart attack or stroke, in his adopted hometown of Washington D.C. He is buried in Mount Hope Cemetery in Rochester, New York.

Frederick Douglass



Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass, original name **Frederick Augustus**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction
- Early life and enslavement
- Escape from slavery, life in New Bedford, and work with the American Anti-Slavery Society
- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, European travel, and *The North Star*
- Involvement with John Brown, Abraham Lincoln, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony
- Move to Washington, D.C., the Freedman's Bank, government office-holding, and later years

Washington Bailey, (born February 1818, Talbot county, Maryland, U.S.—died February 20, 1895, Washington, D.C.), African American abolitionist, orator, newspaper publisher, and author who is famous for his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself*. He became the first Black U.S. marshal and was the most photographed American man of the 19th century.



Sarah J. Eddy: Frederick Douglass

Early life and enslavement

Douglass was born enslaved as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey on Holme Hill Farm in Talbot county, Maryland. Although the date of his birth was not recorded, Douglass estimated that he had been born in February 1818, and he later celebrated his birthday on February 14. (The best source for the events in

Douglass's life is Douglass himself in his oratory and writings, especially his three autobiographies, the details of which have been checked when possible and have largely been confirmed, though his biographers have contributed corrections and clarifications.) Douglass was owned by Capt. Aaron Anthony, who was the clerk and superintendent of overseers for Edward Lloyd V (also known as Colonel Lloyd), a wealthy landowner and slaveholder in eastern Maryland. Like many other enslaved children, Douglass was separated from his mother, Harriet Bailey, when he was very young. He spent his formative years with his

maternal grandmother, Betsey Bailey, who had the responsibility of raising young enslaved children.

Harriet Bailey worked as a field hand on a neighbouring plantation and had to walk more than 12 miles (about 19 km) to visit her son, whom she met with only a few times in his life. He described her as “tall and finely proportioned, of dark, glossy complexion, with regular features, and amongst the slaves was remarkably sedate and dignified.” She died when he was about seven years old. As an adult, Douglass learned that his mother had been the only Black person in what was then Talbot county who could read, an extraordinarily rare achievement for a field hand.

When Douglass was age five or six, he was taken to live on Colonel Lloyd’s home plantation, Wye House. Lloyd’s plantation functioned like a small town. Young Douglass found himself among several other enslaved children competing for food and other comforts. In 1826 at approximately age eight, he was sent to live with Hugh and Sophia Auld at Fells Point, Baltimore. Hugh’s brother Capt. Thomas Auld was the son-in-law of Douglass’s owner, Aaron Anthony. Douglass’s responsibility in Baltimore was to care for Hugh and Sophia’s young son, Thomas. Sophia began teaching Douglass how to read, along with her son. The lessons ended abruptly, however, when Hugh discovered what had been going on and informed Sophia that literacy would “spoil” a slave. According to Douglass, Hugh stated that if a slave were given an inch, he would “take an ell [a unit of measure equal to about 45 inches].” In Maryland, as in many other slaveholding states, it was forbidden to teach enslaved people how to read and write. Douglass continued his learning in secret, by exchanging bread for lessons from the poor white boys he played with in the neighbourhood and by tracing the letters in Thomas’s old schoolbooks.

In March 1832 Douglass was sent from Baltimore to St. Michaels, on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. After both Aaron Anthony and his daughter Lucretia died, her husband, Capt. Thomas Auld, became Douglass’s owner. Teenage Douglass experienced harsher living conditions with Auld, who was known for his abusive practices.

In January 1833 Douglass was leased to local farmer Edward Covey. Leasing or hiring out enslaved persons was a common revenue-generating practice. Farmers would pay slaveholders a monthly fee for enslaved people and take responsibility for their care, food, and lodging. Covey was known as a “slave breaker,” someone who abused slaves physically and

psychologically in order to make them more compliant. According to Douglass, Covey's abuse led to a climactic confrontation six months into Douglass's time with the farmer. One day Covey attacked Douglass, and Douglass fought back. The two men engaged in an epic two-hour-long physical struggle. Douglass ultimately won the fight, and Covey never attacked him again. Douglass emerged from the incident determined to protect himself from any physical assault from anyone in the future.

In January 1834 Douglass was sent to William Freeland's farm. Living and working conditions were better under Freeland; however, Douglass still desired his freedom. While living with Freeland, he started a Sabbath school at which he taught area Blacks how to read and write. Along with four other enslaved men, Douglass plotted to escape north by taking a large canoe up the coast of Maryland and to proceed to Pennsylvania, but their plot was discovered. Douglass and the other participants were arrested. Captain Auld then sent Douglass back to Baltimore to live again with Hugh and Sophia Auld and to learn a trade.

Hugh Auld hired out Douglass to local shipyards as a ship caulker. Now working as a skilled tradesman, Douglass was paid by the shipyards for his efforts. He would then submit his earnings to Auld, who gave Douglass a small percentage of the wages. Douglass would eventually hire out his own time, which meant that he paid Auld a set amount every week but was responsible for maintaining his own food and clothing. During this time, Douglass became more involved in Baltimore's Black community, which led him to meet Anna Murray, a freeborn Black woman, whom he would eventually marry.

Escape from slavery, life in New Bedford, and work with the American Anti-Slavery Society

Douglass moved about Baltimore with few restrictions, but that privilege came to an end when he decided to attend a religious meeting outside of Baltimore on a Saturday evening and postpone paying Auld his weekly fee. The following Monday, when Douglass returned, Auld threatened him. After that encounter, Douglass was determined to escape his bondage. He escaped in September 1838 by dressing as a sailor and traveling from Baltimore to Wilmington, Delaware, by train, then on to Philadelphia by steamboat, and from there to New York City by train. Black sailors in the 19th century traveled with documents granting them protection under the American flag. Douglass used such documents to secure his passage north with the help of Anna, who, according to family lore, had sold her feather bed to help finance his passage.

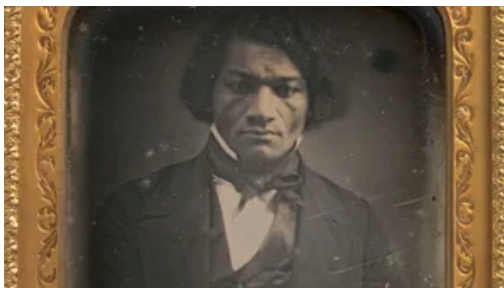
New York City was a dangerous place for enslaved people seeking freedom. Numerous slave catchers traveled to the city to track down those who had escaped. Many locals, Black and white, were willing, for money, to tell the authorities about people trying to escape enslavement. For his own protection, Douglass (still months from assuming that name) changed his name from Frederick Bailey to Frederick Johnson. A chance meeting with Black abolitionist David Ruggles led Douglass to safety. Anna arrived in New York several days later, and the two were married by the Reverend J.W.C. Pennington.



Frederick Douglass, c. 1844

At Ruggles's recommendation, the couple quickly left New York City for New Bedford, Massachusetts. Ruggles had determined that New Bedford's shipping industry would offer Douglass the best chance to find work as a ship caulker. In New Bedford the couple stayed with a local Black married couple, Nathan and Polly Johnson. Because many families in New Bedford had the

surname Johnson, Douglass chose to change his name again. Nathan Johnson suggested the name Douglass, which was inspired by the name of an exiled nobleman in Sir Walter Scott's poem *The Lady of the Lake*. The newly minted Frederick Douglass earned money for the first time as a free man. However, despite Douglass's previous work experience, racial prejudice in New Bedford prevented him from working as a ship caulker (white caulkers refused to work with Black caulkers). Consequently, Douglass spent his first years in Massachusetts working as a common labourer.

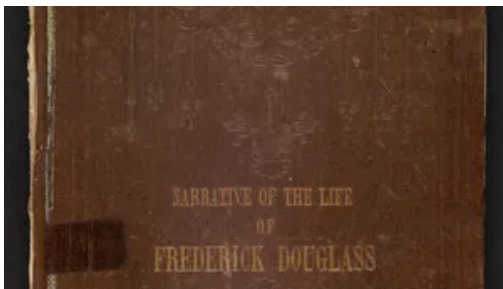


Frederick Douglass, c. 1847

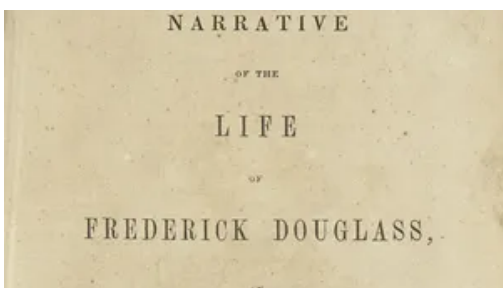
Douglass remained an avid reader throughout his adult life. When he escaped to New York, he carried with him a copy of *The Columbian Orator*. In New Bedford he discovered William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*. Inspired by it, Douglass attended a Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society convention in Nantucket in the summer of 1841. At the

meeting, abolitionist William C. Coffin, having heard Douglass speak in New Bedford, invited him to address the general body. Douglass's extemporaneous speech was lauded by the audience, and he was recruited as an agent for the group.

As an agent of both the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and the American Anti-Slavery Society, Douglass traveled the country promoting abolition and the organizations' agenda. He and other persons who had escaped conditions of enslavement frequently described their own experiences under those conditions. The American Anti-Slavery Society supported "moral suasion" abolition, the belief that slavery was a moral wrong that should be resisted through nonviolent means. Douglass strongly promoted this philosophy during the early years of his abolitionist career. In his speech at the 1843 National Convention of Colored Citizens in Buffalo, New York, Black abolitionist and minister Henry Highland Garnet proposed a resolution that called for enslaved people to rise up against their masters. The controversial resolution ignited a tense debate at the convention, with Douglass rising in firm opposition. His belief in moral suasion would repeatedly place him at odds with other Black abolitionists during this phase of his career. Work as an agent provided Douglass with the means to support his family. He and Anna had five children: Rosetta (born 1839), Lewis (born 1840), Frederick, Jr. (born 1842), Charles (born 1844), and Annie (born 1849).



cover of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*



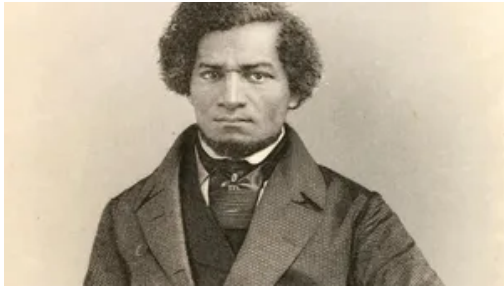
title page of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*



Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, European travel, and *The North Star*

In 1845 Douglass published his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself*. Prior to its publication, audiences at Douglass's lectures had questioned his authenticity as an ex-slave because of his eloquence, refusal to use "plantation speak," and unwillingness to provide details about his origins. The *Narrative* settled these disputes by naming people and locations in Douglass's life. The book also challenged the conventional employment of ghostwriters for slave narratives by boldly acknowledging that Douglass wrote it himself. Douglass would publish two additional autobiographies: *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855) and *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881). The *Narrative* quickly became popular, especially in Europe, but the book's success contributed to Hugh Auld's

engraving of Frederick Douglass in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*



engraving of Frederick Douglass in *My Bondage and My Freedom*



The Fugitive's Song

determination to return Douglass to the conditions of enslavement.

The threat of capture, as well as the book's excellent performance in Europe, prompted Douglass to travel abroad from August 1845 to 1847, and he lectured throughout the United Kingdom. His English supporters, led by Ellen and Anna Richardson, purchased Douglass from Hugh Auld, giving him his freedom. In the spring of 1847, Douglass returned to the United States a free man with the funding to start his own newspaper.

Douglass moved to Rochester, New York, to publish his newspaper, *The North Star*, despite objections from Garrison and others. Basing the newspaper in Rochester ensured that *The North Star* did not compete with the distribution of *The Liberator* and the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* in New England. *The North Star*'s first issue appeared on December 3, 1847. In 1851 the paper

merged with the *Liberty Party Paper* to form *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, which ran until 1860. Douglass would publish two additional newspapers during his life, *Douglass' Monthly* (1859–63) and *New National Era* (1870–74).

The move to Rochester surrounded Douglass with political abolitionists such as Gerrit Smith. During his first few years in Rochester, Douglass remained loyal to Garrison's philosophy, which promoted moral suasion, stated that the U.S. Constitution was an invalid document, and discouraged participation in American politics because it was a system corrupted by slavery. In 1851, however, Douglass announced his split from Garrison when he declared that the Constitution was a valid legal document that could be used on behalf of emancipation. Consequently, Douglass became more engaged in American politics and constitutional interpretation.

Involvement with John Brown, Abraham Lincoln, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony



Frederick Douglass

The country's tension around slavery rapidly increased in the 1850s. Douglass's Rochester home was part of the Underground Railroad and hosted numerous fellow abolitionists. In 1859 Douglass met with abolitionist John Brown in a quarry in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

Brown invited Douglass to participate in the planned raid on the federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia (now in West Virginia), which Brown hoped would inspire a massive uprising by enslaved people. Douglass declined the invitation. Shortly after the raid (October 16–19), Douglass received word that the authorities were looking to arrest him as an accomplice. He quickly fled to Canada before heading to Europe for a scheduled lecture tour. Douglass returned home in April 1860 after learning that his youngest daughter, Annie, had died.



Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Douglass strongly advocated for inclusion of Black soldiers in the Union army. He became a recruiter for the Massachusetts 54th, an all-Black infantry regiment in which his sons Lewis and Charles served. In 1863 Douglass visited the White House to meet with Pres. Abraham Lincoln to advocate for better pay and conditions for the soldiers. Lincoln then invited Douglass to the White House in 1864 to

discuss what could be done for Blacks in the case of a Union loss. Douglass would meet with Lincoln a third time, after the president's second inauguration and about a month before his assassination.

The Emancipation Proclamation and the Union's victory presented a new reality: millions of Black people were free. Douglass dedicated himself to securing the community's rights to this new freedom. He strongly supported the Fourteenth Amendment, which granted Blacks citizenship, but he realized that this new citizenship status needed to be protected by suffrage. Initially Douglass supported a constitutional amendment supporting suffrage for all men and women. Having attended the 1848 women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, he was a longtime supporter of women's rights, joining Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in this stance. Reconstruction politics, however, indicated that a universal suffrage amendment would fail. Douglass then supported Black male suffrage with the idea that Black

men could help women secure the right to vote later. This placed him at odds with Stanton and Anthony. Douglass hoped that the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment would encourage African Americans to stay in the South to consolidate their power as a voting bloc, but the region's high levels of violence against African Americans led him to support Black migration to safer areas of the country.

Move to Washington, D.C., the Freedman's Bank, government office-holding, and later years



lithograph of Frederick Douglass

After a fire destroyed his Rochester home, Douglass moved in 1872 to Washington, D.C., where he published his latest newspaper venture, *New National Era*. The newspaper folded in 1874 because of its poor fiscal health. That same year Douglass was appointed president of the Freedman's Savings & Trust, also known as the Freedman's Bank. The bank failed four months after he

became president because of the years of corruption that predated his association with the bank. The bank's failure harmed his reputation, but Douglass worked with the U.S. Congress to remedy the damage caused by the bank.



Frederick Douglass

After the Freedman's Bank debacle, Douglass held numerous government appointments. He became the first Black U.S. marshal in 1877 when he was appointed to that post for the District of Columbia by Pres. Rutherford B. Hayes. He served in that capacity until 1881, when Pres. James A. Garfield appointed him to the high-paying position of recorder of deeds for the District of

Columbia. In 1889 Pres. Benjamin Harrison selected Douglass as the U.S. minister resident and consul general to the Republic of Haiti. The major controversy during Douglass's tenure was the quest by the United States to acquire the port town of Môle Saint-Nicolas as a refueling station for the U.S. Navy. Douglass disagreed with the Harrison administration's approach, preferring to promote the autonomy of the Haitian government. He resigned the position in 1891 and returned to his home in Washington, D.C.

Douglass spent the last 17 years of his life at Cedar Hill, his home in the Anacostia neighbourhood of Washington, D.C., to which he had moved in 1878. On August 4, 1882,



Frederick Douglass and family



Cedar Hill



Frederick Douglass's bedroom at Cedar Hill



Frederick Douglass at his desk at Cedar Hill



Frederick Douglass

Anna Murray Douglass died in the home after suffering a stroke. In 1884 Douglass married Helen Pitts, his white secretary, who was about 20 years younger than her husband. The marriage was controversial for its time, and it resulted in Douglass's temporary estrangement from some friends and family.

During the latter years of his life, Douglass remained committed to social justice and the African American community. His prominence and work resulted in his being the most photographed American man in the 19th century ^[1]. His distinguished photographs were deliberate contradictions to the visual stereotypes of African Americans at the time, which often exaggerated their facial features, skin colour, and physical bodies and demeaned their intelligence. He served on Howard University's board of trustees from 1871 to 1895. Douglass cultivated relationships with younger activists, most notably Ida B. Wells, who featured his letter to her in her book *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*. He also contributed to her pamphlet ^[2] protesting the exclusion of exhibits dedicated to African American culture from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition*.

Douglass died in his Cedar Hill home on February 20, 1895. After his death, Helen Pitts Douglass established the Frederick Douglass Memorial and Historical Association to preserve his legacy. She bequeathed the home and its belongings to the organization in her will. Cedar Hill became part of the National Park system in 1962, and it was designated the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site ^[3] in 1988. The U.S. Library of

Congress digitized its holdings of Douglass's papers [↗](#), which include letters, speeches, and personal documents.

At the end of his life, Douglass, an American icon who fought for social justice and equity, became known as the "Lion of Anacostia." Through his writings, speeches, and photographs, he boldly challenged the racial stereotypes of African Americans. Douglass's contributions to the Black American community and American history were recognized in the early 20th century during Negro History Week, the predecessor of Black History Month, which many communities anchored to the day on which his birthday was celebrated, February 14. Today Douglass is renowned not just for his rise from slavery to the highest levels of American society but also for his dedication to challenging the country to recognize the rights of all people and be consistent with its ideals.

Noelle Trent

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Our American Story

Frederick Douglass

Stories



Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Elizabeth Cassell, 2011.43.2

On July 5, 1852 approximately 3.5 million African Americans were enslaved — roughly 14% of the total population of the United States. That was the state of the nation when Frederick Douglass was asked to deliver a keynote address at an Independence Day celebration.

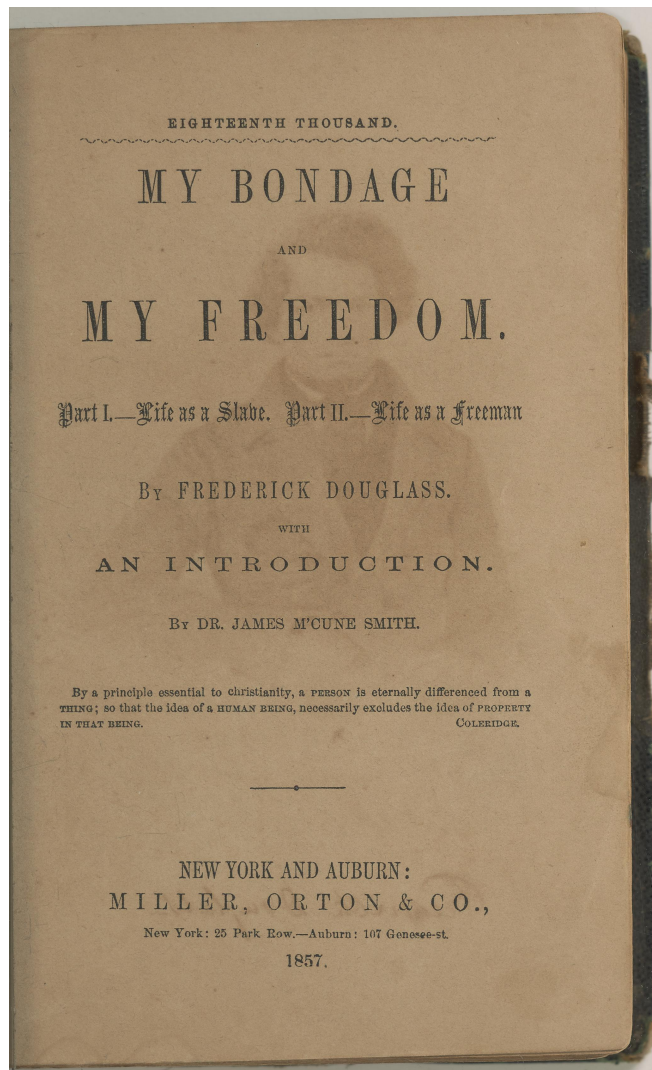
He accepted and, on a day white Americans celebrated their independence and freedom from the oppression of the British crown, Douglass delivered his now-famous speech *What to the Slave is the Fourth of July*. In it, Douglass offered one of the most thought provoking and powerful testaments to the hypocrisy, bigotry and inhumanity of slavery ever given.

Douglass told the crowd that the arguments against slavery were well understood. What was needed was “fire” not light on the subject; “thunder” not a gentle “shower” of reason. Douglass would tell the audience:

The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be denounced.

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery, most likely in February 1818 — birth dates of slaves were rarely recorded. He was put to work full-time at age six, and his life as a young man was a litany of savage beatings and whippings. At age twenty, he successfully escaped to the North. In Massachusetts he became known as a voice against slavery, but that also brought to light his status as an escaped slave. Fearing capture and re-enslavement, Douglass went to England and continued speaking out against slavery.

He eventually raised enough money to buy his freedom and returned to America. He settled in Rochester, New York in 1847 and began to champion equality and freedom for slaves in earnest. By then, his renown extended far beyond America’s boundaries. He had become a man of international stature.



My Bondage and My Freedom by Frederick Douglass, published in 1857.

Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Elizabeth Cassell. Object number 2011.43.2.

One suspects that Rochester city leaders had Douglass' fame and reputation as a brilliant orator in mind when they approached him to speak at their Independence Day festivities. But with his opening words, Douglass' intent became clear — decry the hypocrisy of the day as it played out in the lives of the slaves:

Fellow citizens, pardon me, and allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here today? What have I or those I represent to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? And am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble offering to the national altar, and to confess the benefits, and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us?

You can easily imagine the wave of unease that settled over his audience. The speech was long, as was the fashion of the day. A link to the entire address can be found at the end of this Our American Story. When you read it you will discover that, to his credit, Douglass was uncompromising and truthful:

This Fourth of July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn ... What to the American slave is your Fourth of July? ... a day that reveals to him more than all other days of the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him your celebration is a sham ... your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mock; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings ... hypocrisy — a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages.

Reaction to the speech was strong, but mixed. Some were angered, others appreciative. What I've always thought most impressive about Douglass' speech that day was the discussion it provoked immediately and in the weeks and months that followed.

Certainly much has changed since Douglass' speech. Yet the opportunity to discuss and debate the important impact of America's racial history is very much a part of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Douglass' words remind us that many have struggled to ensure that the promise of liberty be

applied equally to all Americans — regardless of race, gender or ethnicity. And that the struggle for equality is never over.

So, as we gather together at picnics, parades, and fireworks to celebrate the 4th of July, let us remember those, like Frederick Douglass, who fought and sacrificed to help America live up to its ideals of equality, fair play and justice.

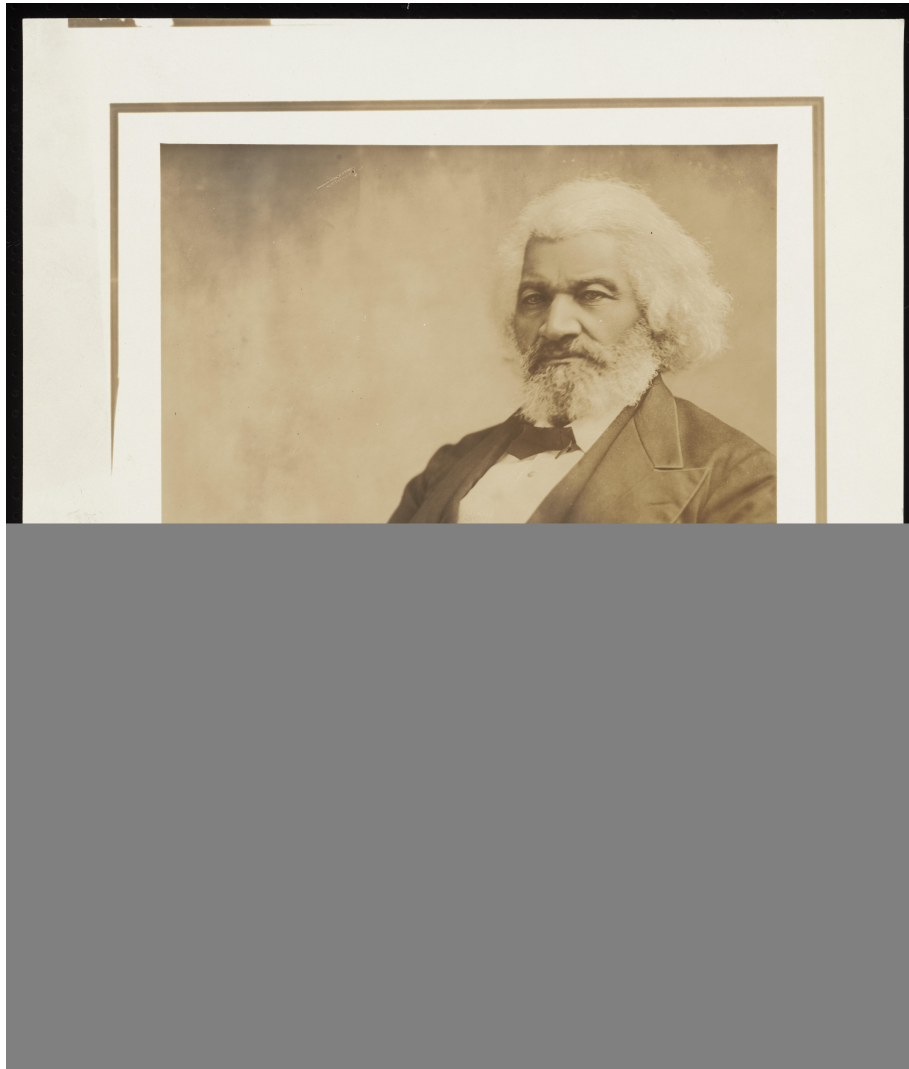


Photo of Frederick Douglass ca. 1895.

Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, © Tuskegee Archives

Frederick Douglass' life and words have left us a powerful legacy. His story, and the African American story, is part of us all.

To you and your family, have a joyous and safe Fourth of July and thank you for your interest in the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

P.S. [Read the full text Frederick Douglass' speech of July 5, 1852](#)  .

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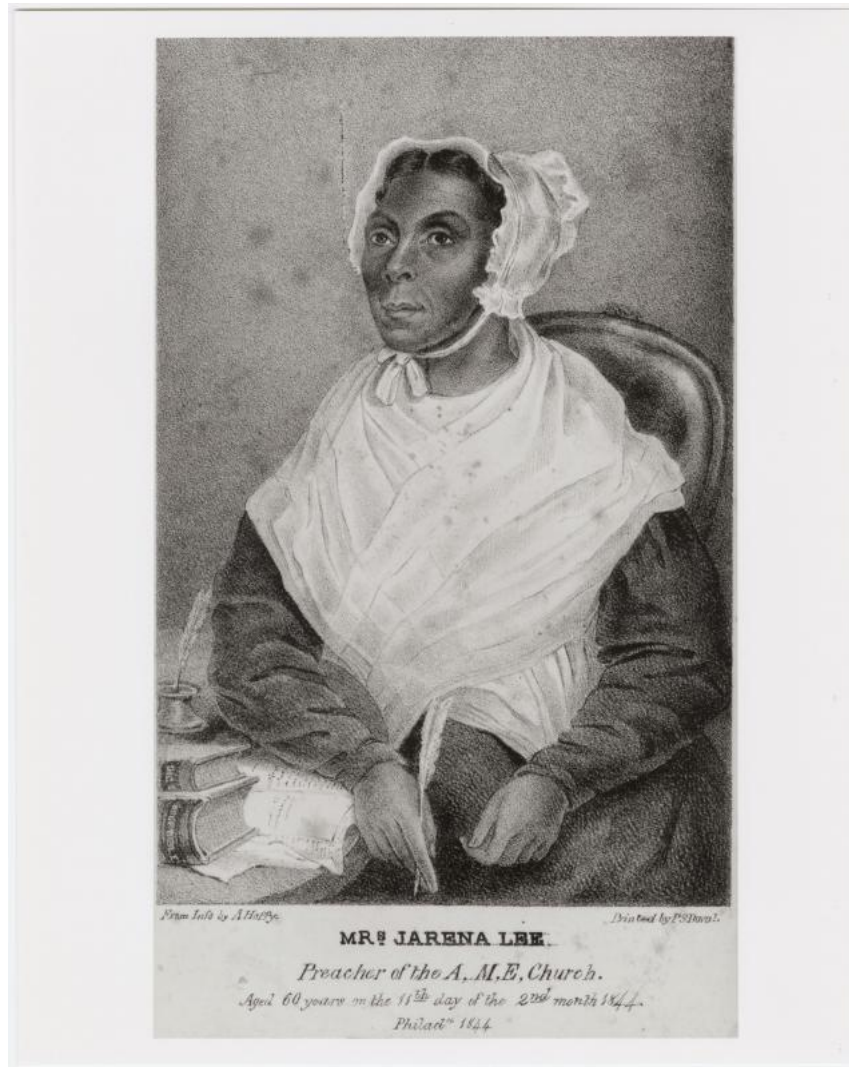
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Frederick Douglass Project: 5th of July Speech

([View](#) as Adobe Acrobat .pdf)

**ORATION, DELIVERED IN CORINTHIAN HALL, ROCHESTER, BY
FREDERICK DOUGLASS, JULY 5TH, 1852.**

Published by Request

ROCHESTER: PRINTED BY LEE, MANN & CO., AMERICAN BUILDING.
1852.

FREDERICK DOUGLASSESQ.:

Dear Sir-The Ladies of the "Rochester Anti Slavery Sewing Society," desire me to return you their most sincere thanks for the eloquent and able address delivered in Corinthian Hall, on the 5th of July. Anticipating its speedy publication in Pamphlet form, they request that you will furnish them with one hundred copies for distribution:

In behalf of the Society,

SUSAN F. PORTER, President.

ORATION.

Mr. President, Friends and Fellow Citizens :

HE who could address this audience without a quailing sensation, has stronger nerves than I have. I do not remember ever to have appeared as a

speaker before any assembly more shrinkingly, nor with greater distrust of my ability, than I do this day. A feeling has crept over me, quite unfavorable to the exercise of my limited powers of speech. The task before me is one which requires much previous thought and study for its proper performance. I know that apologies of this sort are generally considered flat and unmeaning. I trust, however, that mine will not be so considered. Should I seem at ease, my appearance would much misrepresent me. The little experience I have had in addressing public meetings, in country school houses, avails me nothing on the present occasion.

The papers and placards say, that I am to deliver a 4th July oration. This certainly, sounds large, and out of the common way, for me. It is true that I have often had the privilege to speak in this beautiful Hall, and to address many who now honor me with their presence. But neither their familiar faces, nor the perfect gage I think I have of Corinthian Hall, seems to free me from embarrassment.

The fact is, ladies and gentlemen, the distance between this platform and the slave plantation, from which I escaped, is considerable - and the difficulties to be overcome in getting from the latter to the former, are by no means slight. That I am here today, is, to me, a matter of astonishment as well as of gratitude. You will not, therefore, be surprised, if in what I *have* to say, I evince no elaborate preparation, nor grace my speech with any high sounding exordium. With little experience and with less learning, I have been able to throw my thoughts hastily and imperfectly together; and trusting to your patient and generous indulgence, I will proceed to lay them before you.

This, for the purpose of this celebration, is the 4th of July. It is the birthday of your National Independence, and of your political freedom. This, to you, is what the Passover was to the emancipated people of God. It carries your minds back to the day, and to the act of your great deliverance; and to the

signs, and to the wonders, associated with that act that day. This celebration also marks the beginning of another year of your national life; and reminds you that the Republic of America is now 76 years old. I am glad, fellow-citizens, that your nation is so young. Seventy-six years, though a good old age for a man, is but a mere speck in the life of a nation. 'Three score years and ten is the allotted time for individual men; but nations number their years by thousands. According to this fact, you are, even now only in the beginning of you national career, still lingering in the period of childhood. I repeat, I am glad this is so. There is hope in the thought, and hope is much needed, under the dark clouds which lower above the horizon. The eye of the reformer is met with angry flashes, portending disastrous times; but his heart may well beat lighter at the thought that America is young, and that she is still in the impressible stage of her existence. May he not hope that high lessons of wisdom, of justice and of truth, will yet give direction to her destiny? Were the nation older, the patriot's heart might be sadder, and the reformer's brow heavier. Its future might be shrouded in gloom, and the hope of its prophets go out in sorrow. There is consolation in the thought, that America is young.-Great streams are not easily turned from channels, worn deep in the course of ages. They may sometimes rise in quiet and stately majesty, and inundate the land, refreshing and fertilizing the earth with their mysterious properties. They may also rise in wrath and fury, and bear away, on their angry waves, the accumulated wealth of years of toil and hardship. They, however, gradually flow back to the same old channel, and flow on as serenely as ever. But, while the river may not be turned aside, it may dry up, and leave nothing behind but the withered branch, and the unsightly rock, to howl in the abyss-sweeping wind, the sad tale of departed glory. As with rivers so with nations.

Fellow-citizens, I shall not presume to dwell at length on the associations that cluster about this day. The simple story of it is, that, 76 years ago, the

people of this country were British subjects. The style and title of your "sovereign people" (in which you now glory) was not then born. You were under the British Crown. Your fathers esteemed the English Government as the home government and England as the fatherland. This home government, you know, although a considerable distance from your home, did, in the exercise of its parental prerogatives, impose upon its colonial children, such restraints, burdens and limitations, as, in its mature judgment, it deemed wise, right and proper.

But, your fathers, who had not adopted the fashionable idea of this day, of the infallibility of government, and the absolute character of its acts, presumed to differ from the home government in respect to the wisdom and the justice of some of those burdens and restraints. They went so far in their excitement as to pronounce the measures of government unjust, unreasonable, and oppressive, and altogether such as ought not to be quietly submitted to. I scarcely need say, fellow-citizens, that my opinion of those measures fully accords with that of your fathers. Such a declaration of agreement on my part, would not be worth much to anybody. It would, certainly, prove nothing, as to what part I might have taken, had I lived during the great controversy of 1776. To say *now* that America was right, and England wrong, is exceedingly easy. Everybody can say it; the dastard, not less than the noble brave, can flippantly discant on the tyranny of England towards the American Colonies. It is fashionable to do so; but there was a time when, to pronounce against England, and in favor of the cause of the colonies, tried men's souls. They who did so were accounted in their day, plotters of mischief, agitators and rebels, dangerous men. To side with the right, against the wrong, with the weak against the strong, and with the oppressed against the oppressor! *here* lies the merit, and the one which, of all others, seems un fashionable in our day. The cause of liberty may be stabbed by the men who glory in the deeds of your fathers. But, to proceed.

Feeling themselves harshly and unjustly treated, by the home government, your fathers, like men of honesty, and men of spirit, earnestly sought redress. They petitioned and remonstrated; they did so in a decorous, respectful, and loyal manner. Their conduct was wholly unexceptionable. This, however, did not answer the purpose. They saw themselves treated with sovereign indifference, coldness and scorn. Yet they persevered. They were not the men to look back.

As the sheet anchor takes a firmer hold, when the ship is tossed by the storm, so did the cause of your fathers grow stronger, as it breasted the chilling blasts of kingly displeasure. The greatest and best of British statesmen admitted its justice, and the loftiest eloquence of the British Senate came to its support. But, with that blindness which seems to be the unvarying characteristic of tyrants, since Pharoah and his hosts were drowned in the Red sea, the British Government persisted in the exactions complained of.

The madness of this course, we believe, is admitted now, even by England; but , we fear the lesson is wholly lost on our present rulers.

Oppression makes a wise man mad. Your fathers were wise men, and if they did not go mad, they became restive under this treatment. They felt themselves the victims of grievous wrongs, wholly incurable in their colonial capacity. With brave men there is always a remedy for oppression. Just here, the idea of a total separation of the colonies from the crown was born! It was a startling idea, much more so, than we, at this distance of time, regard it. The timid and the prudent (as has been intimated) of that day, were, of course, shocked and alarmed by it.

Such people lived then, had lived before, and will, probably, ever have a place on this planet; and their course, in respect to any great change, (no

matter how great the good to be attained, or the wrong to be redressed by it,) may be calculated with as much precision as can be the course of the stars. They hate all changes, but silver, gold and copper change! Of this sort of change they are always strongly in favor.

These people were called tories in the days of your fathers; and the appellation, probably, conveyed the same idea that is meant by a more modern, though a somewhat less euphonious term, which we often find in our papers, applied to some of our old politicians.

Their opposition to the then dangerous thought was earnest and powerful; but, amid all their terror and affrighted vociferations against it, the alarming and revolutionary idea moved on, and the country with it.

On the 2d of July, 1776, the old Continental Congress, to the dismay of the lovers of ease, and the worshippers of property, clothed that dreadful idea with all the authority of national sanction. They did so in the form of a resolution; and as we seldom hit upon resolutions, drawn up in our day, whose transparency is at all equal to this, it may refresh your minds and help my story if I read it.

Resolved, That these united colonies *are*, and of right, ought to be free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown; and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, dissolved.

Citizens, your fathers Made good that resolution. They succeeded; and today you reap the fruits of their success. The freedom gained is yours; and you, therefore, may properly celebrate this anniversary. The 4th of July is the first great fact in your nation's history-the very ring-bolt in the chain of your yet undeveloped destiny.

Pride and patriotism, not less than gratitude, prompt you to celebrate and to hold it in perpetual remembrance. I have said that the Declaration of Independence is the RINGBOLT to the chain of your nation's destiny; so, indeed, I regard it. The principles contained in that instrument are saving principles. Stand by those principles, be true to them on all occasions, in all places, against all foes, and at whatever cost.

From the round top of your ship of state, dark and threatening clouds may be seen. Heavy billows, like mountains in the distance, disclose to the leeward huge forms of flinty rocks! That *bolt* drawn, that *chain*, broken, and all is lost. *Cling to this day-cling to it*, and to its principles, with the grasp of a storm-tossed mariner to a spar at midnight.

The coining into being of a nation, in any circumstances, is an interesting event. But, besides general considerations, there were peculiar circumstances which make the advent of this republic an event of special attractiveness.

The whole scene, as I look back to it, was simple, dignified and sublime.

The population of the country, at the time, stood at the insignificant number of three millions. The country was poor in the munitions of war. The population was weak and scattered, and the country a wilderness unsubdued. There were then no means of concert and combination, such as exist now. Neither steam nor lightning had then been reduced to order and discipline. From the Potomac to the Delaware was a journey of many days. Under these, and innumerable other disadvantages, your fathers declared for liberty and independence and triumphed.

Fellow Citizens, I am not wanting in respect for the fathers of this republic. The signers of the Declaration of Independence were brave men. They were great men too—great enough to give fame to a great age. It does not often

happen to a nation to raise, at one time, such a number of truly great men. The point from which I am compelled to view them is not, certainly the most favorable; and yet I cannot contemplate their great deeds with less than admiration. They were statesmen, patriots and heroes, and for the good they did, and the principles they contended for, I will unite with you to honor their memory.

They loved their country better than their own private interests; and, though this is not the highest form of human excellence, all will concede that it is a rare virtue, and that when it is exhibited, it ought to command respect. He who will, intelligently, lay down his life for his country, is a man whom it is not in human nature to despise. Your fathers staked their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, on the cause of their country. In their admiration of liberty, they lost sight of all other interests.

They were peace men; but they preferred revolution to peaceful submission to bondage. They were quiet men; but they did not shrink from agitating against oppression. They showed forbearance; but that they knew its limits. They believed in order; but not in the order of tyranny. With them, nothing was "*settled*" that was not right. With them, justice, liberty and humanity were "*final*;" not slavery and oppression. You may well cherish the memory of such men. They were great in their day and generation. Their solid manhood stands out the more as we contrast it with these degenerate times.

How circumspect, exact and proportionate were all their movements! How unlike the politicians of an hour! Their statesmanship looked beyond the passing moment, and stretched away in strength into the distant future. They seized upon eternal principles, and set a glorious example in their defence. Mark them!

Fully appreciating the hardships to be encountered, firmly believing in the

right of their cause, honorably inviting the scrutiny of an on-looking world, reverently appealing to heaven to attest their sincerity, soundly comprehending the solemn responsibility they were about to assume, wisely measuring the terrible odds against them, your fathers, the fathers of this republic, did, most deliberately, under the inspiration of a glorious patriotism, and with a sublime faith in the great principles of justice and freedom, lay deep, the corner-stone of the national super-structure, which has risen and still rises in grandeur around you.

Of this fundamental work, this day is the anniversary. Our eyes are met with demonstrations of joyous enthusiasm. Banners and pennants wave exultingly on the breeze. The din of business, too, is hushed. Even mammon seems to have quitted his grasp on this day. The ear-piercing fife and the stirring drum unite their accents with the ascending peal of a thousand church bells. Prayers are made, hymns are sung, and sermons are preached in honor of this day; while the quick martial tramp of a great and multitudinous nation, echoed back by all the hills, valleys and mountains of a vast continent, bespeak the occasion one of thrilling and universal interest--a nation's jubilee.

Friends and citizens, I need not enter further into the causes which led to this anniversary. Many of you understand them better than I do. You could instruct me in regard to them. That is a branch of knowledge in which you feel, perhaps, a much deeper interest than your speaker. The causes which led to the separation of the colonies from the British crown have never lacked for a tongue. They have all been taught in your common schools, narrated at your firesides, unfolded from your pulpits, and thundered from your legislative halls, and are as familiar to you as household words. They form the staple of your national poetry and eloquence.

I remember, also, that, as a people, Americans are remarkably familiar with all

facts which make in in their own favor. This is esteemed by some as a national trait—perhaps a national weakness. It is a fact, that whatever makes for the wealth or for the reputation of Americans, and can be had *cheap!* will be found by Americans. I shall not be charged with slandering Americans, if I say I think the Americans can side of any question may be safely left in American hands.

I leave, therefore, the great deeds of your fathers to other gentlemen whose claim to have been regularly descended will be less likely to be disputed than mine!

THE PRESENT.

My business, if I have any here today, is with the present. The accepted time with God and his cause is the ever-living now.

"Trust no future, however pleasant, Let the dead past bury its dead; Act, act in the living present, Heart within, and God overhead."

We have to do with the past only as we can make it useful to the present and to the future. To all inspiring motives, to noble deeds which can be gained from the past, we are welcome. But now is the time, the important time. Your fathers have lived, died, and have done their work, and have done much of it well. You live and must die, and you must do your work. You have no right to enjoy a child's share in the labor of your fathers, unless your children are to be blest by your labors. You have no right to wear out and waste the hard-earned fame of your fathers to cover your indolence. Sydney Smith tells us that men seldom eulogize the wisdom and virtues of their fathers, but to excuse some folly or wickedness of their own. This truth is not a doubtful one. There are illustrations of it near and remote, ancient and modern. It was fashionable, hundreds of years ago, for the children of Jacob to boast, we have "Abraham to our father," when they had long lost Abraham's faith and

spirit. That people contented themselves under the shadow of Abraham's great name, while they repudiated the deeds which made his name great. Need I remind you that a similar thing is being done all over this country today? Need I tell you that the Jews are not the only people who built the tombs of the prophets, and garnished the sepulchres of the righteous? Washington could not die till he had broken the chains of his slaves. Yet his monument is built up by the price of human blood, and the traders in the bodies and souls of men, shout-" We have Washington to "*ourfather*."-A las! that it should be so; yet so it is.

"The evil that men do, lives after them, The good is oft interred with their bones."

Fellow-citizens, pardon me, allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here today? What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? and am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble offering to the national altar, and to confess the benefits and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us?

Would to God, both for your sakes and ours, that an affirmative answer could be truthfully returned to these questions! Then would my task be light, and my burden easy and delightful. For *who* is there so cold, that a nation's sympathy could not warm him? Who so obdurate and dead to the claims of gratitude, that would not thankfully acknowledge such priceless benefits? Who so stolid and selfish, that would not give his voice to swell the hallelujahs of a nation's jubilee, when the chains of servitude had been torn from his limbs? I am not that man. In a case like that, the dumb might eloquently speak, and the "lame man leap as an hart."

But, such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common.- The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought life and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth July is *yours*, not *mine*. *You* may rejoice, I must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony. Do you mean, citizens, to mock me, by asking me to speak today? If so, there is a parallel to your conduct. And let me warn you that it is dangerous to copy the example of a nation whose crimes, towering up to heaven, were thrown down by the breath of the Almighty, burying that nation in irrecoverable ruin! I can today take up the plaintive lament of a peeled and woe-smitten people!

" By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down. Yea! we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there, they that carried us away captive, required of us a song; and they who wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."

Fellow citizens; above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions! whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are, today, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them. If I do forget, if I do not faithfully remember those bleeding children of sorrow this day, "may my right hand forget her cunning, and may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!" To forget them, to pass lightly over their wrongs, and

to chime in with the popular theme, would be treason most scandalous and shocking, and would make me a reproach before God and the world. My subject, then, fellow-citizens, is AMERICAN SLAVERY. I shall see, this day, and its popular characteristics, from the slave's point of view. Standing, there, identified with the American bondman, making his wrongs mine, I do not hesitate to declare, with all my soul, that the character and conduct of this nation never looked blacker to me than on this 4th of July! Whether we turn to the declarations of the past, or to the professions of the present, the conduct of the nation seems equally hideous and revolting. America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future. Standing with God and the crushed and bleeding slave on this occasion, I will, in the name of humanity which is outraged, in the name of liberty which is fettered, in the name of the constitution and the Bible, which are disregarded and trampled upon, dare to call in question and to denounce, with all the emphasis I can command, everything that serves to perpetuate slavery--the great sin and shame of America! "I will not equivocate; I will not excuse;" I will use the severest language I can command; and yet not one word shall escape me that any man, whose judgment is not blinded by prejudice, or who is not at heart a slaveholder, shall not confess to be right and just.

But I fancy I hear some one of my audience say, it is just in this circumstance that you and your brother abolitionists fail to make a favorable impression on the public mind. Would you argue more, and denounce less, would you persuade more, and rebuke less, your cause would be much more likely to succeed. But, I submit, where all is plain there is nothing to be argued. What point in the anti-slavery creed would you have me argue? On what branch of the subject do the people of this country need light? Must I undertake to prove that the slave is a man? That point is conceded already. Nobody doubts it. The slave-holders themselves acknowledge it in the enactment of

laws for their government. They acknowledge it when they punish disobedience on the part of the slave. There are seventy-two crimes in the State of Virginia, which, if committed by a black man, (no matter how ignorant he be,) subject him to the punishment of death; while only two of the same crimes will subject a white man to the like punishment.-What is this but the acknowledgement that the slave is a moral, intellectual and responsible being. *The* manhood of the slave is conceded. It is admitted in the fact that Southern statute books are covered with enactments forbidding, under severe fines and penalties, the teaching of the slave to read or to write.-When you can point to any such laws, in reference to the beasts of the field, then I may consent to argue the manhood of the slave. When the dogs in your streets, when the fowls of the air, when the cattle on your hills, when the fish of the sea, and the reptiles that crawl, shall be unable to distinguish the slave from a brute, *then will I* argue with you that the slave is a man

For the present, it is enough to affirm the equal manhood of the negro race. Is it not astonishing that, while we are ploughing, planting and reaping, using all kinds of mechanical tools, erecting houses, constructing bridges, building ships, working in metals of brass, iron, copper, silver and gold; that, while we are reading, writing and cyphering, acting as clerks, merchants and secretaries, having among us lawyers, doctors, ministers, poets, authors, editors, orators and teachers; that, while we are engaged in all manner of enterprises common to other men, digging gold in California, capturing the whale in the Pacific, feeding sheep and cattle on the hillside, living, moving, acting, thinking, planning, living in families as husbands, wives and children, and, above all, confessing and worshipping the Christian's God, and looking hopefully for life and immortality beyond the grave, we are called upon to prove that we are men!

Would you have me argue that man is entitled to liberty? that he is the

rightful owner of his own body? You have already declared it. Must I argue the wrongfulness of slavery? Is that a question for Republicans? Is it to be settled by the rules of logic and argumentation, as a matter beset with great difficulty, involving a doubtful application of the principle of justice, hard to be understood? How should I look today, in the presence of Americans, dividing, and subdividing a discourse, to show that men have a natural right to freedom? speaking of it relatively, and positively, negatively, and affirmatively. To do so, would be to make myself ridiculous, and to offer an insult to your understanding.-There is not a man beneath the canopy of heaven, that does not know that slavery is wrong *for him*.

What, am I to argue that it is wrong to make men brutes, to rob them of their liberty, to work them without wages, to keep them ignorant of their relations to their fellow men, to beat them with sticks, to flay their flesh with the lash, to load their limbs with irons, to hunt them with dogs, to sell them at auction, to sunder their families, to knock out their teeth, to burn their flesh, to starve them into obedience and submission to their masters? Must I argue that a system thus marked with blood, and stained with pollution, is *wrong*? No I will not. I have better employment for my time and strength, than such arguments would imply.

What, then, remains to be argued? Is it that slavery is not divine; that God did not establish it; that our doctors of divinity are mistaken? There is blasphemy in the thought. That which is inhuman, cannot be divine! *Who* can reason on such a proposition? They that can, may; I cannot. The time for such argument is past.

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. O! had I the ability, and could I reach the nation's ear, I would, to day, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle

shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced.

What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade, and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States, at this very hour.

Go where you may, search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotisms of the old world, travel through South America, search out every abuse, and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the every day practices of this nation, and you will say with me, that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival.

THE INTERNAL SLAVE TRADE.

Take the American slave-trade, which we are told by the papers, is especially prosperous just now. Ex-Senator Benton tells us that the price of men was never higher than now. He mentions the fact to show that slavery is in no danger. This trade is one of the peculiarities of American institutions. It is

carried on in all the large towns and cities in one half of this confederacy; and millions are pocketed every year, by dealers in this horrid traffic. In several states, this trade is a chief source of wealth. It is called (in contradistinction to the foreign slave-trade) "*the internal slave-trade.*" It is, probably, called so, too, in order to divert from it the horror with which the foreign slave-trade is contemplated. That trade has long since been denounced by this government, as piracy. It has been denounced with burning words, from the high places of the nation, as an execrable traffic. To arrest it, to put an end to it, this nation keeps a squadron, at immense cost, on the coast of Africa. Every-where, in this country, it is safe to speak of this foreign slave-trade, as a most inhuman traffic, opposed alike to the laws of God and of man. The duty to extirpate and destroy it, is admitted even by our DOCTORS OF DIVINITY. In order to put an end to it, some of these last have consented that their colored brethren (nominally free) should leave this country, and establish themselves on the western coast of Africa! It is, however, a notable fact, that, while so much execration is poured out by Americans, upon those engaged in the foreign slave-trade, the men engaged in the slave-trade between the states pass without condemnation, and their business is deemed honorable.

Behold the practical operation of this internal slave-trade, the American slave-trade, sustained by American politics and American religion. Here you will see men and women, reared like swine, for the market. You know what is a swine-drover? I will show you a man-drover. They inhabit all our Southern States. They perambulate the country, and crowd the highways of the nation, with droves of human stock. You will see one of these human flesh jobbers, armed with pistol, whip and bowie-knife, driving a company of a hundred men, women, and children, from the Potomac to the slave market at New Orleans. These wretched people are to be sold singly, or in lots, to suit purchasers. They are food for the cotton-field, and the deadly sugar-mill.

Mark the sad procession, as it moves wearily along, and the inhuman wretch who drives them. Hear his savage yells and his blood-chilling oaths, as he hurries on his affrighted captives! There, see the old man, with locks thinned and gray. Cast one glance, if you please, upon that young mother, whose shoulders are bare to the scorching sun, her briny tears falling on the brow of the babe in her arms. See, too, that girl of thirteen, weeping, yes! weeping, as she thinks of the mother from whom she has been torn! The drove moves tardily. Heat and sorrow have nearly consumed their strength; suddenly you hear a quick snap, like the discharge of a rifle; the fetters clank, and the chain rattles simultaneously; your ears are saluted with a scream, that seems to have torn its way to the centre of your soul! The crack you heard, was the sound of the slave-whip; the scream you heard, was from the woman you saw with the babe. Her speed had faltered under the weight of her child and her chains! that gash on her shoulder tells her to move on. Follow this drove to New Orleans. Attend the auction; see men examined like horses; see the forms of women rudely and brutally exposed to the shocking gaze of American slave-buyers. See this drove sold and separated for ever; and never forget the deep, sad sobs that arose from that scattered multitude. Tell me citizens, WHERE, under the sun, you can witness a spectacle more fiendish and shocking. Yet this is but a glance at the American slave-trade, as it exists, at this moment, in the ruling part of the United States.

I was born amid such sights and scenes. To me the American slave-trade is a terrible reality. When a child, my soul was often pierced with a sense of its horrors. I lived on Philpot Street, Fell's Point, Baltimore, and have watched from the wharves, the slave ships in the Basin, anchored from the shore, with their cargoes of human flesh, waiting for favorable winds to waft them down the Chesapeake. There was, at that time, a grand slave mart kept at the head of Pratt Street, by Austin Woldfolk. His agents were sent into every town and county in Maryland, announcing their arrival, through the papers, and on

flaming "hand-bills," headed CASH FOR NEGROES. These men were generally well dressed men, and very captivating in their manners. Ever ready to drink, to treat, and to gamble. The fate of many a slave has depended upon the turn of a single card; and many a child has been snatched from the arms of its mother, by bargains arranged in a state of brutal drunkenness.

The flesh-mongers gather up their victims by dozens, and drive them, chained, to the general depot at Baltimore. When a sufficient number have been collected here, a ship is chartered, for the purpose of conveying the forlorn crew to Mobile, or to New Orleans. From the slave prison to the ship, they are usually driven in the darkness of night; for since the anti-slavery agitation, a certain caution is observed.

In the deep still darkness of midnight, I have been often aroused by the dead heavy footsteps, and the piteous cries of the chained gangs that passed our door. The anguish of my boyish heart was intense; and I was often consoled, when speaking to my mistress in the morning, to hear her say that the custom was very wicked; that she hated to hear the rattle of the chains, and the heart-rending cries. I was glad to find one who sympathised with me in my horror.

Fellow-citizens, this murderous traffic is, to-day, in active operation in this boasted republic. In the solitude of my spirit, I see clouds of dust raised on the highways of the South; I see the bleeding footsteps; I hear the doleful wail of fettered humanity, on the way to the slave-markets, where the victims are to be sold like *horses, sheep, and swine*, knocked off to the highest bidder. There I see the tenderest ties ruthlessly broken, to gratify the lust, caprice and rapacity of the buyers and sellers of men. My soul sickens at the sight.

"Is this the land your Fathers loved, The freedom which they toiled to win? Is this the earth whereon they moved? Are these the graves they slumber in?"

But a still more inhuman, disgraceful, and scandalous state of things remains to be presented.

By an act of the American Congress, not yet two years old, slavery has been nationalized in its most horrible and revolting form. By that act, Mason & Dixon's line has been obliterated; New York has become as Virginia; and the power to hold, hunt, and sell men, women and children, as slaves, remains no longer a mere state institution, but is now an institution of the whole United States. The power is co-extensive with the star-spangled banner, and American Christianity. Where these go, may also go the merciless slave-hunter. Where these are, man is not sacred. He is a bird for the sportsman's gun./ By that most foul and fiendish of all human decrees, the liberty and person of every man are put in peril. Your broad republican domain is hunting ground for *men*. Not for thieves and robbers, enemies of society, merely, but for men guilty of no crime. Your law-makers have commanded all good citizens to engage in this hellish sport. Your President, your Secretary of State, your *lords, nobles*, and ecclesiastics, enforce, as a duty you owe to your free and glorious country, and to your God, that you do this accursed thing. Not fewer than forty Americans, have, within the past two years, been hunted down, and, without a moment's warning, hurried away in chains, and consigned to slavery, and excruciating torture. Some of these have had wives and children, dependent on them for bread; but of this, no account was made. The right of the hunter to his prey, stands superior to the right of marriage, and to *all* rights in this republic, the rights of God included! For black men there are neither law, justice, humanity, nor religion.

The Fugitive Slave *Law* makes MERCY TO THEM, A CRIME; and bribes the judge who tries them. An American JUDGE GETS TEN DOLLARS FOR EVERY

VICTIM HE CONSIGNS to slavery, and five, when he fails to do so. The oath of any two villains is sufficient, under this hell-black enactment, to send the most pious and exemplary black man into the remorseless jaws of slavery! His own testimony is nothing. He can bring no witnesses for himself. The minister of American justice is bound, by the law to hear but *one* side; and *that* side, is the side of the oppressor. Let this damning fact be perpetually told. Let it be thundered around the world, that, in tyrant-killing, king-hating, people-loving, democratic, Christian America, the seats of justice are filled with judges, who hold their offices under an open and palpable *bribes*, and are bound, in deciding in the case of a man's liberty, *to hear only his accusers!*

In glaring violation of justice, in shameless disregard of the forms of administering law, in cunning arrangement to entrap the defenceless, and in diabolical intent, this Fugitive Slave Law stands alone in the annals of tyrannical legislation. I doubt if there be another nation on the globe, having the brass and the baseness to put such a law on the statute-book. If any man in this assembly thinks differently from me in this matter, and feels able to disprove my statements, I will gladly confront him at any suitable time and place he may select.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

I take this law to be one of the grossest infringements of Christian Liberty, and, if the churches and ministers of our country were not stupidly blind, or most wickedly indifferent, they, too, would so regard it.

At the very moment that they are thanking God for the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, and for the right to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, they are utterly silent in respect to a law which robs religion of its chief significance, and makes it utterly worthless to a world

lying in wickedness. Did this law concern the "*mint, anise and cummin*,"- abridge the right to sing psalms, to partake of the sacrament, or to engage in any of the ceremonies of religion, it would be smitten by the thunder of a thousand pulpits. A general shout would go up from the church, demanding *repeal, repeal, instantrepeal!*-And it would go hard with that politician who presumed to solicit the votes of the people without inscribing this motto on his banner. Further, if this demand were not complied with, another Scotland would be added to the history of religious liberty, and the stern old covenanters would be thrown into the shade. A John Knox would be seen at every church door, and heard from every pulpit, and Fillmore would have no more quarter than was shown by Knox, to the beautiful, but treacherous Queen Mary of Scotland.-The fact that the church of our country, (with fractional exceptions,) does not esteem "the Fugitive Slave Law" as a declaration of war against religious liberty, implies that that church regards religion simply as a form of worship, an empty ceremony, and *not* a vital principle, requiring active benevolence, justice, love and good will towards man. It esteems sacrifice above mercy; psalm-singing above right doing; solemn meetings above practical righteousness. A worship that can be conducted by persons who refuse to give shelter to the houseless, to give bread to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and who enjoin obedience to a law forbidding these acts of mercy, is a curse, not a blessing to mankind. The Bible addresses all such persons as "scribes, pharisees, hypocrites, who pay tithe *of mint, anise, and cummin*, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith."

THE CHURCH RESPONSIBLE.

But the church of this country is not only indifferent to the wrongs of the slave, it actually takes sides with the oppressors. It has made itself the bulwark of American slavery, and the shield of American slave-hunters. Many of its most eloquent Divines, who stand as the very lights of the church, have

shamelessly given the sanction of religion, and the bible, to the whole slave system. - They have taught that man may, properly, be a slave; that the relation of master and slave is ordained of God; that to send back an escaped bondman to his master is clearly the duty of all the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ; and this horrible blasphemy is palmed off upon the world for christianity.

For my part, I would say, welcome infidelity! welcome atheism! welcome anything! in preference to the gospel, *as preached by those Divines!* They convert the very name of religion into an engine of tyranny, and barbarous cruelty, and serve to confirm more infidels, in this age, than all the infidel writings of Thomas Paine, Voltaire, and Bolingbroke, put together, have done? These ministers make religion a cold and flinty-hearted thing, having neither principles of right action, nor bowels of compassion. They strip the love of God of its beauty, and leave the throne of religion a huge, horrible, repulsive form. It is a religion for oppressors, tyrants, man-stealers, and *thugs*. It is not that "*pure and undefiled religion*" which is from above, and which is "*first pure, then peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*" But a religion which favors the rich against the poor; which exalts the proud above the humble; which divides mankind into two classes, tyrants and slaves; which says to the man in chains, *stay there*; and to the oppressor, *oppress on*; it is a religion which may be professed and enjoyed by all the robbers and enslavers of mankind; it makes God a respecter of persons, denies his fatherhood of the race, and tramples in the dust the great truth of the brotherhood of man. All this we affirm to be true of the popular church, and the popular worship of our land and nation—a religion, a church and a worship which, on the authority of inspired wisdom, we pronounce to be an abomination in the sight of God. In the language of Isaiah, the American church might be well addressed, "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an

abomination unto me : the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed feasts my soul hatest. They are a trouble to me; I am weary to bear them; and when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you. Yea! when ye make many prayers, I will not hear. YOUR HANDS ARE FULL OF BLOOD; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge for the fatherless; plead for the widow."

The American church is guilty, when viewed in connection with what it is doing to uphold slavery; but it is superlatively guilty when viewed in connection with its ability to abolish slavery.

The sin of which it is guilty is one of omission as well as of commission. Albert Barnes but uttered what the common sense of every man at all observant of the actual state of the case will receive as truth, when he declared that "There is no power out of the church that could sustain slavery an hour, if it were not sustained in it."

Let the religious press, the pulpit, the sunday school, the conference meeting, the great ecclesiastical, missionary, bible and tract associations of the land array their immense powers against slavery, and slave-holding; and the whole system of crime and blood would be scattered to the winds, and that they do not do this involves them in the most awful responsibility of which the mind can conceive.

In prosecuting the anti-slavery enterprise, we have been asked to spare the church, to spare the ministry; but *how*, we ask, could such a thing be done? We are met on the threshold of our efforts for the redemption of the slave, by the church. and ministry of the country, in battle arrayed against us; and we are compelled to fight or flee. From *what* quarter, I beg to know, has

proceeded a fire so deadly upon our ranks, during the last two years, as from the Northern pulpit? As the champions of oppressors, the chosen men of American theology have appeared—men, honored for their so called piety, and their real learning. The LORDS of Buffalo, the SPRINGS of New York, the LATHROPS of Auburn, the COXES and SPENCERS of Brooklyn, the GANNETS and SHARPS of Boston, the DEWEYS of Washington, and other great religious lights of the land, have, in utter denial of the authority of *Him*, by whom they professed to be called to the ministry, deliberately taught us, against the example of the Hebrews, and against the remonstrance of the Apostles, they teach *that we ought to obey man's law before the law of God.*"

My spirit wearies of such blasphemy; and how such men can be supported, as the "standing types and representatives of Jesus Christ," is a mystery which I leave others to penetrate. In speaking of the American church, however, let it be distinctly understood that I mean the *great mass* of the religious organizations of our land. There are exceptions, and I thank God that there are. Noble men may be found, scattered all over these Northern States, of whom Henry Ward Beecher, of Brooklyn, Samuel J. May, of Syracuse, and my esteemed friend* on the platform, are shining examples; and let me say further, that, upon these men lies the duty to inspire our ranks with high religious faith and zeal, and to cheer us on in the great mission of the slave's redemption from his chains.

RELIGION IN ENGLAND AND RELIGION IN AMERICA.

One is struck with the difference between the attitude of the American church towards the anti-slavery movement, and that occupied by the churches in England towards a similar movement in that country. There, the church, true to its mission of ameliorating, elevating, and improving the condition of mankind, came forward promptly, bound up the wounds of the West Indian slave, and restored him to his liberty. There, the question of

emancipation was a high religious question. It was demanded, in the name of humanity, and according to the law of the living God. The Sharps, the Clarksons, the Wilberforces, the Buxtons, the Burchells and the Knibbs, were alike famous for their piety, and for their philanthropy. The anti-slavery movement *there*, was not an anti-church movement, for the reason that the church took its full share in prosecuting that movement : and the anti-slavery movement in this country will cease to be an anti-church movement, when the church of this country shall assume a favorable, instead of a hostile position towards that movement.

Americans! your republican politics, not less than your republican religion, are flagrantly inconsistent. You boast of your love of liberty, your superior civilization, and your pure christianity, while the whole political power of the nation, (as embodied in the two great political parties, is solemnly pledged to support and perpetuate the enslavement of three millions of your countrymen. You hurl your anathemas at the crowned headed tyrants of Russia and Austria, and pride yourselves on your Democratic institutions, while you yourselves consent to be the mere *tools* and *body-guards* of the tyrants of Virginia and Carolina. You invite to your shores fugitives of oppression from abroad, honor them with banquets, greet them with ovations, cheer them, toast them, salute them, protect them, and pour out your money to them like water; but the fugitives from your own land, you advertise, hunt, arrest, shoot and kill. You glory in your refinement, and your universal education; yet you maintain a system as barbarous and dreadful, as ever stained the character of a nation—a system begun in avarice, supported in pride, and perpetuated in cruelty. You shed tears over fallen Hungary, and make the sad story of her wrongs the theme of your poets, statesmen and orators, till your gallant sons are ready to fly to arms to vindicate her cause against her oppressors; but, in regard to the ten thousand wrongs of the American slave, you would enforce the strictest silence, and would hail him

as an enemy of the nation who dares to make those wrongs the subject of public discourse! You are all on fire at the mention of liberty for France or for Ireland; but are as cold as an iceberg at the thought of liberty for the enslaved of America.-You discourse eloquently on the dignity of labor; yet, you sustain a system which, in its very essence, casts a stigma upon labor. You can bare your bosom to the storm of British artillery, to throw off a three-penny tax on tea; and yet wring the last hard earned farthing from the grasp of the black laborers of your country. You profess to believe "that, of one blood, God made all nations of men to dwell on the face of all the earth," and hath commanded all men, everywhere to love one another; yet you notoriously hate, (and glory in your hatred,) all men whose skins are not colored like your own. You declare, before the world, and are understood by the world to declare, that you "*hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal; and are endowed by their Creator with certain, inalienable rights; and that, among these are, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;* and yet, you hold securely, in a bondage, which according to your own Thomas Jefferson, "*is worse than ages of that which your fathers rose in rebellion to oppose,*" a seventh part of the inhabitants of your country.

Fellow-citizens! I will not enlarge further on your national inconsistencies. The existence of slavery in this country brands your republicanism as a sham, your humanity as a base pretence, and your christianity as a lie. It destroys your moral power abroad it corrupts your politicians at home. It saps the foundation of religion; it makes your name a hissing, and a by-word to a mocking earth. It is the antagonistic force in your government, the only thing that seriously disturbs and endangers your *Union*. It fetters your progress; it is the enemy of improvement, the deadly foe of education; it fosters pride; it breeds insolence; it promotes vice; it shelters crime; it is a curse to the earth that supports it; and yet, you cling to it, as if it were the sheet anchor of all your hopes. Oh! be warned! be warned! a horrible reptile

is coiled up in your nation's bosom; the venomous creature is nursing at the tender breast of your youthful republic; *for the love of God, tearaway, and fling from you the hideous monster, and let the weight of twenty millions, crush and destroy it forever!*

THE CONSTITUTION.

But it is answered in reply to all this, that precisely what I have now denounced is, in fact, guaranteed and sanctioned by the Constitution of the United States; that, the right to hold, and to hunt slaves is a part of that Constitution framed by the illustrious Fathers of this Republic.

Then, I dare to affirm, notwithstanding all I have said before, your fathers stooped, basely stooped.

"To palter with us in a double sense : And keep the word of promise to the ear, But break it to the heart."

And instead of being the honest men I have before declared them to be, they were the veriest imposters that ever practised on mankind. *This* is the inevitable conclusion, and from it there is no escape; but I differ from those who charge this baseness on the framers of the Constitution of the United States. *It is a slander upon their memory*, at least, so I believe. There is not time now to argue the constitutional question at length; nor have I the ability to discuss it as it ought to be discussed. The subject has been handled with masterly power by Lysander Spooner, Esq., by William Goodell, by Samuel E. Sewall, Esq., and last, though not least, by Gerritt Smith, Esq. These gentlemen have, as I think, fully and clearly vindicated the Constitution from any design to support slavery for an hour.

Fellow-citizens! there is no matter in respect to which, the people of the North have allowed themselves to be so ruinously imposed upon, as that of

the pro-slavery character of the Constitution. In *that* instrument I hold there is neither warrant, license, nor sanction of the hateful thing; but interpreted, as it *ought* to be interpreted, the Constitution is a GLORIOUS LIBERTY DOCUMENT. Read its preamble, consider its purposes. Is slavery among them? Is it at the gateway? or is it in the temple? it is neither. While I do not intend to argue this question on the present occasion, let me ask, if it be not somewhat singular that, if the Constitution were intended to be, by its framers and adopters, a slave-holding instrument, why neither *slavery*, *slaveholding*, nor *slave* can anywhere be found in it. What would be thought of an instrument, drawn up, *legally* drawn up, for the purpose of entitling the city of Rochester to a track of land, in which no mention of land was made? Now, there are certain rules of interpretation, for the proper understanding of all legal instruments. These rules are well established. They are plain, common-sense rules, such as you and I, and all of us, can understand and apply, without having passed years in the study of law. I scout the idea that the question of the constitutionality, or un. constitutionality of slavery, is not a question for the people. I hold that every American citizen has a right to form an opinion of the constitution, and to propagate that opinion, and to use all honorable means to make his opinion the prevailing one. With out this right, the liberty of an American citizen would be as insecure as that of a Frenchman. Ex-Vice-President Dallas tells us that the constitution is an object to which no American mind can be too attentive, and no American heart too devoted. He further says, the constitution, in its words, is plain and intelligible, and is meant for the home-bred, unsophisticated understandings of our fellow-citizens. Senator Berrien tells us that the Constitution is the fundamental law, that which controls all others. The charter of our liberties, which every citizen has a personal interest in understanding thoroughly. The testimony of Senator Breese, Lewis Cass, and many others that might be named, who are everywhere esteemed as sound lawyers, so regard the constitution. I take it, therefore, that it is not presumption in a private citizen

to form an opinion of that instrument.

Now, take the constitution according to its plain reading, and I defy the presentation of a single pro-slavery clause in it. On the other hand it will be found to contain principles and purposes, entirely hostile to the existence of slavery.

I have detained my audience entirely too long already. At some future period I will gladly avail myself of an opportunity to give this subject a full and fair discussion.

Allow me to say, in conclusion, notwithstanding the dark picture I have this day presented, of the state of the nation, I do not despair of this country. There are forces in operation, which must inevitably, work the downfall of slavery. "*The arm of the Lord is not shortened,*" and the doom of slavery is certain.

I, therefore, leave off where I began, with *hope*. While drawing encouragement from "the Declaration of Independence," the great principles it contains, and the genius of American Institutions, my spirit is also cheered by the obvious tendencies of the age. Nations do not now stand in the same relation to each other that they did ages ago. No nation can now shut itself up, from the surrounding world, and trot round in the same old path of its fathers without interference. The time was when such could be done. Long established customs of hurtful character could formerly fence themselves in, and do their evil work with social impunity. Knowledge was then confined and enjoyed by the privileged few, and the multitude walked on in mental darkness. But a change has now come over the affairs of mankind. Walled cities and empires have become unfashionable. The arm of commerce has borne away the gates of the strong city. Intelligence is penetrating the darkest corners of the globe. It makes its pathway over and under the sea, as

well as on the earth. Wind, steam, and lightning are its chartered agents. Oceans no longer divide, but link nations together. From Boston to London is now a holiday excursion. Space is comparatively annihilated.—Thoughts expressed on one side of the Atlantic, are distinctly heard on the other.

The far off and almost fabulous Pacific rolls in grandeur at our feet. The Celestial Empire, the mystery of ages, is being solved. The fiat of the Almighty, "*Let there be Light,*" has not yet spent its force. No abuse, no outrage whether in taste, sport or avarice, can now hide itself from the all-pervading light. The iron shoe, and crippled foot of China must be seen, in contrast with nature. *Afric must rise and put on her yet unwoven garment. "Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand unto God."* In the fervent aspirations of William Lloyd Garrison, I say, and let every heart join in saying it :

God speed the year of jubilee

The wide world o'er!

When from their galling chains set free, Th' oppress'd shall vilely bend the knee, And wear the yoke of tyranny

Like brutes no more.

That year will come, and freedom's reign, To man his plundered rights again Restore.

God speed the day when human blood

Shall cease to flow!

In every clime be understood,

The claims of human brotherhood,

And each return for evil, good, Not blow for _blow;

That day will come all feuds to end,

And change into a faithful friend

Each foe.

God speed the hour, the glorious hour, When none on earth

Shall exercise a lordly power,

Nor in a tyrant's presence cower; But all to manhood's stature tower, By equal birth!

THAT HOUR WILL COME, to each, to all,
And from his prison-house, the thrall Go forth.

Until that year, day, hour, arrive,
With head, and heart, and hand I'll strive, To break the rod, and rend the gyve,
The spoiler of his prey deprive

So witness Heaven!

And never from my chosen post,
Whate'er the peril or the cost,
Be driven.

* Rev. R. R. Raymond.