

Champions of Resistance

Frederick Douglass

- Born: 1817-1818 (Exact date unknown) Frederick Douglass' given name was Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey. Born into slavery at Holme Hill Farm, Talbot County, Maryland.
- 1826 Sent to live with Hugh Auld family in Baltimore. Douglass said, "I left it with joy. The ties that ordinarily bind children to their homes were all suspended in my case. I found no severe trial in my departure." (Douglass)
- 1827 Sophia Auld, the master's wife, teaches Douglass to read and write. He said, "My mistress was a kind and tenderhearted 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." (Douglass)
- 1834 Douglass' master hired Edward Covey, a "slave breaker" to break his spirit and make him accept slavery.
- 1836 Tries to escape from slavery, but his plot was discovered.
- 1836-38 Works in Baltimore shipyards as a caulker. He falls in love with Anna Murray, a free Negro (daughter of slaves).
- 1838 Escapes from slavery and goes to New York City. Marries Anna Murray. He changes his name to Frederick Johnson but to distinguish himself and on advisement from a friend changes his name to Frederick Douglass.
- 1839 Subscribes to William Garrison's "The Liberator". "The paper became my meat and drink...my soul was set all on fire." (Douglass)

Frederick Douglass has been called the father of the civil rights movement. He rose through determination, brilliance, and eloquence to shape the American nation. He was an abolitionist, human rights and women's rights activist, orator, author, journalist, publisher, and social reformer. In a letter written to William Lloyd Garrison, Douglass said, "I am not only an American slave, but a man and as such, am bound to use my powers for the welfare of the whole human brotherhood." (Douglass)

Highlights

*Speaks at a meeting of the Bristol Anti-Slavery Society and becomes an agent for the Society, hired by William Lloyd Garrison, traveling widely in the East and Midwest lecturing against slavery and campaigning for rights of free Blacks.

*Publishes the autobiographies - The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave and My Bondage and My Freedom.

*To escape recapture following publication, goes to England lecturing on the American anti-slavery movement throughout the British Isles.

*1846 Becomes legally free when British supporters purchase his freedom from Hugh Auld, his former master. Back in the US, publishes a weekly newspaper the "North Star" later changed to "Frederick Douglass's Paper". Later he becomes owner and editor of "The New National Era", a weekly newspaper in Washington. DC.

*1848 Attends the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls, NY and advocates the right to vote for women.

*1895 Dies at Cedar Hill, Anacostia

*Douglass served as an advisor to many presidents. Abraham Lincoln referred to him as "The most meritorious man of the nineteenth century." In his later years, Douglass was appointed to several offices. He served as U.S. Marshal of the District of Columbia during Rutherford B. Hayes' administration and President James Garfield appointed him the District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds. In 1889, President Benjamin Harrison appointed him to be the US minister to Haiti. He was later appointed by President Grant to serve as secretary of the commission of Santo Domingo. Douglass had hoped that his appointments would open doors for other African-Americans.

"To those who have suffered in slavery, I can say I, too, have suffered. To those who have battled for liberty, brotherhood and citizenship I can say I, too, have battled." Frederick Douglass was a runaway slave who helped free millions from the bonds of slavery. His life was a testament of courage and persistence that continues to serve as an inspiration to those who struggle in the cause of liberty and justice. (Douglass)