



MRS. AMY FOST, THE OLD ASSOCIATE OF THE LATE FREDERICK DOUGLASS,
WHOSE CELLAR WAS USED AS THE FAMOUS UNDERGROUND RAILWAY



FREDERICK DOUGLASS AS A YOUNG
MAN.



THE LATE HON. FREDERICK DOUG-
LASS, THE EX-SLAVE STATESMAN,

APRIL 4, 1888.



ELIZABETH CADY STANTON.

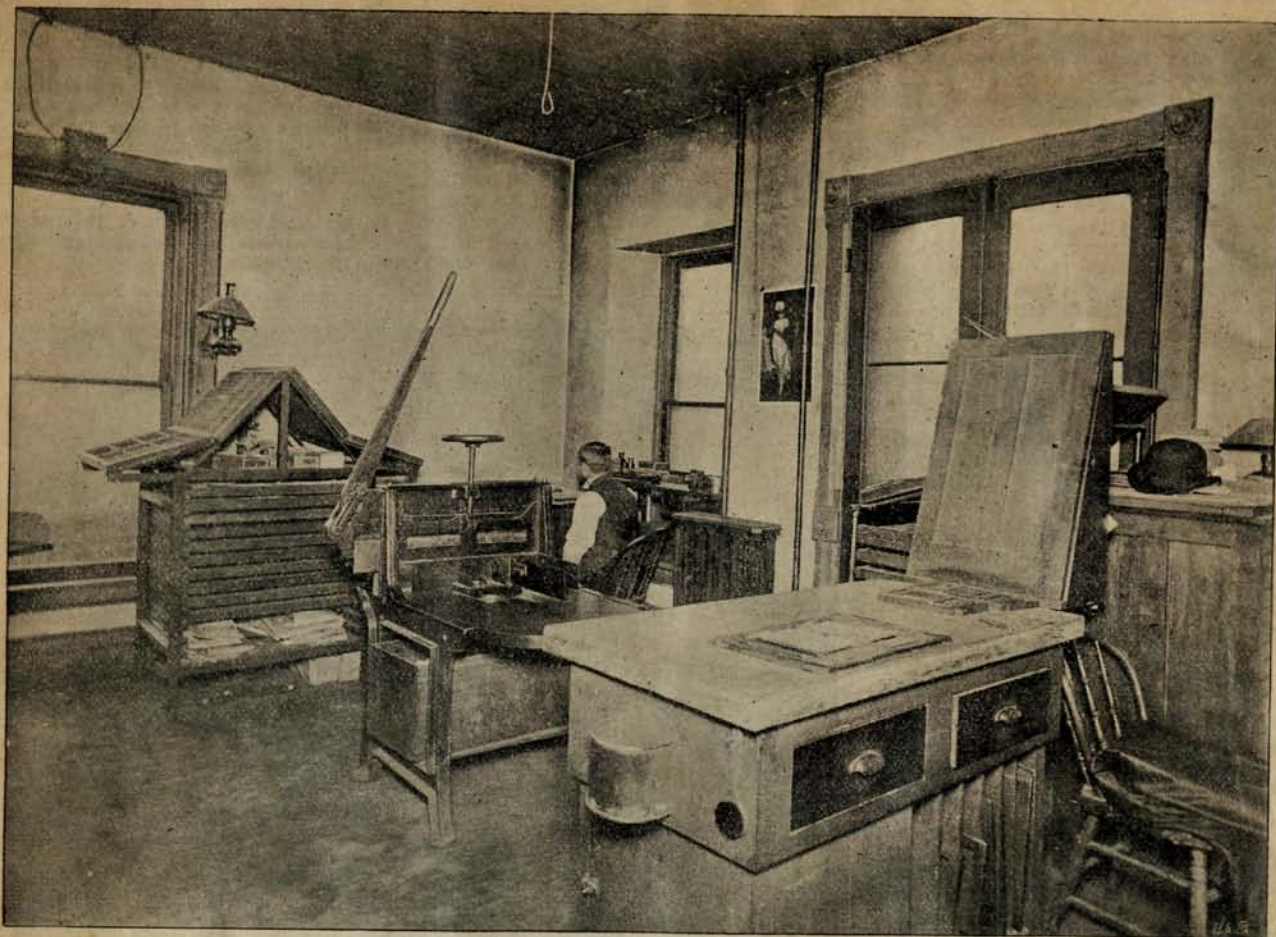
President of the National Woman's
Suffrage Association.

**William Oliver Relates Interesting
Reminiscences of Him.**

It is not likely that there lives in the city to-day any one who knew the late Fred Douglass more intimately than did William Oliver, the ex-county clerk. In speaking of Mr. Douglass and his life in Rochester yesterday, Mr. Oliver said:

"In the year 1851 I entered the employ of Mr. Douglass to learn the printer's trade, first doing the general chores and acting as carrier boy. The office was located in the Tallman block, opposite Reynolds's arcade, two flights up over Edwin Scrantom's auction store. Mr. Douglass's first foreman was the late James Vick, the celebrated seedsman, succeeded by a Mr. Dick, and then by William H. Clough, who was foreman when I commenced work. The paper was first called The North Star, with a cut of a runaway darkey, having a bundle on his back, and guided on his way to freedom by keeping his eye on the North star.

"After your years publication under that name, it was changed to Frederick Douglass's Paper. At first the paper was worked off by hand on a press owned by Mr. Douglass, but afterwards the Jeromes,



FREDERICK DOUGLASS' OLD OFFICE, WHERE THE "NORTH STAR" WAS PRINTED.

then publishers of the *Daily American* (Alexander Mann, editor), did the press work. The late John E. Morey and Lorenzo Kelly were both employed on the *American* at that time, the former as foreman of the job room, and the latter as general manager.

"The unjust prejudice entertained by a majority of the white people towards the colored race in those days was intense, and many 'licking' and stoning I received when going on my weekly round in delivering the paper to the city subscribers, from toughs who didn't believe in white people working for 'niggers.'

"Shortly after the commencement of the publication of the paper," continued Mr. Oliver, "two English ladies, sisters, came over and aided Mr. Douglass in the new enterprise. Their names were Griffiths, and were true blue abolitionists and ladies of means and education. They lived in the family of Mr. Douglass, causing much criticism. One of the sisters married Mr. Dick, Douglass's second foreman, afterwards removing to Toronto. The other sister, Julia, remained with Mr. Douglass until the abolition of slavery was or was about to be accomplished, and then returned to England, where she afterwards married a clergyman named Croft. I think she is alive to-day. She was a shrewd business woman, and of great assistance to Mr. Douglass in managing his finances and assisting in editing and mailing the paper. The paper never was a financial success, and was a constant drain on Mr. Douglass's private purse. Through Miss Julia Griffiths's exertions donations were frequently obtained from anti-slavery people to help it along. It never had an edition of over 1,500.

"While I was foreman, all his sons, Louis H., Fred, and Charley, learned to set type in the office. They were bright boys. Young Fred was a great ball player and fond of outdoor sports. He died in Washington several years ago,

and is buried there. Charley has a son who has developed into a first-class musician, and was the pride of his grandfather. The last time I saw Charley was when he was marching as captain at the head of a fine-looking colored military company at Washington on the occasion of Garfield's inauguration. Rose, the daughter, afterwards Mrs. Sprague, was a well-educated girl and a perfect lady. The first Mrs. Douglass was a motherly woman, her great delight being in attending to her household duties and making home pleasant. I knew them all well.

"I remember one day Mr. Douglass came into the office and danced a breakdown, and he could use his feet pretty well, I tell you. Upon asking the cause of his feeling so good, his reply was: 'Well, William, I ought to feel good; just twenty-one years ago to-day, with my pack on my back and the North star as my guide, I made a break for liberty.' He could also manipulate the violin to perfection.

"The outbreak at Harper's Ferry took place, if I remember, on the 16th of October, 1859. Previous to this, old John Brown had been a guest of Douglass, was often in the office, and I got familiar with the stern old Covenanter, of course, but knowing the man's previous history and his dare-devil nature, I suspected that he was maturing plans of some desperate nature. The final result has gone into history, and I think 'Old Ossawatimie's failure and execution was the entering wedge looking to the downfall of American slavery.

"Although it was well known that Mr. Douglass tried to dissuade Brown from engaging in such a foolhardy undertaking, Governor Wise, of Virginia, thought otherwise, and a requisition was issued for his arrest. The late Henry R. Selden, a neighbor of Douglass, informed him that an officer was getting out the necessary papers for his return to Virginia, and advised him by all means to leave the country in order to avoid a riot if an attempt was made to

place him in the hands of the Virginia governor. Douglass, after consulting other friends, left for Clifton, Ontario, and then went to Montreal and took a steamer for England. While at Clifton, I visited him twice, taking his letters to him, and arranged matters looking to the publication of the paper during his enforced absence. Miss Julia Griffiths ran the finances, and I kept up the mechanical end.

"An irreparable loss happened June 2, 1872, when his residence on South avenue was burned, destroying twelve volumes of the paper from 1848 to 1860. They were never replaced complete, although some friend in Saco, Me., supplied him with two volumes.

"Among the contributors to his paper were Garrett Smith, Dr. J. E. McCurrie Smith (Communipaw), William J. Watkins, Miss Julia Griffiths, Miss Porter and others. Charles Dickens's "Bleak House" was published in the paper, a chapter appearing every week, taking a long time to finish it. Thomas Connell of the Union office set up the matter. Besides Mr. Connell, William H. Atkinson and Frank Alexander were printers in the office.

"Mr. Douglass's manuscript was rather cramped, but easily read when one got used to it. He was very prolific in changing words and sentences in the proof, or, as the printers call it, 'a. f. c.' Always kind and affable, he was beloved by every one who enjoyed his acquaintance. I know, for I worked for him ten years.

"Mr. Douglass's office," continued Mr. Oliver, "was the last station on the underground railroad on this side of the line. On the arrival of a runaway, a quiet tip was given Isaac Post, William S. Falls, E. C. Williams and others around the Four Corners, and the unfortunate was sent on his way rejoicing either to St. Catherine's by rail, or by boat to Port Hope.

THE UNION AND ADVERTISER.

ROCHESTER, N. Y., FEB. 21, 1895.

DOUGLASS DEAD

The Great Anti-Slavery Advocate's Life in Rochester.

His Lectures, Newspaper Work, Underground Railroad Business, and Various Historical Events.

Anecdotes of the Distinguished Colored Man—His Zealous Friends in This City and His Early Struggles.

The colored people of Rochester will probably hold exercises in commemoration of Frederick Douglass. The colored soldiers' monument committee will be called together in a day or two to take preliminary steps. A meeting of the Douglass League will be held to-morrow night, it is understood, to consider what action should be taken. The death of Mr. Douglass will also be brought before the congregation of Zion Church on Sunday. It will probably be about twenty days before the formal exercises are held. A large hall will be secured, according to the present plans, and there will be speakers both white and colored.

The following telegram was sent to-day:

"Mrs. Frederick Douglass, Anacosta, Washington, D. C.:

"The Douglass statue and monument committee tenders its heartfelt sympathy in your sad bereavement.

"J. W. Thompson."

There will be services at the Zion Church, Favor street, under the auspices of the Zion Literary Society on Thursday evening, February 28th, at 8 o'clock, in memory of the late Hon. Frederick Douglass. There will be prominent speakers in attendance and it is proposed to make the event a public mass meeting.

The death of Frederick Douglass brought to the minds of many Rochesterians incidents in his eventful life while a resident of this city. It was in 1847, nine years after his escape from slavery, that he settled in Rochester and he lived here a quarter of a century. His old friends, white and colored, learn of his death with genuine sorrow.

After his escape and before coming to Rochester he went to England and made friends with the anti-slavery people of that country. His lectures at that time attracted wide attention. When he came here, selecting Rochester for a home as it was a stronghold of the anti-slavery advocates, he surprised people by starting a weekly paper. Even his friends were afraid that a man, only nine years removed from the ignorance of a plantation slave, was scarcely fit to run a paper. The North Star made its appearance and was afterwards called 'Frederick Douglass' paper. Under many difficulties it was kept afloat until after the emancipation. It was a large sized sheet with a circulation at times as high as 4,000 a week and the running expenses were about \$80 weekly.

Among his friends and supporters in this city were: Lindley Murray Moore, Isaac and Amy Post, William Halliwell, William S. Falls, Samuel D. Porter, William C. Bloss, Benjamin Fish, Asa Anthony, Grove S. Gilbert, Nelson Bostwick, Joseph Marsh, E. C. Williams, George A. Avery, John Kedzie, Thomas James and Isaac Gibbs.

During the earlier months of his residence in the city Mr. Douglass lived on Alexander street, not far from East avenue. Later he removed to South avenue, on the hill approaching what is now Highland park. Here John Brown laid his plans for the Harper's Ferry raid which cost him his life. Here also was the last station of a section of the underground railroad from Baltimore and Mr. Douglass as the Rochester agent cared for the escaping slaves until they were passed on to safety at St. Catharines across the lake.

At the funeral exercises held in this city after the death of Lincoln the principal speaker was Mr. Douglass, and his effort on that occasion was one of the most eloquent speeches ever heard in this city. In 1872 his house, together with the files of his newspaper and private documents, was burned, and he soon after went to Washington, which was his home up to the time of his death. The first Mrs. Douglass, who was a colored woman, died some years before this. In 1883 Mr. Douglass married Miss Pitts, a white woman and the daughter of a farmer of Honeoye, Ontario county. The family was prominently identified with the Abolition movement, and it was this family which gave its name to Pittsford.

Jacob K. Post is among the citizens who remember Mr. Douglass most vividly. In 1843 the great colored orator was first seen in Rochester, when he addressed an anti-slavery convention in the old Co-inthian Hall. Upon that occasion he was entertained by Mr. Post's father, Isaac Post, a prominent Abolitionist. Four years later, when Mr. Douglass came to Rochester to live, he made his home for a time at Mr. Post's house. In speaking of Mr. Douglass' love of music and jokes Jacob Post related the following anecdote to-day:

"He liked to tell jokes on his own race as well as at the expense of any other. Once when he was in Dublin he felt very lonesome. He was wandering about the streets when he was attracted by two violins in the window of a second-hand dealer. Frederick entered and asked the price of one of the instruments.

"'Five shillings, sor,' said the Irish dealer.

"Frederick turned up the violin and began to play 'Rocky Roads to Dublin.' Soon the proprietor's wife heard the music and entered from the rear door. Then Frederick started in on the 'Irish Washerwoman' and the couple began to dance for dear life. When the music and dancing stopped Frederick tendered the dealer the five shillings, but his performance on the violin had greatly enhanced its value in the mind of the dealer and as he hurried it away to a place of security exclaimed:

"'If a black nigger can git sich chunes out av that fiddle, I'll never sell it at any price, begorra!'"

Jane Marsh Parker, in a sketch of Mr. Douglass written in 1887, said:

"He stood at bay with the bitter prejudices of the community. The mission to which he had devoted himself—the emancipation of his people—had the sympathy of but an ostracized minority. He lectured continuously. The office of the North Star, his weekly paper, was a beacon light of abolitionism. The New York Herald wondered why Rochester did not throw the nigger printing press and its editor into Lake Ontario. Few

knew what hard work the editor of the North Star was doing in those days—hardly ten years out of bondage—fettered by a crude and narrow education, he himself, write creditably for the public and maintain his reputation as a public speaker. His home was blest with the best of housekeepers. His wife, a free woman, had done much to aid him in getting his freedom. They lived most respectably, and their children were remarkably well bred; in fact, there was an aristocratic air about the Douglass children that saved them from a world of snubbing.

"Foreigners of distinction came to Rochester to see Frederick Douglass, for he was then more of a curiosity than now. The event which somewhat overheated the blood of conservative Rochester was when two English ladies arrived and became members of the Douglass household, walking openly on the street with the distinguished mulatto, one on either arm as a rule, their English dress and peculiarities making them otherwise conspicuous. They were ladies of means and education, zealous abolitionists, who had chosen to come and aid Frederick Douglass all they could. The younger of them was soon married to a prominent abolitionist, a white man.

"The elder, a woman of superior literary and executive ability, braved out her sojourn in the Douglass family and office for several years, seemingly oblivious of the comments of the community. Her assistance to Frederick Douglass at this critical and laborious time of his life was to him at least invaluable. She urged him to re-write his autobiography, which had been published in Boston in 1845, which he did, improving it greatly by additions and amplifications. The book, 'My Bondage and My Freedom,' still has a large sale. It was the basis of its writer's present prosperity. He wrote it in the rambling house on the hill south of the city, the house in which John Brown, as his guest, planned the raid on Harper's Ferry and built his miniature forts."

DOUGLASS IN LIFE

Reminiscences of His Active Career in Rochester.

Henry Bull Tells of the Ex-Slave's Love of Music at the Old Abolition Meetings.

Anecdotes of the Eloquent Lectures by the "Black Giant" in This and Other Cities of the Land.

To-day while the funeral of Frederick Douglass was in progress in this city there were many of the older citizens who recounted scenes and incidents in his marvelous career, especially in Rochester and Washington.

Henry Bull, who is one of the old-time and best-known citizens of Rochester, was in a reminiscent mood when a Union reporter called on him last evening at his home, 36 Greig street, and asked him to relate some of his experiences with Frederick Douglass.

"You see, I knew Mr. Douglass from the time he first came to Rochester," said Mr. Bull. "Mr. Douglass at once began his lectures and speeches on abolition, and as I was a strong abolitionist, I heard him often.

"I was at that time a member of the Rochester Glee Club, a male quartette, which was then the only musical organization in the place. Of course, that led interest to our singing, and we were all willing to sing in the halls where Mr. Douglass lectured in this city. I am now the only survivor of that quartette, which was composed of Ferdinand Andrews, Stephen L. Wright, Joseph Haws and myself, and although I am now in the seventies, I can recall the stirring meetings which Mr. Douglass used to address in old Minerva Hall, which stood on what is now the southeast corner of St. Paul and East Main streets. The hall was burned in 1858. It was there that Mr. Douglass delivered some of the most eloquent speeches of his life.

"I well remember one of his favorite pieces which we sang was one which began:

There's a good time coming, boys,
Wait a little longer.

and many times in the course of his remarks he would quote those lines, and then, in his most impressive tones, say, 'Yes, yes, that time will surely come, just as sure as death,' and then he would ask the quartette to sing the song over again.

"He was a grand speaker, and I remember one impressive sentence, 'The pen will supersede the sword.'

"To all his hearers Mr. Douglass appeared to have that wonderful peculiarity of rising above them, so that they, metaphorically, looked up to him, and yet inviting their every eye. One touching incident to which he often referred was the cordial reception which he was tendered in England, as contrasted with his receptions here.

"Douglass was a great man, and most people learned to like and respect him while he lived in this city."

Ex-Deputy Secretary of State Col. Anson S. Wood of Wolcott, while speaking with a Union reporter yesterday in relation to the sudden death of Frederick Douglass, gave an account of several meetings he had had with the great colored statesman.

"My first meeting with Mr. Douglass," said Col. Wood, "was during the winter of 1857-58. At this time I had just been admitted to the bar and opened an office at Lyons, our county seat. These were the palmy days of the lecture platform, and no town thought itself complete without a course of lectures during the winter. A prominent Republican lawyer and politician, since deceased, James V. D. Westfall of bank fame, whose signature was often mistaken for that of Li Hung Chang, and myself were appointed a committee to secure proper talent for the season. Among the other lecturers I can only recall Horace Greeley and Dr. E. H. Chapin of New York.

"The season was drawing to a close and we were in arrears on the enterprise nearly \$200. Learning that, on account of color, Frederick Douglass could be secured much cheaper, Mr. Westfall and I, against the advice of our chairman, engaged him and advertised the fact extensively. When the evening of the lecture came and the audience was assembling, our chairman, who had introduced all previous lecturers, suddenly announced that he wouldn't introduce the 'd—d nigger.'

"The duty thus falling on me I hastened to Congress Hall, where Douglass was stopping, and asked him if he had any choice as to the manner of introduction. He said: 'You know how Stephen A. Douglass is everywhere introduced—as the Little Giant? Well, you may simply say, "This is Frederick Douglass, the Black Giant." I did so and never heard an audience give a man a more enthusiastic welcome than was accorded him.

"I may here say that the entertainment was financially a great success, paying all our arrears and leaving a small margin for profit.

"In contrast to his first visit to Lyons in 1858, I must here mention his second visit, soon after the war, in 1867, I think. This time, so far from being unwilling to introduce him, prominent politicians of both parties, struggled for the honor, and for a seat on the platform behind him.

"It was between these two dates, in 1859, that my most important meeting with Mr. Douglass occurred. It fell to my lot to escort him over the line into the queen's domain, after the failure of John Brown's expedition at Harper's Ferry.

"On the evening following his capture, I was going west in the interest of a client, Detroit being my destination. I was obliged to change cars at Lockport at a late hour, and going to my train found it crowded to overflowing, with the exception of a passenger coach which was attached next the baggage car and appeared to be entirely empty. On trying the door I found it locked. The conductor of the train coming up at this moment.

"I inquired as to the car being closed. He mumbled something about 'orders,' and taking my grip attempted to lead me into one of the other coaches. Glancing through the window I noticed against the lights of the station opposite, a solitary man in one of the seats of the empty car. I stubbornly refused to leave the platform and when the conductor, appeared on the point of removing me by force, the man on the inside tapped on the window and motioned him to open the door. This he did and a whispered consultation ensued, at the end of which I found myself thrust within the car and shaking hands with Mr.

Douglass. The door was at once closed and locked behind me. The train pulled out almost immediately, and I shall ever recall the few hours in which I was locked in with Mr. Douglass as some of the most entertaining in my life.

"Among other things which he mentioned in our conversation was that he was not leaving the country because he feared a fair trial for conspiracy in the John Brown raid, but because a fair trial for a person of his color, was at this time an impossibility in Virginia courts.

"Through the aid of friends he had secured this private car in which he hoped to be carried across the line undetected. In the early morning the train pulled into Clifton, when the car door was quietly unlocked and Mr. Douglass and I stepped out on the station platform. Here I had barely time to congratulate him and bid him a hasty adieu before I was compelled to leave. His stay in the Dominion was short, as he soon left for England, where he made his \$200,000 lecture tour.

"My fourth and last public meeting with Mr. Douglass was in December, 1872, at the meeting of the New York electoral college at Albany. I was deputy secretary of State at this time and acted as clerk of the college. Douglass was a delegate-at-large, and a large number of the delegates wishing to honor him, announced their intention of making him chairman. Gen. Stewart L. Woodford being the only other candidate. Woodford's friends wished to carry their end, but without antagonizing the other party, so I was called in as a mediator to effect a compromise.

"The position of chairman was one of honor simply and contained no pecuniary reward, while that of messenger to carry the news to Washington contained liberal compensation. I was to interview Mr. Douglass and see if he would not prefer the latter office. I called upon him at the Delavan House and laid the matter before him. His decision was made instantly. 'Give Gen. Woodford the honor,' said he, 'I'll take the money; it's more tangible.'

"I don't think this incident was ever made public before, though the fact that Douglass acted as messenger that year is well known.

The Late Frederick Douglass.

PALMYRA, March 9, 1895.

To the Editor of the Palmyra Courier:

I well remember Frederick Douglass and the first "talk" he gave to the people in the old Baptist church in Macedon, way back in the "Forties." It was an abolition meeting, with such worthies as Asa B. Smith, William R. Smith, Lindley Moore and others present. While the meeting was organizing, he was walking the floor in the "entry," head down, and with a very modest demeanor, and none of that "flashy" appearance, as a Geneva correspondent has described. I well remember how hard they had to urge him to go on the platform to make that "maiden speech." How bashful and how slow and stammering he began; but, as he warmed up and gained confidence, his large eye began to sparkle, his voice grew strong and clear and it was easily to be seen and understood that he was a "diamond in the rough," a sapling that would soon grow and expand into a mighty forest monarch, one whom Sojourner Truth had to stop and caution amidst his fiery eloquent and most bitter denunciation of the slavery system and practices, with the words, "Frederick, Frederick, remember that God still lives." His memory is fragrant. A. M. PURDY.