

ROCHESTER HISTORY

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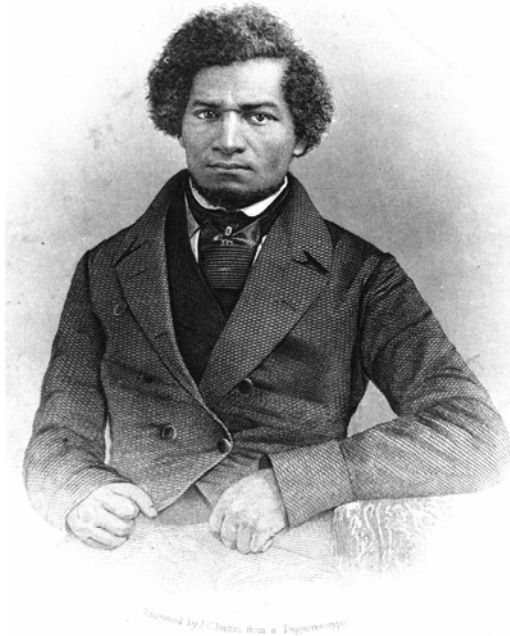
Summer, 2005

No. 3

Rochester's Frederick Douglass

Part One

by Victoria Sandwich Schmitt



Frederick Douglass c. 1850, engraved by J. C. Buttre from a daguerreotype. From *My Bondage and My Freedom* by Frederick Douglass. New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855.

Courtesy of the Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester, NY

The engraving records Frederick Douglass' appearance during his early years in Rochester

Baltimore December 12th 1846, Received from
Walter Lewis of New York, by the hands of C.
Wardwell, the sum of seven hundred & eleven
dollars and ninety six cents, in full of the
consideration of a certain Bill of Manumission
of a negro man known by the name of Frederick
Bailey, otherwise called Douglas, formerly my slave
for life, bearing date on the fifth of December,
Eighteen hundred and forty six.

W. L. Lewis

Hugh Auld

A bill of sale written by Hugh Auld of Baltimore to Walter Lewis of New York
in the sale of a Frederick Bailey, alias Frederick Douglass, for \$711.66 to set him free
from slavery on December 5, 1846.

Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

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Frederick Douglass

From an impoverished birth into chattel slavery in America, Frederick Douglass (c.1818-1895) rose to the heights of fame and celebrity.¹ The self-made leader gained eminence as a powerful and eloquent orator, renowned author, newspaper editor, and statesman. He became the most celebrated African American of the 1800s, and the century's most prominent African American intellectual. Douglass assumed the status of an American icon: a visible public representative of African Americans, and the public conscience of a great moral struggle familiar to all Americans.² Frederick Douglass spent twenty-five years (1847-1872) – arguably the most productive time of his life – in Rochester, New York.

The World of Frederick Douglass' Birth

“Why am I a slave? Why are some people slaves and others masters? These were perplexing questions and very troublesome to my childhood.”³—Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass began life in Tuckahoe, Maryland, as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, enslaved on a plantation on the state's Eastern Shore. For twenty years, he experienced the pain of separation from family, the bitterness of working without being paid, the brutality of whippings and beatings, the pangs of hunger, and the injustice of being denied the rights of an American citizen.

Douglass never knew his birthday. He recognized the year of his birth to be 1817 or 1818 based on a comment made by his master.⁴ Douglass later wrote, “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... [a] want of information concerning my own [age] was a source of unhappiness to me even during childhood... I was not allowed to make any inquiries of my master concerning it. He deemed all such inquiries impertinent, and evidence of a restless spirit.”⁵

Frederick Douglass knew little about his ancestral roots - or his parents or siblings.⁶ He later observed that it was common practice in Maryland to separate children from their mothers before they reached one year of age, and to hire the mother out to other employers far away while placing the child in the care of a woman too old for field labor. A product of this practice, Douglass only saw his mother, Harriet Bailey, on a handful of occasions.⁷ Separated from her in infancy, Douglass was raised by his grandparents, Betsey and Isaac Bailey.

Frederick Douglass never knew his paternal side. He wrote, “[my] father was a white man. He was admitted to be such by all I had ever heard speak of my parentage. The opinion was also whispered that my master was my father, but...the means of knowing was withheld from me.”⁸ He speculated that his

father was Aaron Anthony, the master of the plantation, since it was not an uncommon practice for slave owners to have affairs with or rape enslaved women in their custody.

Douglass' grandmother Betsey Bailey, born in 1774, was an early and important influence in his life. In her cabin on the Choptank River in Maryland, she raised him until he was six, encouraging him and giving him hope for a life free from enslavement. Although Betsey Bailey was enslaved, her husband Isaac was free. "Living thus with my grandmother, whose kindness and love stood in place of my mother's, it was some time before I knew myself to be a slave," Douglass wrote.⁹ In later years, Douglass wrote to his former owner entreating him to send his grandmother to him in Rochester, so that Douglass might care for her in her remaining years.¹⁰ The request was not fulfilled.

Douglass Starts Work at Age Six

Douglass learned what it meant to be enslaved at the age of six, when he went to live and work on the plantation of Colonel Edward Lloyd. The wealthy Maryland landowner held 1,000 enslaved workers, including Betsey Bailey. Douglass' grandmother alternately carried him and walked with him on the "dreaded journey" of twelve miles to his new home. There he worked at tasks such as cleaning the yard, driving cows and running errands. He also met siblings he never knew he had: older brother Perry and sisters Sarah and Eliza.

Frederick Douglass described the daily hardships on the Maryland plantation where he grew up:

There were no beds given the slaves, unless one coarse blanket be considered such, and none but the men and women had these...They find less difficulty from the want of beds, than from the want of time to sleep; for when their day's work in the field is done, the most of them having their washing, mending, and cooking to do, and having few or none of the ordinary facilities for doing either of these, very many of their sleeping hours are consumed in preparing for the field the coming day; and when this is done, old and young, male and female, married and single, drop down side by side, on one common bed,--the cold, damp floor,--each covering himself or herself with their miserable blankets; and here they sleep till they are summoned to the field by the driver's horn.¹¹

In hottest summer and coldest winter, I was kept almost naked--no shoes, no stockings, no jacket, no trousers, 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.¹²

Douglass' grandmother was well known for her fishing skills and her success in growing sweet potatoes. Her services were in demand in the region, and Douglass likely did not go hungry in her care. When he went to live at Lloyd Plantation, he suffered from constant hunger. Despite Colonel Edward Lloyd's great wealth (he owned 20-30 plantations), his enslaved workers suffered great privations. Douglass' daily meal consisted of corn mush, served in a wooden trough on the ground, and eaten without utensils - and he competed with all the other children for his share.

On the plantation, Douglass first witnessed the physical brutality of enslavement. The first whipping he saw, at the age of seven, left a lasting impression. "I never shall forget it whilst I remember any thing. It was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be a witness and a participant. It struck me with awful force. It was the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery, through which I was about to pass."¹³ Douglass also saw fifteen close family members sold south.

House Servants and Field Hands Were Worlds Apart

All enslaved people shared the trauma of a life without freedom, yet major differences existed between the lives of field hands and house servants. As a house servant on the home plantation of Colonel Edward Lloyd, whose extensive properties were managed by Douglass' "owner," Captain Aaron Anthony, Frederick Douglass fared better than most enslaved field hands, including his mother.

Field hands typically worked from sunrise to sunset at every aspect of farming from planting to weeding to preparing the harvest for shipment to market. After the harvest, they mended fences, dug ditches, repaired tools, and built structures needed on the plantation. With little in the way of food, clothing or rest to sustain them, this was a difficult and grueling life at best.

As slave owners established households, they brought some field hands, particularly women, into their homes to take on duties as servants, nurses, dressmakers, and cooks. Though less demanding physically than fieldwork, the workday of an enslaved domestic was long and rigorous. Officially on duty from five in the morning until nine or ten at night, they could be called upon at any hour.

Every major commercial venture in areas like the Chesapeake Bay involved the labor, skills, and ingenuity of African Americans. Large plantations such as the one where Frederick Douglass began work needed skilled mechanical workers as well as house and field workers. Many enslaved workers brought craft skills from Africa and were put to work as carpenters, metalworkers and blacksmiths, watch smiths, gun makers, coopers, cartwrights, grain grinders, weavers and sailors.

The Whims of Slaveholders

Like other enslaved African Americans, Douglass had no control over his domestic or work life. When Captain Anthony died in 1826, Douglass became the inherited property of Anthony's son-in-law, Thomas Auld, who sent the eight-year-old boy to Baltimore to work for his brother, Hugh Auld.

Frederick Douglass considered it fortunate that he left rural Maryland and spent most of his formative years in the home of Hugh and Sophia Auld in Baltimore. Like many other enslaved African Americans who lived in cities, he had more freedom there and the opportunity to learn a trade. Although he had to give most of what he earned to Hugh Auld, he was allowed to keep a small portion of his cash wages. He no longer experienced the daily pain of hunger, and wore better clothing and lived in improved quarters. "I had resided but a short time in Baltimore, before I observed a marked difference in the manner of treating slaves, generally, from that which I had witnessed in that isolated and out-of-the-way part of the country where I began life. A city slave is almost a free citizen, in Baltimore, compared with a slave on Col. Lloyd's plantation. He is much better fed and clothed, is less dejected in his appearance, and enjoys privileges altogether unknown to the whip-driven slave on the plantation," Douglass explained.¹⁴

In Baltimore, Douglass learned the shipbuilder's caulking trade, important work in a port city. When the planking was in place on a ship, caulkers filled the seams between planks. They laid a thread of cotton in the seam, and with the small mallet and chisel, tapped it into place. Next they laid tarred hemp on the seam and pushed it into place with the larger mallet and chisel. When the work was done correctly, the caulking material swelled to fill the space between planks to keep the interior dry.

A Step Toward Freedom

While enslaved, Frederick Douglass made three crucial and risky choices that changed the course of his life. The first of these choices occurred while he lived in Baltimore: he learned to read.

Sophia Auld began teaching him to read alongside her son. Most southern states enacted laws with severe penalties for teaching any African Americans to read or write. By the time Sophia's husband, Hugh, stopped the lessons, Douglass had learned the alphabet and could spell words of three or four letters.

Literacy constituted a giant step toward freedom. For Douglass it opened the world of thought, ideas, religion, and abolitionism to him. Reading 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 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."¹⁵

Despite the risk of severe punishment, Douglass determined to continue his studies in secret. He worked through a Webster's spelling book by himself. He carried old newspapers and books with him when he ran errands, and he tricked young white boys into helping him learn.

At 13, Douglass secretly purchased his first book, a popular students' compilation of speeches, *The Columbian Orator*. This book deeply moved him, and he kept it for the rest of his life. Douglass described the book as "a rich treasure...These were all choice documents to me, and I read them, over and over again, with an interest that was ever increasing, because I was ever gaining in intelligence; for the more I read them, the better I understood them. The reading of these speeches added much to my limited stock of language, and enabled me to give tongue to many interesting thoughts, which had frequently flashed through my soul, and died away for want of utterance." ¹⁶ One speech, in which a slave was freed after convincing his master in a debate that slavery is wrong, influenced Douglass' future.

In 1833, Thomas Auld brought Douglass back to rural St. Michael's, Maryland, where he hired Douglass out for field work. After seven years in Baltimore, the teenaged Douglass found the hunger and other privations unbearable. Finding Douglass "unmanageable," Thomas Auld declared that city life had "ruined" the young man.

Douglass Stands Up To A Slave Breaker

Auld hired Douglass out for a year to Thomas Covey, a slave breaker with a reputation for "taming" difficult cases. For the first time in his life, Douglass worked as a farm hand and endured constant beatings. After six months, Douglass made a dangerous decision, the second of his critical choices. He resisted a beating, and then fought back.

Perhaps because of a desire to maintain his reputation as a slave breaker, Covey did not turn Douglass in for raising a hand to a white man, and no further punishments ensued.

Once again, Douglass experienced renewed self-respect and hope for freedom from enslavement. "This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning point in my career as a slave... It recalled the departed self-confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free." ¹⁷

After three difficult years, during which he tried unsuccessfully to break Douglass' spirit, Thomas Auld sent Douglass back to his brother in Baltimore.

Douglass Takes His Freedom

From the time that he was seven or eight years old, Frederick Douglass knew that escape from enslavement was possible, because he had an aunt and uncle who successfully took their freedom. As a teenager, Douglass planned to go north with a group of friends. One of them revealed the conspiracy, and

Douglass spent a week in jail, a relatively light punishment for such a serious offense.

Taking one's freedom required great courage and determination, as well as survival skills. Starvation, difficult terrain, lack of knowledge of where to go and safe places along the way were among the challenges. Punishments for unsuccessful freedom seekers included attacks by tracking dogs, sale to plantations in the Deep South, severe beatings, shackling with heavy iron collars or leg irons, and foot amputations.

"I hated slavery, always, and the desire for freedom only needed a favorable breeze, to fan it into a blaze, at any moment. The thought of only being a creature of the present and the past, troubled me, and I longed to have a future - a future with hope in it. To be shut up entirely to the past and present, is abhorrent to the human mind; it is to the soul -- whose life and happiness is unceasing progress -- what the prison is to the body; a blight and mildew, a hell of horrors," Douglass wrote.¹⁸

That "favorable breeze" came at the age of 20, when Frederick Douglass met his future wife, Anna Murray, at an African American Improvement Society meeting in Baltimore. Murray's parents, Bambarra and Mary Murray were enslaved, as were her seven older siblings. She and her four younger brothers and sisters were born free.¹⁹ Like her future husband, she grew up in rural Maryland. Murray moved to Baltimore at 17 to support herself as a domestic worker. She worked first for a French family, and later in the home of a postmaster named Wells.²⁰



Portrait of Anna Murray Douglass (c. 1813-1882)
From *My Mother As I Recall Her*, by Rosetta Douglass Sprague. Reprinted by Fredericka Douglass Sprague Perry, 1923.

Presented by Rosetta Douglass Sprague before the Anna Murray Douglass Union, W.C.T.U., on May 10, 1900.
Courtesy of Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester, NY

Anna Murray's courage and loyalty strengthened Douglass' resolve. Their eldest child, Rosetta, later recounted her mother's importance in her father's early life: "Frederick Douglass' hopes and aspirations and longing desire for freedom has been told...It was a story made possible by the unswerving loyalty of Anna Murray...Her courage, her sympathy at the start was the main-spring that supported the career of Frederick Douglass."²¹

On September 3, 1838, at the age of 20, Frederick Douglass left Baltimore dressed in a red sailor's shirt, and carrying a friend's Seaman's papers. Anna

Murray had helped Douglass pay for the train ticket that would enable him to free himself from enslavement in Maryland. Despite questioning by a railroad conductor, and the possible betrayal by an acquaintance who recognized him, Douglass' journey north by boat and by train lasted less than 24 hours. Douglass kept details of his route and the names of the people who aided him secret for forty years in order to protect them. He stayed briefly in New York City, where Anna Murray, having given up everything and everyone she knew in Maryland, joined him. The two married and made their way to Massachusetts, where Douglass hoped to put his shipbuilding skills to work. Douglass became part of the small percentage of enslaved African Americans who successfully freed themselves.

Throughout his life in enslavement in Maryland, Frederick Douglass held hope that he would some day be free. His quest for freedom depended on luck, as well as difficult and courageous personal choices. Douglass was lucky to have a loving grandmother who encouraged him; a master who did not sell him south or maim him when he tried to free himself; the relative independence of a skilled ship caulker's trade in Baltimore; and the financial help of a woman who loved him. His choice to break the law and learn to read and develop his knowledge and intellect; his self-confidence born from successful defiance of a slave breaker; and his willingness to leave all that was familiar behind him forever; all contributed to a successful outcome.

When Douglass left a life of enslavement behind in Maryland and began life anew in the North,²² he described it as "a time of joyous excitement which words can but tamely describe."²³ Within a decade, Douglass' life changed dramatically, and his new life, one that he chose himself, would bring him to Rochester, New York – a city named for the Maryland slaveholder and trader who founded it.

The World Frederick Douglass Chose

"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."²⁴ –Frederick Douglass

Prejudice Tempers Douglass' Hopes In New Bedford

Anna and Frederick Douglass arrived by coach in the bustling seaport of New Bedford, Massachusetts in September 1838. They made their way to the home of Mary and Nathan Johnson, African American Quakers and abolitionists, who offered hospitality, safety and advice on starting a new life in New Bedford.

New Bedford seemed a promising destination for an ambitious, young African American ship's caulker. The flourishing whaling industry created wealth for the Quaker community and provided jobs for skilled and unskilled workers on

the docks. African Americans enjoyed a degree of independence not known in most Northern cities. Resident Quakers committed themselves to antislavery – and to equality of opportunity.

Northern prejudice thwarted Douglass' plan to find employment in the seaport's major industry, however. When Douglass went to the docks wearing "the clothes of a common laborer," the foreman of a caulking crew told him that "every white man would leave the ship...unfinished...if [Douglass] struck a blow at [his] trade upon her."²⁵ Instead, Douglass earned a living in New Bedford as a day laborer while his wife turned to domestic work.²⁶

Frederick Douglass chose a new name for himself when he took his freedom, changing from Frederick Bailey to Frederick Johnson. In New Bedford, the name caused confusion among the many Johnson families, including the Douglasses' first friend Nathan Johnson. Nathan Johnson suggested the name "Douglass" from a character in a book he was reading, *Lady of the Lake* by Sir Walter Scott, and Frederick Douglass adopted it.

Reverend Thomas James Spurs Douglass to Speak Out

New Bedford's AME (African Methodist Episcopal) Zion chapel became an anchor for newly arrived Frederick and Anna Douglass. Douglass served as sexton, clerk and class leader. Church Pastor, the Reverend Thomas James, formerly of Rochester, New York, licensed Douglass to serve as a lay preacher and encouraged him to speak out on slavery issues. Douglass' first public speech before an audience took place in this church when he argued against the "back to Africa" movement to create a new colony in Liberia for African Americans. Later Douglass publicly related his personal journey from enslavement into freedom for the first time when Rev. James called upon him to step forward and tell his story during a meeting.²⁷

The Rev. Thomas James was the first to play an important role in launching Douglass' career as an anti-slavery activist. James had much in common with Douglass. Born enslaved in Canajoharie, New York, Thomas James took his freedom by making his way, alone, to Canada. He returned to the U.S. and settled in Rochesterville, New York, a fast-growing village on the Erie Canal. Like Douglass, James supported himself by working at odd jobs while learning to read and write and educating himself. He became an ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and traveled throughout New York and New England organizing new congregations and speaking against slavery. From 1843 to 1845, while serving as pastor of Douglass' church in New Bedford, he recognized and encouraged Frederick Douglass' oratorical skills.

A second individual influenced Douglass long before the two met. William Lloyd Garrison led the "moral suasion" or non-violent resistance wing within the abolitionist movement. In 1831 Garrison became editor of *The Liberator*, the single most important abolitionist publication. Within weeks of taking his

freedom, Douglass subscribed to the paper. He later wrote: “*The Liberator* was a paper after my own heart. It detested slavery – exposed hypocrisy and wickedness ...made no truce with traffickers in the bodies and souls of men; it preached human brotherhood...and demanded the complete emancipation of my race. I not only liked—I loved this paper and its editor.”²⁸

In August 1841, William Lloyd Garrison listened to Douglass at a New Bedford Anti-Slavery meeting. Days later he urged Douglass to speak before a European-American audience on Nantucket Island, a seaport city 50 miles southeast of New Bedford, at the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Calling on all he had learned about orations from the *Columbian Orator* and from his own deepest feelings about slavery, Douglass told the story of his life. The leaders of the New England antislavery movement – William Lloyd Garrison, Parker Pillsbury and Samuel J. May –were all deeply moved. That night they invited him to become an agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Garrison’s words, “I will be heard,” became Douglass’ own.

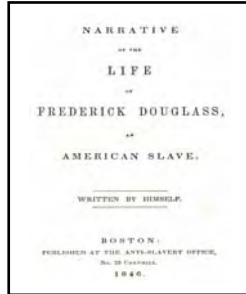
That same year, the Douglasses left New Bedford with their two children – Rosetta, born in 1839 and Lewis Henry, born in 1840 – and relocated to Lynn, Massachusetts outside Boston. Their family grew as Anna Murray Douglass gave birth to sons Frederick, Jr. and Charles Remond, born in Lynn in 1842 and 1844.

Douglass’ Autobiography Makes Him A Celebrity

Less than a decade out of enslavement, Frederick Douglass emerged as a leading agent for the American antislavery movement and became a national celebrity. The publication in 1845 of his first autobiography, the best selling, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, constituted a major step in this transition. Douglass used his own life as a weapon against slavery.

As Douglass’ reputation grew on the anti-slavery lecture circuit, so did questions about the authenticity of his life in enslavement. How could such a polished and confident orator ever have been in bondage? Douglass wrote his autobiography, which included a signed photograph and letters of verification from leading abolitionists, in part to validate the story he told audiences.

In his autobiography Douglass recounted the horrors of slavery – just as he did on the lecture circuit. He lashed out at the hypocrisy of Christian slaveholders who beat their human chattel, broke up families, and fathered children who remained enslaved. Douglass’ literary abilities and his compelling story earned him critical as well as popular acclaim. An instant success, *The Narrative*, priced at 50 cents, sold 30,000 copies within five years.



Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself. Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845
Courtesy of Charles A. Beyah

For further proof of the veracity of his story, Douglass mailed a copy of *The Narrative* to his former master, Thomas Auld, challenging him to refute the story. That bold act, combined with the fame that resulted from the overnight success of his book, placed him in danger of capture and return to enslavement. To remain safe, Douglass left his wife and children in Massachusetts and sailed for England, Ireland and Scotland on an anti-slavery lecture tour. Anna Murray Douglass supported their family with her wages as a shoe binder, while he lectured abroad for almost two years. In 1846, British friends paid Hugh Auld 150 pounds sterling - \$711.66 in U.S. currency at the time – and Auld no longer had legal claim to Douglass as his property.

Why Rochester?

In 1847, Frederick Douglass returned to the United States from his 18-month lecture tour in the British Isles a free man with signed manumission (freedom) papers. He also brought \$4,000 in contributions from English abolitionists to start an anti-slavery newspaper. To his surprise and dismay, his colleagues in the New England anti-slavery movement opposed his newspaper and predicted failure if he persisted.

Douglass chose to move to Rochester, New York, which he had first visited in 1843, to start his newspaper because:

- It was far away from the Boston branch of the American Anti-slavery Society and competition with William Lloyd Garrison's anti-slavery newspaper, *The Liberator*. It was also far enough away from circulation of New York City's anti-slavery paper, the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*.²⁹
 - It was a young and fast-growing city suitable for a new venture.
 - It was home to an active, enterprising, free African American community.
 - It was a hotbed of reform movements, including abolitionism.
 - It was home to a community of Quakers who embraced abolition and racial equality.
 - Its location near Canada made it a critical site on the Underground Railroad
- 1847 Rochester was a vibrant, growing city on the Erie Canal with opportunities to establish a business and raise a family, as well as find reform-minded supporters. Frederick Douglass came here to launch an assault on

slavery through the power of the press, established the *North Star*³⁰ on Dec. 3, 1847, and developed it into one of the most influential African American antislavery papers. He prepared to use the written and spoken word to put an end to slavery in the United States.

Directly across Lake Ontario from Canada, Rochester was a vital hub on the Underground Railroad. Many freedom seekers came to Rochester from the Southern Tier (south of the city) and from Syracuse (to the east), continuing on to Canada by heading west to Buffalo, crossing the Lake from the Port of Rochester at Charlotte, or from another site, such as Pultneyville to the east.³¹

Douglass described the city as “the center of a virtuous, intelligent, enterprising, liberal, and growing population. The surrounding country is remarkable for its fertility, and the city itself possesses one of the finest water-powers in the world. It is on the line of the New York Central railroad--a line that, with its connections, spans the whole country. Its people [are] industrious and in comfortable circumstances--not so rich as to be indifferent to the claims of humanity, and not so poor as to be unable to help any good cause which commanded the approval of their judgment.”³²

Rochester: A Center for National Reform

Part of Rochester’s appeal for Frederick Douglass lay in its openness to new ideas about social reform. From the 1830s to the 1870s, Rochester was a hotbed for reform movements, including moral reform, temperance,³³ women’s rights, charitable activities, the peace movement, abolitionism, and the fight for African American equality. The region also spawned new religious groups such as Spiritualists, Mormons and Millerites (Seventh Day Adventists) and hosted Protestant religious revivals. Free African Americans and European-Americans, women, Quakers and evangelical Christians all participated in reform activities, including Rochester’s active anti-slavery network. National reform leader and human rights advocate Susan B. Anthony made Rochester her home base during this time.

Rochesterians tolerated radical reform movements. Although most Rochesterians did not actively support the anti-slavery movement or the Underground Railroad, and many openly opposed them, nevertheless reformers flourished in their midst. “I know of no place in the Union where I could have located at the time with less resistance, or received a larger measure of sympathy and cooperation,” Douglass later reflected.³⁴

Douglass found support for his Rochester anti-slavery newspaper through funds raised from items sold at anti-slavery fairs in Western New York, which also supported freedom seekers who passed through the region on the Underground Railroad.

Reform-Minded African Americans Welcome Douglass

An important factor in Frederick Douglass' decision to move to Rochester was the presence of an active and enterprising free African American population. As they purchased property and established businesses, homes and churches, Rochester's African American citizens contributed to reform activities far beyond their numbers and could be counted on to advertise and publicize events in Douglass' anti-slavery newspaper.³⁵ Douglass likely knew of the characteristics of Rochester's African American citizens through the Rev. Thomas James.

Austin Steward was a distinguished leader of Rochester's African American community prior to Douglass' arrival. Enslaved first in the South and later in Bath, New York, Steward legally took his freedom and moved to Rochesterville during the earliest days of settlement in 1816. Despite open hostility, he opened a meat market on what is now West Main Street and eventually enjoyed the patronage of many of Rochester's prominent citizens. Steward helped establish a Sabbath School for African Americans where the future Rev. Thomas James learned to read. In 1827, Steward gave an important speech during the local celebration of Emancipation in New York State.³⁶

The 1830 census shows that most African American families lived in Rochester's first and third wards, and few occupied areas outside the city limits. An 1834 survey³⁷ counted 360 people of color – three per cent of the city's total population. Skilled workers included five blacksmiths, two shoemakers, masons, clergymen, and stonecutters; a tailor, cabinetmaker, merchant and physician, as well as farmers, boatmen, barbers, waiters and seamstresses. The majority found work as laborers, however – the same kind of work Frederick Douglass did when he arrived in New Bedford. By 1850, most African American residents lived in the third ward, near the homes of wealthy European-descended Rochesterians who provided work.

Despite their status as free people³⁸ and their many varied contributions to the growth of the city in its formative years, African Americans living in Rochester endured many forms of what Douglass called the "vulgar prejudice against color, so common to Americans."³⁹ These included segregated reform organizations – even anti-slavery societies – separate schools and limited employment opportunities. Douglass believed that his efforts made a difference in the treatment of African Americans in Rochester. "There were barriers erected against colored people in most places of instruction and amusement in the city, and until I went there they were imposed without any apparent sense of injustice and wrong, and submitted to in silence; but one by one they have gradually been removed...."⁴⁰ The first year he lived in Rochester, Frederick Douglass' name appeared in a section of the *Rochester Directory* reserved for African Americans, one of many examples of prejudice toward African Americans that Douglass encountered in Rochester.

In 1850, a group of African American citizens of Rochester met to strategize following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law. Jacob P. Morris, Frederick Douglass' partner in coordinating Underground Railroad activities in the Rochester area, presided over the meeting. William C. Nell, who wrote for Douglass' *North Star*, recorded the minutes.⁴¹ The Fugitive Slave Law made it possible for free African Americans as well as enslaved freedom seekers to be kidnapped and sent South. In response, Rochester's African American citizens devised a secret password to shout out in the event of attempted kidnappings. Only once was a formerly enslaved person seized in Rochester after this meeting. The captive slit her throat rather than return South.⁴²



Amy Kirby Post (1802-1889)
Loaned by Nancy Foster Owen, Amy and Isaac
Post's great great granddaughter
"You were among the first of American women to
give me shelter & make me feel at home under your
roof kindness I never forget." Letter from Frederick
Douglass to Amy Post, from The Isaac and Amy
Post Papers, Courtesy of the Rare Books and
Special Collections, University of Rochester Library

Lifelong Friends-- Isaac and Amy Post

Rochester's significant population of Quakers supported the abolitionist, women's rights and temperance movements. Members of this religious society, which began in England in the 1600s, believed that every person – male or female, enslaved or free – was of equal worth. Also known as The Friends, Quakers did not use alcohol, lived and dressed simply, and worshipped without ritual and ceremony. While they opposed slavery, they believed that active involvement in reform movements was too worldly. As a result, radical Quaker reformers who supported Douglass and the Underground Railroad, including Susan B. Anthony's family and Douglass' close friends Isaac and Amy Post, resigned from local Quaker meetings.

Isaac and Amy Post were among Rochester's most active reformers and were two of Frederick Douglass' closest friends. They met Douglass on his first visit to the city in 1843 and welcomed him into their home. Douglass expressed his affection for the Posts in a letter from Edinburgh, Scotland, written the year before he moved to Rochester.

*My Dear Amy,
I must say a few hurried words to you in the way of
friendship. Amy your family was always dear -- very dear
to me, you loved me and treated me as a brother before the
world knew me as it ^now^ does. & when my friends were
fewer than they now are and let me tell you that I never*

loved and admired you more, than since I last met you in Rochester. You may however believe me that Isaac is as dear to me -- Oh! how glad I should be could I but look in upon you all. Could I but clasp your kind hands and look you all full in the face, yea more mingle my voice with yours in the discussions of the many interesting subjects which are constantly presenting themselves to your consideration. ...In great haste, I am most sincerely yours

*Frederick Douglass
28 April 1846*⁴³

Hicksite Quakers, the Posts came to Rochester from Long Island, via Scipio, New York in the late 1830s. Isaac Post operated a drug store in Rochester. In the 1840s they became involved in the antislavery movement. Their Sophia Street (now Plymouth Avenue) home, on the site of the present day Hochstein Music School, may have harbored more freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad than any other single location in Rochester.⁴⁴ The Posts embraced a variety of the reform movements centered in Western New York. Douglass said of the Posts: "They were not more amiable than brave, for they never seemed to ask, 'What will the world say?' but walked straight forward in what seemed to them the line of duty, please or offend whomsoever it might."⁴⁵ Their active efforts to secure equality for women and African Americans led them to resign from the Quaker meeting. They converted to Spiritualism, and Isaac Post became a medium who wrote a book of messages he received from well-known persons.⁴⁶

In 1847, Douglass revealed to the Posts his decision to move his family to Rochester and start his anti-slavery newspaper. Douglass stayed with the Posts when he first arrived in Rochester, and they helped him settle his family in the city. The three remained friends for the rest of their lives.

Boston, 28 October 1847

My dear Amy,

*I have finally decided on publishing the North Star in Rochester, and to make that city my future home. I am now buying type and all the little etc. of a printing establishment. I shall probably be able to issue my first number as early as the middle of November, any delay can only do the enterprise harm, I have therefore resolved to commence at once. As I shall see you soon and having no time now must delay further communication til I see you - My best love to every member of your family
Yours sincerely,
F Douglass*⁴⁷

Lynn Mass 3rd Feb [1848]

My Dear Isaac,

I have now full resolved to bring my family to Rochester with me – and I shall probably reach there – as early as one week from to morrow which is Friday. I write to request that you will secure me a tenement – the rent of which will not exceed one hundred dollars per annum.

*I regret to be absent from Rochester so long as I shall have to be this time – but the length of time now may prevent a longer period in future. I am getting subscribed – which is no unimportant item. With love to all the members of your Dear family – I am yours ever – in great haste
Frederick Douglass⁴⁸*

A Remarkable Fundraiser

No longer a salaried employee of the American Anti-Slavery Society when he came to Rochester, Douglass had to raise all the funding needed to maintain his family and support his “great work of renovating the public mind, and building up a public sentiment, which should send slavery to the grave.”⁴⁹ The celebrated orator and author developed impressive fundraising skills that contributed to his success as a national reform leader.

*There were many times when, in my experience as editor and publisher, I was very hard pressed for money, but by one means or another I succeeded so well as to keep my pecuniary engagements, and to keep my anti-slavery banner steadily flying during all the conflict from the autumn of 1847 till the union of the States was assured and emancipation was a fact accomplished.*⁵⁰ Douglass proudly recalled.

Douglass inspired many influential people to support his work. Hon. Gerrit Smith, a Congressman, wealthy landowner, and dedicated abolitionist from Madison County, New York, subscribed to the *North Star* and generously gave Douglass financial help in times of crisis. Samuel D. Porter, an early resident of Rochester, wealthy merchant, landowner, and ardent anti-slavery activist, also financially supported Douglass’ newspaper and Underground Railroad activities. The Porter family became close friends of Douglass, who later wrote, “The late Samuel D. Porter and his wife Susan F. Porter, and his sisters, Maria and Elmira Porter, deserve grateful mention as among my steadfast friends, who did much in the way of supplying pecuniary aid.”⁵¹ Samuel Porter also joined Douglass in successfully desegregating Rochester’s public schools.

To finance his reform efforts, Douglass sold newspaper subscriptions, lectured weekly one winter in Rochester’s Corinthian Hall, traveled extensively to speak out against slavery, solicited donations from friends in England and western

New York, networked with women's and antislavery organizations that conducted revenue-generating activities, mobilized volunteers, and built up his real estate holdings.

The Western New York Anti-Slavery Society, which included African Americans and European-descended Americans, women and men, had been founded in Rochester in 1842. After 1847, it turned a large portion of the funds raised at annual fairs over to Douglass' *North Star*. Through sales of needlework and other hand-sewn articles at festivals and bazaars including textiles imported from Ireland, members of the Rochester Ladies Anti-Slavery Sewing Society also raised money for Douglass' newspaper and other abolitionist activities.

Abolitionist and women's rights lecturer Sojourner Truth spent so much time in Rochester that she joined the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Sewing Society. Like Douglass, she stayed often in the home of Isaac and Amy Post. Born enslaved in eastern New York State, Truth successfully sued to rescue her young son who was sold South when the state mandated gradual emancipation. She and Amy Post helped find jobs in Rochester for newly freed people following the Civil War. In later years, Douglass and Amy Post contributed funds for Truth to retire in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Douglass Assaults Slavery

Frederick Douglass established the *North Star* in Rochester, New York on December 3, 1847, and developed it into one of the most influential African American antislavery papers published. He later described the challenges he faced, "A wood-sawyer offering himself to the public as an editor! A slave, brought up in the depths of ignorance, assuming to instruct the highly civilized people of the north in the principles of liberty, justice, and humanity! The thing looked absurd. Nevertheless, I persevered."⁵² With the motto on the *North Star* masthead "Right is of no Sex - Truth is of no Color - God is the Father of us all, and we are all brethren," Douglass denounced slavery and fought for the emancipation of women and other oppressed groups, including children and animals. The *North Star* circulated to more than 4,000 readers in the United States, Europe, and the West Indies.

Slowly, support for Douglass' efforts grew in Rochester. "The New York Herald...counselled [sic] the people of [Rochester] to throw my printing-press into Lake Ontario and to banish me to Canada, and, while they were not quite prepared for this violence, it was plain that many of them did not well relish my presence amongst them. This feeling, however, wore away gradually, as the people knew more of me and my works,"⁵³ Douglass observed.

In June 1851 the *North Star* merged with the Liberty Party Paper of Syracuse, NY and became *Frederick Douglass' Paper*. It circulated under this new name until 1860. Douglass devoted the next three years to publishing an abolitionist

journal called *Douglass' Monthly* before he stopped publishing to begin recruitment of African American soldiers for the Union Army in 1863.

Douglass could not have produced the paper and continued his busy lecture schedule without the help of numerous talented and dedicated colleagues. These colleagues included Martin Delaney, William Cooper Nell, and Julia Griffiths. John S. Jacobs, the son of the formerly enslaved Harriet Jacobs, who gained fame as the author of her own autobiography, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, (1861), also assisted Douglass.

Physician, author, abolitionist, and early African American nationalist, Martin Delaney (1812-1885) joined Douglass in Rochester in 1847 as co-editor of the *North Star*. Delaney's own Pittsburgh-based abolitionist newspaper, the *Mystery*, went out of business earlier that year. Like Douglass, Delaney addressed anti-slavery gatherings throughout the East and Midwest. Delaney left the *North Star* in 1849 to study medicine and pursue other career interests. During the Civil War, like Douglass, Delaney recruited African American troops in Massachusetts and other New England states. He became the first African American field officer in the Union Army in 1865 when he was commissioned major.

William Cooper Nell (1816-1874) acted as a subscription agent and contributor to many newspapers including the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, the *Weekly Elevator*, the *Provincial Freedman*, and the *Pine and Palm*. From 1847 to 1851 he assisted Frederick Douglass on the *North Star* and served as acting editor when Douglass traveled on speaking tours. Nell remained loyal to William Lloyd Garrison and left the *North Star* when Douglass broke ties with Garrison. An activist for equal rights, integrationist and organizer, he became the first published African American historian, the first African American to hold a federal government position, and a leader in the desegregation of Boston public schools.

Julia Griffiths (?-1895) met Frederick Douglass in England and became his assistant newspaper editor in Rochester in 1851. She helped raise money in England to launch the *North Star*, and then came to Rochester to ensure its survival by putting the finances in order.⁵⁴ "To no one person was I more indebted for substantial assistance than to Mrs. Julia Griffiths Crofts," Douglass later wrote of her.⁵⁵ Douglass and Griffiths worked opposite each other at a table and a desk in the newspaper's office. The sight of an African American man living with, working with and escorting a white English woman on the streets of Rochester in the mid-1800s distressed many citizens, even abolitionist friends.⁵⁶ By 1855 the criticism of Julia Griffiths and of what was viewed by many to be an unorthodox relationship with Douglass had become intense and distracting.⁵⁷ Griffiths returned to England, where she continued her antislavery activities and eventually married. She corresponded with Douglass until his death three months before hers.

An eyewitness described Douglass' newspaper office in 1859 as consisting of a single room on the second floor of the Talman block at 25 Buffalo Street, now West Main Street. The three-story Talman block stood on the south side of Main Street. Douglass' desk sat in one corner, with cases of type around the sides. His son Frederick, Jr. and his daughter Rosetta set the type with the help of printer Horace McGuire. When the forms were locked up, they carried them into the adjacent offices of the *Rochester Democrat*, which printed the edition. The papers were then folded, single-wrapped and mailed to subscribers. The small press in Douglass' office turned out small jobs for paying clients.

Tense Moments Follow Douglass' Move To Alexander Street

Thirty-year-old Frederick Douglass purchased his first home in Rochester at 4 Alexander Street near the corner of East Avenue (then Main Street) in April 1848. The two-story brick house of nine rooms stood on a city lot in a neighborhood described as "suburban and aspiring."⁵⁸ "So far as my domestic affairs are concerned, I can boast of as comfortable a dwelling as your own." Frederick Douglass wrote to Thomas Auld, his former owner.⁵⁹ A magnolia bush beside the archway of the porch welcomed visitors, and there was room in the small yard behind the house for Anna Douglass' garden.⁶⁰

A future neighbor, Joseph Marsh,⁶¹ engineered the sale of the house, owned by anti-slavery activist and jeweler John Kedzie,⁶² to Douglass. Like Douglass, Marsh maintained an office in the Talman block, where he published an Adventist newspaper. The home was flanked on both sides by abolitionists.⁶³ Other neighbors on the block protested openly.

Local opposition waned as neighbors found Frederick Douglass to be "a gentleman and a good neighbor;" Anna Murray Douglass a "model housekeeper" with "very aristocratic ideas;" and the children, -- Rosetta, Frederick, Charles, and Lewis "trained to self-helpfulness and systematic industry."⁶⁴ The Douglasses' fifth child, Annie, was born in the Alexander Street house.



The Douglass house on Alexander Street in Rochester, courtesy of the Rochester Public Library.

Charlotte Murray, believed to be Mrs. Douglass' younger sister, lived with the seven members of the Douglass family and Douglass' assistant editor Julia Griffiths in this house on Alexander Street in Rochester. ⁶⁵

Regardless of how their parents felt, the children of Alexander Street held Frederick Douglass in high esteem. ⁶⁶ Having a national celebrity for a neighbor, especially one who generated controversy and courted danger, was a source of great interest to the neighborhood children. Neighbor and future historian Jenny [Jane] Marsh Parker, ⁶⁷ herself a child when the Douglass family moved in, observed and recorded the exciting goings-on that captured the attention of her childhood friends. "Every one [sic] of note who came to the city was pretty sure to call upon Frederick Douglass; we had only to watch his front door to see many famous men and women; which, with his connection with the Underground Railroad (known only to anti-slavery neighbors), added much to a locality which before had been rather dull." ⁶⁸

According to Parker, children especially loved to hear Frederick Douglass sing and play the violin. She wrote, "If he knew that a group of children were gathered before his window on a warm summer night when he was singing to his violin, he was sure to give them what he knew they were waiting for – 'Nelly was a Lady' or 'Old Kentucky Home,' coming to the door and bowing his acknowledgement of their hearty applause. . . . He has a rich baritone voice and a correct ear and it was something to hear him sing . . . from *The Seraph*, the very same old singing-book which he has slipped into his bundle when he skipped out of Maryland for freedom." ⁶⁹

Surrounded by abolitionists, Frederick Douglass began his national reform efforts and conducted the activities of the Underground Railroad in Western New York from his Alexander Street home, where he established a home 'among strangers' ⁷⁰ and a national headquarters for his reform efforts.

Continued in Part Two

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Endnotes

1. Born into enslavement in Maryland, Frederick Douglass inherited the legacy of chattel slavery shared by enslaved peoples taken from Africa and applied to their descendants in North America. Until 1865 when the 13th Amendment pronounced an end to all chattel slavery, American law described enslaved people as property rather than human beings. As a result, they enjoyed none of the rights granted to citizens of the United States under the Constitution.
2. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *A Dangerous Literacy: The Legacy of Frederick Douglass*, *New York Times Book Review*, May 28, 1995, p.3; and David W. Blight, “‘For Something beyond the Battlefield’: Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for the Memory of the Civil War,” *Journal of American History*, March 1989, p.1156-1178. Both scholars have examined Douglass’ place in American history.
3. Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, New York and Auburn, 1855, p.89.
4. Both dates appear on gravestones in the Douglass plot in Mt. Hope Cemetery in Rochester. 1818 is the accepted date of Douglass’ birth today.
5. Douglass, *op.cit.*, p.35.
6. The transatlantic slave trade legally transported Africans to North America from 1619 until 1808, when it was officially banned. During this time historians estimate that 400,000 to 500,000 Africans survived the voyage to North America, where European-descended slave-owners used their labor to develop the blossoming plantation economy. This number accounts for just 6% of all of the enslaved people brought to the Americas; the other 94% went to destinations in Central and South America, as well as the Caribbean. The early trade centered in West Africa, but by the 1800s most enslaved people came from the Congo-Angola area of Central Africa. Douglass came into contact with some newly arrived Africans. “There were several slaves on Mr. Lloyd’s place who remembered being brought from Africa. There were others that told me that their fathers and mothers were stolen from Africa.” (Douglass, *op.cit.*p.91). Despite their best efforts, African culture in America did not dissolve at the hand of the slave owners. Enslaved African Americans disguised old messages in new forms, rendering even subversive interchanges undetectable to the slave masters. This resourceful blending of cultural elements resulted in the gradual development of a distinctly African American culture – characterized by improvisation and innovation – so pervasive that it continues to inform trends today. Examples include African American textiles, music and language.
7. Frederick Douglass kept much of his personal life private, and he wrote conflicting reports of his contacts with his mother. She died when he was about 7.
8. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, By Himself*, Boston, 1845, p.2.
9. Douglass, *My Bondage...*, p.38.
10. “Letter to His Old Master,” *Ibid.*, p.427
11. Douglass, *Narrative...*, pp10-11.
12. Douglass, *Narrative...*, pp,26-27.

13. Douglass, *Narrative...*, p.6.
14. Douglass, *Narrative...*, p.34.
15. Douglass, *Narrative...*, p.33.
16. Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass Written by Himself*, Boston, 1892, p.104.
17. Douglass, *Narrative...*, p.72.
18. Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*. New York, 1855, Chapter 19.
19. To ensure a cheap labor source in the 1700s and 1800s, plantation owners encouraged and sometimes forced their enslaved workers to have children to replace those who died under the brutal conditions of chattel slavery. In some cases, owners promised enslaved women freedom after bearing a certain number of children.
20. *My Mother As I Recall Her*, by Rosetta Douglass Sprague. Reprinted by Fredericka Douglass Sprague Perry, 1923. Presented by Rosetta Douglass Sprague before the Anna Murray Douglass Union, W.C.T.U., on May 10, 1900. Howard W. Coles Collection, RMSC.
21. *Ibid.*, p.6.
22. Slavery existed in all 13 British colonies. Massachusetts became the first colony to recognize slavery as a legal institution in 1641; Georgia was the last in 1750. In the North, where the economy developed around trade and family farming rather than cash crop agriculture, slavery proved less profitable. Although slavery did exist in the North, enslaved people only grew to about five percent of the total. Most of the original Northern colonies implemented gradual emancipation in the late 1700s and early 1800s, or upon admission to the Union. Until 1827, slavery was legal in New York State, where an increased police presence restricted African Americans' movement. Most enslaved New Yorkers suffered in isolation, because they lived in small numbers, apart from each other on scattered farms and in cities.
23. Douglass, *My Bondage...*, p.336.
24. Douglass, *Life and Times...*, p.582.
25. Douglass, *Life and Times...* Reprinted from revised edition 1892. Toronto, 1962, p. 211.
26. For three years, Douglass "sawed wood, shoveled coal, dug cellars, moved rubbish ... worked on the wharves, loaded and unloaded vessels and scoured their cabins." *Ibid.*, p.211; cited in William McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*, NY, 1991.
27. "I called upon Fred. [sic] Douglass...to relate his story... He did so, and in a year from that time he was on the lecture field with Parker Pillsbury and other leading abolitionist orators.," the Rev. Thomas James later wrote. Rev. James founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Rochester. *Wonderful Eventful Life of Rev. Thomas James, by himself*. 3rd edition. Rochester, NY, 1887.
28. Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Chapter 12.
29. Howard W. Coles, *The Cradle of Freedom*, Rochester, NY, 1941, p.12.
30. Named for the celestial body used by freedom seekers to find their way North.

31. Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck, Ed., *Network to Freedom: A Guide to the Underground Railroad and the Abolitionist Movement*, Rochester/Monroe Co. Freedom Trail Commission, 2003, and Emerson Klees, *Underground Railroad Tales: With Routes Through the Finger Lakes Region*, Rochester, NY 1997.
32. Douglass, *Life and Times*, p. 332. Douglass' final autobiography contains the most specific references to his Rochester years.
33. The temperance movement opposed the habitual use of alcohol and public drunkenness. Temperance literature aimed to convince readers that spending money on alcohol would lead to ruined lives and families. In Rochester, where the Erie Canal brought thousands of seasonal wage earners through town, the temperance movement became part of an effort to "civilize" the population.
34. Douglass, *Life and Times*...Reprinted from revised edition 1892. Toronto: Crowell Collier, 1962, p. 270.
35. As early as 1834, African Americans in Rochester supported three religious societies, two anti-slavery groups (one male, one female), and a temperance organization which opposed the habitual use of alcohol and public drunkenness. William Clough Bloss, editor, *The Rights of Man*, 1834. Dr. Ena L. Farley, "The African American Presence in the History of Western New York," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, Vol.14, No.1, Jan. 1990, pp.27-91. Musette Castle, "A Survey of the History of African Americans in Rochester, New York 1800-1860," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, Vol.13, No.2, July 1989, pp.7-32.
36. Austin Steward, *Twenty-two Years a Slave and Forty Years a Freeman*, Rochester, 1857.
37. In 1834, William Bloss, editor of the *Rights of Man*, surveyed the African American population in Rochester. "Colored" citizens and their residences and occupations were also designated in the *Charter and Directory of the City of Rochester*, Rochester, 1834.
38. New York State emancipated its enslaved population in 1827.
39. Douglass, *Life and Times*....p.331.
40. Douglass, *Life and Times*....p.333.
41. Minutes of the Anti-Fugitive Slave Law Meeting of the Colored Citizens of Rochester, manuscript, Rochester, NY. Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Library.
42. Amy Post, "The Underground Railroad," in William F. Peck, *Semi-Centennial History of Rochester*, Syracuse, 1884, p.459-460.
43. From The Isaac and Amy Post Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Library.
44. Shirley Cox Husted, *Sweet Gift of Freedom*. Rochester, NY, 1986, p.22.
45. Douglass, *Life and Times*....p.229.
46. Nancy Hewitt, "Amy Kirby Post," *University of Rochester Library Bulletin*, 1984, No. 37, pp.5-21. Dr Hewitt, Professor of History and Women's Studies at Rutgers University, is writing a biography of Amy Post.
47. From The Isaac and Amy Post Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Library.
48. From The Isaac and Amy Post Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Library.
49. Douglass, *Life and Times*...., p. 320.

50. Douglass, *Life and Times*..., p.321.
51. Douglass, *Life and Times*..., p.325.
52. Douglass, *Life and Times*..., p.321.
53. Douglass, *Life and Times*..., p.326.
54. Julia Griffiths created *Autographs for Freedom*. Second Series. Edited by Julia Griffiths for the Rochester Ladies Anti-Slavery Society. Auburn: Alden, Beardsley; Rochester: Wanzer, Beardsley & Co., 1854 Courtesy of the Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester, NY. Proceeds resulting from the sales of this book, featuring anti-slavery essays by famous abolitionists, helped finance Douglass' national reform activities.
55. Douglass, *Life and Times*...,p.321.
56. Jenny Marsh Parker, "Reminiscences of Frederick Douglass," *The Outlook*, 51, April 1898, p.552-53. In a letter of January, 1852, Douglass chided Samuel Porter for writing him of the "scandalous reports" instead of confronting him face to face. From The Porter Family Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Library.
57. Samuel Porter letter to Frederick Douglass, cited in William McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*, New York, 1991.
58. *Reminiscences of Frederick Douglass*, by Jane Marsh Parker, typescript, unpublished. Howard W. Coles Collection, RMSC.
59. Frederick Douglass to Thomas Auld, September 3, 1848, in Douglass, *My Bondage*..., Appendix III.
60. William McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*, New York, 1992, p. 154, 400 (Notes). McFeely cites a letter from Mrs. George D. Van Zandt to Anna M. Douglass [March 1848], Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society Papers, University of Rochester Library.
61. Amy Hamner-Croughton, "Anti-Slavery Days," *Rochester Historical Society Publication Series*, Volume 14, Rochester, 1936, p.126. Joseph Marsh's daughter Jenny [Jane] Marsh Parker met the Douglass family when a child, and she followed their activities with great interest. Her eyewitness accounts of the Douglasses are among the few sources of inside information about their personalities, daily life, and impact on fellow Rochesterians.
62. *Daily American Directory of the City of Rochester for 1847-8*. Rochester, 1847, p.143 John Kedzie is listed as owning a house at 4 Alexander the year before Douglass purchased a house of the same address.
63. The families of skilled European-American woodworkers William Billinghamurst and Nelson Bostwick, desirable artisans in a growing city like Rochester, lived on either side of the Douglasses. Both Billinghamurst and Bostwick were abolitionists, as was neighbor, Joseph Marsh, a Millerite pastor and leader in the new religion advanced during the era of reform in Rochester. Millerites, who eventually became Adventists, predicted the world would end on October 22, 1844. Joseph Marsh became editor of the *Advent Harbinger* and a firm abolitionist. He purchased Billinghamurst's home and moved in next to Douglass around 1849. His daughter, author Jenny Marsh Parker, recorded many of her memories of the Douglass family and provides lively eyewitness accounts.
64. *Reminiscences of Frederick Douglass*, by Jane Marsh Parker, typescript, unpublished. Howard W. Coles Collection, RMSC.

65. **Frederick Douglass 1850 Census** 7th Ward Sept. 4, 1850 p.318-1/2

Dwelling House #59 Family #711

Frederick Douglass	33 M	Mulatto	Editor	val. of real est. 6000	b. Maryland
Anna Douglass	35 F	Black			b. Maryland
Rosetta Douglass	11 F	Black	attended school in last yr.		b. Mass.
Lewis H. Douglass	10 M	Black	attended school in last yr.		b. Mass.
Frederick Douglass	8 M	Black	attended school in last yr.		b. Mass.
Charles Douglass	5 M	Black	attended school in last yr.		b. Mass.
Anna Douglass	1 F	Black			b. NY
Charlotte Murray	30 F	Black;	person over 20 who can't read or write		b. Maryland
Julia Griffith	32 F				b. Scotland

66. "Frederick Douglass was highly esteemed by his neighbors and most popular with the children. When the boys stole his apples he made them ashamed, and they became his loyal admirers forever after." *Reminiscences of Frederick Douglass*, by Jane Marsh Parker, typed, unpublished. Howard W. Coles Collection, RMSC.

67. Jenny Marsh Parker, *Rochester: A Story Historical*, Rochester, NY, 1884.
 68. *Reminiscences of Frederick Douglass*, by Jane Marsh Parker, typed, unpublished. Howard W. Coles Collection, RMSC.

69. Frederick Douglass loved music, and especially the violin. He first learned to play in Baltimore in 1838, with the encouragement of his future wife, Anna Murray. One biographer described Douglass as "no mean performer on the violin, in his prime." In Washington, D.C., Douglass accompanied his second wife, Helen Pitts Douglass, with this violin while she played piano. Douglass was very proud of his grandson, Joseph Douglass, who played classical violin publicly many times in his grandfather's honor.

70. Douglass, *Life and Times*....p.321.

CIRCULAR.

THE FIRST REPORT OF THE ROCHESTER LADIES' ANTI-SLAVERY SEWING SOCIETY.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

Amount of receipts at the Anti-Slavery Fair, March 10th and 12th, 1852.	
For Foreign goods sold	\$ 114.00
" Books	19.00
" Domestic goods	75.75
" Refreshments	103.67
" Entertain at door	66.20
" Donations from 25 individuals	67.12
Charges.	\$ 297.20
Paid Mr. Reynolds for hall, 20th Street, Hills	20.00
" 20th St.	20.00
" Doan's to Mr. Douglas	\$ 207.71
" Balance in Treasury	22.00
	\$ 71.71

We present the above as the preliminary result of the first effort of the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Sewing Society. The sum realized, though quite small when viewed in connection with our large sales, and the pressing wants of the anti-slavery cause, is nevertheless, highly encouraging, and will serve to stimulate us to further endeavors of a like character. For the success which attended the recent Festival, we are greatly indebted to the kind co-operation of friends on both sides of the Atlantic. Our tables were supplied with articles of our own, and of foreign manufacture. Valuable contributions reached us from Cork, Belfast, Manchester and Birmingham, sent expressly to be disposed of for the benefit of *Frederick Douglass' Paper*. Many of our friends in Great Britain and Ireland, inquire as to what articles prove most saleable in Rochester, that they may make their future arrangements accordingly. We would say to those friends that the beautiful *paper wools* from Manchester, together with the articles manufactured in Liverpool, were greatly admired and commanded good prices. The finely-wrought baby-linen, the exquisite sea-weed baskets, the drawings, the collections of Irish shells, and the beautiful embroidery, together with the knitted and netted work, in the Belfast box, were very acceptable. The handsome parasols, reticules and crochet work from Cork, re-

tained a ready sale. Owing to some delay, a box of valuable contributions from Bridgewater, England, and another box from Penzance, failed to reach Rochester in time for the Festival. To the kind friends who forwarded the boxes in question, we would say that, while we regret the non-arrival of their contributions for the late occasion, we are happy to state that measures will be forthwith adopted to dispose of them in a very short time, and that the proceeds will be appropriated in the manner the donors desire. While referring to the valuable donations of our trans-Atlantic friends, we would not forget to mention that the three books of care and choice botanical specimens, so beautifully classified by a friend in Exeter, Scotland, found purchasers. The lady who devoted so much valuable time to their arrangement will be interested to learn that one of the books is now in possession of *Francis Scott Esq.*, of Peterboro, the prince of American plantarists. The presence of Mr. Smith at the Festival, contributed, in no small degree, towards its interest, usefulness and success. On the first evening he delivered an able and eloquent address, which was listened to with deep attention by the audience assembled.

On the second evening, addresses were made by the Rev. H. Raymond of Syracuse, and by Frederick Douglass. Both addresses were heart-stirring, and left upon the audience a profound impression. It was thought, by some of our members, that had the society accomplished nothing more than the calling forth of those speeches, in the presence of such an auditory, their labors would have been amply repaid; for a class of the Rochester citizens were reached, on that evening, by anti-slavery, who had in all probability never heard it before. In the address of Mr. Douglass, the devoted labors of our trans-Atlantic friends and coadjutors were gratefully remembered, and eloquently commended. Our sisters in Great Britain may feel assured that their sympathy for the enslaved of our land is a welcome cordial to our hearts, in our labors to free our beloved country from the heinous crime, and deep disgrace of enslaving one-sixth of our popula-

tion. The time has gone by, we trust, when it can be deemed improper or insignificant for the people of our country to sympathize with, and to labor for the improvement and elevation of the people of another. In the name of *Amicae fratres*, we may crave the co-operation of the universe. That cause is bound by no geographical nor national line. The slave has a right to appeal from his cruel task-master, to assembled mankind.— We, therefore, welcome with gratitude the contributions of our British friends; and we beg to assure them that, *small as their donations may seem to them to be*, they are here highly prized, and rendered greatly serviceable. For the Slave's sake, we solicit a continuance of the co-operation already existing. It is meet that our British friends should labor in this, to them, missionary work.

To our home friends who have assisted us, we tender our grateful acknowledgments.— Among these, we would especially remember our young friends at *McGrawville* who sent us ten dollars. The existence of such an institution as Central College, so thoroughly anti-slavery and anti-sect, is a sign of progress exceedingly gratifying. It will be also seen that donations were sent from *Gamandagna, Peterboro, Philadelphia, and elsewhere*. The contributions to the refreshment tables, from various sources, were very acceptable. Our *Warrington* and *Henrietta* and Rochester friends did nobly in that department, making the expense of furnishing tables very slight. Being quite young in the cause, we very naturally glanced around to see by whom our efforts are favorably regarded. Sirras may sometimes show the course of the wind. Among the journals who willingly and kindly gave publicity to our intended Festival and Convention, we gratefully remember the *National Era, Pennsylvania Freeman, the American Baptist, The Independent, The Commonwealth, the German Ledger, the Banner of the Times, the New York Tribune*, and our own city papers. Before taking leave of the immediate concerns of the Festival, and of our pleasant labors in *Constitution Hall*, we would express our best acknowledgments to Mr. W. A. Reynolds, the proprietor of the building, for his

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Rochester, NY.