Frederick and Anna:

Complicated Lives, Controversial Times

By

R. C. O'Keefe

Dedication

This book is dedicated to Frederick and Anna Douglass, and those in their circle.

Acknowledgments

Services and individuals that helped with this book include: Rochester Public Library, Local History Division of the Downtown Public Library; the late Lea Kemp, curator at Rochester Museum and Science Center; and publicist Lonna Cosmano. Special thanks go to retired archivist, Karl Kabelac; the women in my writing group: Paula Cary, Rolla Donaghy, Joanne Insull, Yvonne Jordan, Valerie McPherson, Marcella Pavelka, and Marile Watersraat and Dennis Carr, Friends of Mount Hope trustee. Of the twenty or so books read for this project, particular mention goes to Peter Burchard for *Frederick Douglass: For the Great Family of Man*; Leigh Fought for *Women in the World of Frederick Douglass; The Frederick Douglass Papers* series, edited by John Blassingame, John McKivigan and Peter Hanks; and Dickson J. Preston's for *Young Frederick Douglass*.

A shorter version of this work was published in 2013.

Disclaimer

This information was compiled from many sources with respect for academic style but intended for a general readership who may be interested in the topic but isn’t going to sift through twenty books to learn about it. Any errors are not intentional and may be reported to the author at www.roseokeefe.com.

Introduction

In his third autobiography, Frederick Douglass wrote: “When the true history of the anti-slavery cause shall be written, woman will occupy a large space in its pages; for the cause of the slave has been peculiarly woman’s cause.” What is it about long winters in Rochester that led me to spend years learning everything I could about the *family* of Frederick Douglass? There have been more surprises than I ever imagined, and they keep coming! As I was expecting to complete the revision of this manuscript in the fall of 2017, the information in Leigh Fought’s brilliant book set me back to square one. It is my intention that this compendium will paint a fuller portrait of the obstacles and accomplishments Frederick and Anna faced in their quest for a good life.

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FOR THIS VERSION, plain text is what appeared in the earlier book; ***additions to this manuscript*** are in bold.

CHAPTER ONE: 1818, Eastern Shore

Frederick Douglass began his first autobiography: "I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their age as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday."[1]

In his second book, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Douglass described Tuckahoe as a drab and dreary neighborhood, surrounded by poor whites.[2] He guessed at the origin of the name Tuckahoe, but did not know it came from Algonquin for root or mushroom.[3]

Although he never knew his exact birth date, his family's lineage was traceable through records to 1701, the birth year of his grandmother's grandfather. In the 1700s, the family lived in the most prosperous and populated area of the colony of Maryland. By the time of Douglass' birth, they were an established black subculture of former West Indians whose ways were different from new slaves arriving from Africa. The family had lived on Maryland's Eastern Shore for a hundred years by the time of Frederick's birth. His master

[1] *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave: Written by Himself*, edited by Benjamin Quarles (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), 23.

[2] Douglass, Frederick, *My Bondage and My Freedom,* F. D. Papers, Series Two, Autobiographical Writings, Vol. 2, 21.

[3] Douglass, *My Bondage*, annotation, 320, 21.19/33.21.

Anthony Auld used to call him, "his little Indian boy." Years later, Douglass's son Lewis wrote to him after visiting the area to say Frederick's grandmother, Betsey Bailey, was of Indian descent.[4]

One of the ironies of slavery is that there are accurate records of Frederick Bailey's family tree. In his research, Dickson Preston studied the records for six generations of slaves owned by the Anthony, Skinner and Rice families in Talbot County. Frederick's male ancestor Baly was the first to arrive on Maryland's Eastern Shore. For the next hundred years or so, their family had the familiarity of living on the same land.

In some families, slave mothers had the option of naming their children, passing on favored names like a precious gift. There was a Baly, Bealy, Bail, Baley or Baily for five generations before the Bailey name appeared. Variations on Betty and Harry were often used.

While it may be difficult to determine whether the Bailey family's lasting kinship was connected to their community life in Africa or their long-term relationship with upper class whites on the same land in Maryland, it is impressive that the Bailey clan has the longest family record in that area. Bailey children were raised in a tight circle of extended family who modeled practical skills and values, including courage and respect for their ancestors.[5]

The slaves who came to Talbot County before 1750, had already been separated from their African homelands and had lived in the West Indies since the early 1600s. These West Indians, primarily from Barbados, traveled by ship up on deck along with rum, sugar, molasses, and salt. They had already developed their own creole culture that transformed them into Afro-Americans, distinct from native Africans. Their matrilineal traditions and

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[4] Dickson J. Preston, *The Young Frederick Douglass, The Maryland Years* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980) 6-9

[5] Preston, *Young F. D.*, Appendix B, 205.

values had nothing in common with those of later slaves in the Deep South, with whom they only had skin color in common.[6]

For economic and religious reasons, manumission was popular after the American Revolution, particularly in Talbot County, where there were many Quakers who had been forbidden to own slaves after 1776. There were more free blacks in Talbot County than any other county in Maryland. By 1790, Quaker meeting on the Eastern Shore were free of slave owners.[7]

Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey's formidable name came in part from his being named Augustus for a son of Betsey's who had died, and Bailey for his mother's family name. His color was lighter than his mother's or grandmother's, of a shade called yellow, like a light tan, and his face made more than Aaron Anthony think of an Indian boy. He recalled the first eight years of his life as being carefree and happy.

Under Maryland law, the children of one black and one known white parent had rights that other blacks did not. They could be acknowledged in their white father's wills. Mulattos born of white women served for seven years as slaves; those of black women were slaves for life, but if they were freed, they could testify in court.[8]

A common fate for healthy slave women, particularly in the Chesapeake area, was life as a breeder, like livestock, to increase the owners' inventory. These enslaved women's lives were like other slaves, with the added duty of bearing a child every two years, without control of who fathered them. Under the peculiarity of slave life, they did not receive the brutal punishments others did and were less likely to sold away than male slaves. Despite

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[6] Preston, *Young F. D.*, 11, 13-14.
[7] Preston, *Young F. D*., 18-19.
[8] Ibid., 35-36; and Kate Clifford Larson, *Bound for Freedom*, (New York: One World Ballantine), 81.

forced pregnancies, such women were heads of their own households, and often models of stability and independence. Hard-working women sold poultry, eggs, pies, cakes, produce, handcrafted items, baskets, hunted, trapped or pilfered meats, around their own plantation and with other plantations in an active slave economy.[9]

According to a private document called "My Blacks," sometime after his marriage to Ann Skinner in 1798, Aaron Anthony wrote a list of the names, ages and mothers of the blacks he owned with her. Anthony's descendants updated the list for several decades, making it an unprecedented record of a slave family from colonial days onward. It also confirmed Freddy's birth year of February 1818.

When Aaron Anthony died in 1826, two Bailey family sub groups were defined, and this list pulled together information from several sources that Freddy's great-grandmother was the one and the same Jinny, Jenny and Jeney. It also revealed details Douglass never learned in his own lifetime. Contrary to his understanding that his grandmother Betsey and grandfather Isaac had five daughters and a son, they had nine daughters, three sons and about twenty-five grandchildren.

The list includes his own mother's birthdate in February 1792 and five other children Harriet bore in addition to him.[10]

He said his mother, Harriet Bailey, the daughter of Isaac and Betsey Bailey, was darker in color than either of her parents. That his father was white was common knowledge; that his father was

[9] Lydia Bjornlund, *Women of Colonial America*, (Lucent Books, Thomason Gale, 2004) 48-49.
[10] Ibid, 5-6.

his master, Aaron Anthony, "Captain Anthony" was hinted at. Since Freddy and his mother had little time together, he barely knew or remembered her.[11]

Betsey Bailey was described as a "tall, straight-backed and strong, more brown than black" woman who had "remarkable self-reliance and independence of mind" – characteristics which she passed on to her children. In addition to her other work, her master, Aaron Anthony, also paid for her services as a midwife.[12]

"Aunt Betsey" raised dozens of children whose mothers labored in distant fields. Despite living in an old windowless log cabin with a clay floor and dirt chimney, the cabin was a haven for children like Freddy.[13] Aunt Betsey delighted in having the children, mostly of her own daughters, around her. The daughters were Jenny, Esther, Milly, Priscilla and Harriet. For much of the first seven years of his life he had only a long shirt, no possessions, but if he stayed away from tough older boys, he was as happy as could be.[14]

Freddy's carefree days ended when he and Aunt Betsey left the swampy backwoods for a brick house where his owner, Aaron Anthony, lived with his daughter and her husband, Lucretia and Thomas Auld. Betsey encouraged him to play with his brother Perry, sisters Sarah and Eliza, and cousins Phil, Tom, Steve, Jerry, Nancy and Betty. When Freddy found out his grandmother was gone, he collapsed, crying over her leaving without warning. His two years there – where he was

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[11] Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass,* F. D. Papers, Series Two, Autobiographical Writings. Vol 1, 13.

[12] Ibid., 17, and *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, McKivigan, 317, note 13.

[13] Burchard, *F. Douglass,* 10, and Maryann N. Weidt, *Voice*, 8- 9.

[14] *F. Douglass Papers,* Vol. 2, 23-224.

called in local dialect “Captain Anthony Fed – were painful for being underfed and witnessing brutal beatings. The most common reason for whippings was oversleeping.[15]

Douglass later recalled his early days on Holme Hill Farm as a place where he could fish in the creek with a bent pin or linger near the water-mill watching the heavy wheel turning for the stream of people who came to have their corn ground into meal. Despite living simply on cornmeal with a piece of sweet potato or crabmeat, none of the children in Betsey’s care ever starved. She was a respected farmer who planted sweet potatoes and the fishnets that she wove were in great demand.[16]

It is likely that members of the Bailey family on Aaron Anthony’s farm were part of an extended network with Bailey’s on nearby farms and that Freddy Bailey would have known Harriet Tubman’s extended family before he fled in 1838.[17]

In the U.S. Census of 1820 Isaac Baily was listed as free colored, head of household with nine children under the age of 14.[18] **He was a free black woodcutter who earned his income selling trimmed hardwood and pine to carpenters and cabinet makers.**[19]

The trees along Tuckahoe Creek included oaks, maples, sweet gums, walnuts and loblolly pines. In 1797, Isaac and Betsey had set up house away from the community quarters, in a clearing in the woods, near the bank of the Tuckahoe. Their windowless one-room cabin

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[15] Burchard, *F. Douglass,* 14-16, and Preston, *Young F.* Douglass, 38-39.and *Narrative*, 17 and *My Bondage*, 29, 45, 60.

[16] Peter Burchard, *Frederick Douglass, For the Great Family of Man* (New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2003) 10, and Maryann N. Weidt, *Voice of Freedom* (Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books, 2001) 8-9.

[17] Larson, *Bound for*, 95.

[18] Preston, *Young F. D.*, 216, note 53.

[19] Burchard, *F. Douglass*, 8.

had a packed clay floor, mud and straw chimney, and a simple ladder for reaching a small attic. They had a shallow well and were close to a spring that went through a ravine toward a spot called "muddy shore" where they trapped shad and herring in nets during the spring runs.

During the thirty years that Isaac's had his own business, he did so well that he was able to hire a slave by the year, at least twice, to help him. Betsey stayed there past Isaac's death and the removal of her children and grandchildren, until she became blind and feeble. The place where her cabin had been, was called "Aunt Bettie's Lot" for year by whites and blacks, after her death in November of 1849.[20]

Freddy grew up with Isaac, Betsy, and several cousins. He had rare visits from his own mother, Harriet Bailey, (1792-c.1825) who had to walk twelve miles from the fields after dusk, rest with him and get back to the fields by dawn. She did this only a few times and died when he was about seven. At age six when his grandmother walked him to the main house to stay, he left his younger sisters, Kitty and Ariana, and met his brother Perry and sisters, Eliza and Sarah, for the first time.[21]

Freddy remembered that summer morning for the rest of his life. It was during the summer of 1824, because he remembered peaches and pears being ripe. His grandmother didn't explain where they were going, and he later recalled that he would have given her trouble if she had. As it was, she carried him a few times along the twelve-mile route to the Wye Plantation and the Great House, as it was called. Their walk ended going through a service lane called the Long Green Lane that cut through twenty grassy acres, past the quarters, to

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[20] Preston, *Young F. D.*, 18.

[21] William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: Norton, 1991) 8-10, and Weidt, *Voice,* 9.

the wharf at Lloyd's Cove. Freddy would have had a peek at Wye House, as they headed to a plain red-brick house where "Old Master" lived, with a separate kitchen building for the slaves.

In the two hundred years since Edward Lloyd V's family had arrived from Wales, they had prospered, owning their own mansion, outbuildings, highly-prized thoroughbreds, and about seven hundred sheep. At that time, Lloyd was the most successful farmer in Maryland as well as one of the most successful in the United States.

Aunt Betsey took Freddy to the brick house where his owner, Aaron Anthony, lived with his daughter Lucretia and her husband, Thomas Auld. Betsey encouraged him to play with his brothers, sisters and cousins, which he did reluctantly. When he found out she had left while he was in the backyard, he fell to the ground crying over her leaving, and her not warning him. Desolate, he curled up and slept alone in a corner of Aaron Anthony's kitchen.[22]

The shock of leaving his grandmother's cabin was increased by being under the care of a foul-tempered slave, Aunt Katy, who took care of the children in the kitchen building on Aaron Anthony's farm. She seems to have taken a strong dislike to Freddy, but also favored her own children over the others.

Aunt Katy was known to give Freddy's food to her children. One rare time when his mother visited, she brought him a heart-shaped ginger cake and with her boy perched on her knee, Harriet Bailey vented her fury at Aunt Katy, making Freddy feel like somebody truly cared for him. It was the last visit he had a visit from his mother, who died a short time later.

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[22] Burchard, *F. Douglass*, 14-16, and Preston*, Young F. D.*, 38-39.

Aaron Anthony's employer, Colonel Lloyd, held spectacular parties all summer long for neighboring planters and his circle of friends from Annapolis. He was never in direct contact with most slaves except for his grooms and house servants. These favored slaves who were good looking, smart and loyal, were well dressed and fed, and had perfect manners, while field hands worked and lived in squalor out of sight.[23]

Edward Lloyd V, owner of Wye Plantation, was the most successful, wealthy farmer in Maryland. Wye House or Wye Mansion was known as the Great House. Aaron Anthony, called Captain Anthony, was a widower who lived on the Lloyd estate with his daughter Lucretia and her husband Thomas Auld, working under Lloyd. Anthony owned most of the Bailey family. When Freddy left his grandmother's cabin, he lived in the wood-framed kitchen of a brick house that was behind Wye House, that Aaron Anthony lived in.[24]

When Freddy lived in the swampy backwoods at Tuckahoe, Edward Lloyd's farms were run with strict order. Around the central farm and mansion were a blacksmith, carpenter, shoemaker, wheelwright, their private dock, a windmill, smoke-, milk- and ice houses and other outbuildings. Lloyd owned a dozen other farms and kept buying more. At that time, he owned about one hundred and eighty slaves. Lloyd delegated an overseer for each farm who was rated for his efficiency. Anthony measured out food and clothing for the field workers from the central farm. Out of the allotment of eight pounds of pickled pork or fish, a bushel of cornmeal and a pint of salt, the pork or fish was often spoiled and the cornmeal unfit to eat. Slaves could also have pigs, chickens and garden plots, and were allowed to fish

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[23] Burchard, *F. Douglass*, 18-21 and Preston, *Young F. D.*, 52-53.
[24] Burchard, *F. Douglass,* 13-15.

and get clams, oysters and crabs.[25]

Through slave trading, tobacco, wheat, corn, rye, politics and other dealings, the Lloyd family's wealth had grown immensely since their ancestors' arrival in the 1660s. Their reputation was: they never sold slaves; never gave slaves their freedom; gave their slaves the least amount of food, clothing and shelter; and worked them under harsh overseers. Edward V, who was governor three times and senator twice, gradually owned over five hundred and fifty slaves and kept buying more.[26]

When Freddy moved to the Lloyd plantation, he couldn't understand the "Guinea dialect" of the field hands who had arrived from Africa and was surprised to learn that other blacks had not lived in Talbot County for generations.[27]

He was trained *not* to speak common English, but to speak in dialect. **For a time, he played in the Great House with Lloyd's youngest son, twelve-year-old Daniel, who seemed not to notice his color. They roamed in the fields and hunted rabbits and birds, with Freddy fetching the kill. Daniel shared cakes and biscuits and spared Freddy from being bullied by older boys. Later in life Frederick said his command of the English language came from playing with Daniel and listening to the descriptions of the sumptuous feasts and many guests at the Great House.**

Since he was too young to work in the fields, Freddy also ran errands for Lucretia Auld, tidied the front yard and drove up the cows in the evening. Lucretia was a kind woman who tended Freddy's wounds when he got into fights. They became friends and she

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[25] Preston, *Young F. D.*, 48.
[26] Preston, *Young F. D.*, 42-43, 45.
[27] Preston, *Young F. D.*, 14.

rewarded him with bread and butter for singing outside her window.

While he was neither a field hand nor a house servant, as Daniel's companion, Freddy had a clear view of the daily life of all the workers who made the Lloyd's extravagant lifestyle possible.[28]

Lucretia Auld's father, Aaron Anthony, had risen from poverty as the lowly son of a poor tenant farmer, taught himself his letters and numbers and worked on the boats that hauled cargo to Chesapeake Bay. He did so well, that he became captain of the Elizabeth Ann, owned by Colonel Edward Lloyd V, the richest man on the Eastern Shore. For three years, Anthony transported members of the Lloyd family from the mansion to their Annapolis townhouse.

He was a hard worker who stepped up in society with his marriage to Ann Skinner in early 1797. Lloyd set them up in a rent-free house on his property and gave him a raise. Aaron invested his money in land and bought Holme Hill Farm from Lloyd in 1802. In 1805, he bought one hundred and five neighboring acres that became Red House Farm, and then in 1806, he bought forty-one acres of malarial swamp land where the Bailey's cabin stood. He never needed to purchase slaves and by the time of his death owned thirty.[29]

From the short time that he was around his master, Freddy described Aaron Anthony as a miserable, anxious man. His wife had become sickly and died years earlier; their sons did not do well in life, and there was gossip about Anthony's fondness for Betsey Bailey's attractive daughters. After thirty years of service to Colonel Lloyd, Aaron had become violent and inconsistent and not been rehired. Lucretia and her husband Thomas Auld had

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[28] Burchard, *F. Douglass*, 22-23, and Preston, *Young F. D.*, 54-55.
[29] Preston, *Young F. D.*, 26, 27.

moved to the village of Hillsboro where Thomas ran a store, so Aaron was alone in the house on the estate.[30]

Notable events in young Freddy's life were the death of his mother in 1825 or early 1826. Harriet had died without letting him know who his father was. All he learned was that she had died after a long illness and that she was the only one of all the slaves and colored people in Tuckahoe who could read. The other event happened a few months later, when Harriet's sister, Aunt Jenny and her husband Uncle Noah fled to freedom in the North. Such escapes were very risky in the 1820s before the Underground Railroad was established. They were both 26 and had two small children –a seven-year old girl and a six-year old boy – whom they left behind. Up until this time, Freddy hadn't known there was such a thing as a free state and that slaves became free there.[31]

Aaron Anthony offered a reward of fifty dollars for Jenny and one hundred dollars for Noah for their return to him. The couple must have believed they were going to be sold and separated and left their children with Aunt Betsey. Anthony sold both children to a trader from Alabama.[32]

Freddy's first experience with schooling on the Wye Plantation was dismal. One of the heads of the Copper clan, the largest family group of Lloyd's slaves, was a crippled old man who had bred fighting cocks for Colonel Lloyd in his younger days. Like everyone on the plantation, he followed a rigid social order. Colonel Lloyd and his well-to-do guests never

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[30] Preston, *Young F. D.*, 29-30.
[31] Preston, *Young F. D.*, 64-65.
[32] Burchard, *F. Douglass*, 25.

socialized with Aaron Anthony, who never mingled with the overseers who in turn, scorned the slaves. Uncle Isaac or Doctor Isaac, as he was called, had four lengths of hickory switches that he used so often, that after a few bitter sessions learning the lines of the Lord's Prayer by repetition, Freddy made sure to avoid the lessons and floggings. Instead he learned as much as he could from his cousin Tommy, who worked on the ship Sally Lloyd, and despite stuttering, told Freddy about the world beyond the plantation.[33] Freddy had been seven when his mother died, but since he knew her so little, her death had little direct effect on him. After the wrenching pain he had felt leaving his grandmother, he never fully trusted anyone again.[34]

1826

When Freddy was hungry and sang by Lucretia's window, she rewarded him with bread and butter, but the description of her as the kindly daughter of Freddy' master is simplistic. Lucretia doled out the rations that were allotted to the cook, Aunt Katy, who gave more to her own children than others. If they had skimpy clothes or no blankets it was because Lucretia never gave any to Aunt Katy, whose harsh treatments met with tacit approval. Lucretia's kindness to Freddy seems to have been for a smallish boy who was picked on by bigger boys. Once he outgrew his childishness, she wouldn't have noticed him. Chances are that when Aaron Anthony was not rehired in January of 1826, and Thomas and Lucretia moved to Hillsboro to open a store there – not far from Aunt Betsey's cabin and Anthony's house, Lucretia may have decided to send Freddy to Baltimore to her

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[33] Burchard, Ibid, 21; and Preston, *Young F. Douglass*, 61.
[34] McFeely, *F. Douglass,* 10.

brother-in-law. Her sister-in-law, Sophie Auld may have requested help with the care of her son Tommy who was 2, because she was pregnant again and due in November. It is likely that her father agreed to send him to Baltimore because Freddy had been a playmate for Daniel Lloyd and was familiar with being a servant in a white home.[35]

One day, Lucretia told him to scrub himself clean from head to toe and gave him a clean pair of pants and a shirt for his trip. He traveled on the *Sally Lloyd*, the Colonel's sloop, along with six hundred sheep headed for slaughter. **Douglass later wrote he didn't regret leaving the plantation. Having seen the harsh treatment of others he knew that one day, he would have an overseer.**

On the two-day trip, he had his first sight ever of a city – Annapolis – and then the excitement of unloading the sheep ***at*** **Smith's Wharf** and walking **down lanes and streets** to his new home in **Happy Alley, in Fells Point, which was** a shipbuilding neighborhood.[36]

At that time Baltimore had a free black community of about 30,000, and the sight of free blacks must have been a surprise for Freddy, but his main recollection is of where he lived. He had gone to the Auld home at the time of the building of a large frigate at the bottom of Alliceanna Street where the Aulds lived.[37]

Later in life, Douglass was confused about the year of his going to Baltimore but was able to recall the completion of an eighteen-ton warship in a shipyard where Hugh Auld worked. He had attended the launching, which was written up in a May 1826 newspaper. While this accomplishment impressed him, what affected him most was the kindness of his new mistress, Sophie Auld. On his first night there, he had not only eaten supper at the same table with the

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[35] Leigh Fought, *Women in the World of Frederick Douglass* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017) 30-31.
[36] Burchard, *F. Douglass*, 27-28.
[37] *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, introduction and notes by Robert O'Meally, (New York: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003), 109; also, Preston, *Young Frederick Douglass*, .33.

Auld family, he had then slept in a loft above the kitchen on a straw mattress, with clean sheets and a warm blanket. **At first, Sophie treated him like a second son, having been taught by her working-class parents that slavery was a crime**.[38]

Sophia Auld most likely had little schooling but was a devout Methodist who read stories from the Bible to her both boys. When her husband, Hugh, found out that Sophia had taught letters to Freddy along with Tommy, he was irate about her mistake of teaching a slave to read. From that time on Sophie's relationship to Freddy changed.[39]

Unlike Lucretia, Sophie Auld's family, who were some kind of weavers, would have been familiar with apprentices who were not free, but were not property either. Her family had not owned slaves and she didn't grow into the ways that slave-owning families had of viewing children as property. She had first treated Freddy like her own son and took his interest in learning to read the Bible as a call for salvation. She tutored him for about a year, by which time his love of learning was set.[40]

It is not known whether Lucretia saw a family resemblance in her mulatto half-brother causing her to favor Freddy and have him sent away from Wye Plantation.

After Aaron Anthony died without leaving a will in November 1826, the question of whether he would have let Freddy stay in Baltimore could not be determined. Anthony had three children, Andrew, Richard and Lucretia, who were to receive a portion of his estate, but in the meantime, Lucretia died leaving ownership of 29 slaves to her husband Thomas and her brothers.[41]

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[38] Burchard, *F. Douglass*, 29.
[39] McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 24-27, Burchard, *F. Douglass*, 29, and Preston, *Young F. Douglass*, 85-86.
[40] Fought, *Women in the World*, 32-33.
[41] Burchard, *F.D.*, 30-31.

Aaron Anthony had died while visiting his daughter, son-in-law and new granddaughter in Hillsboro, and was buried in an unmarked grave on Holme Hill Farm. Without a will, his property was to be divided among his daughter and sons, but before a settlement could be made, Lucretia died shortly after the birth of her first child, and her husband Thomas became heir to her portion. When Freddy left for Tuckahoe for the estate settlement, he, Sophia and Tommy wept bitterly. The agonizing sorting process included Freddy watching as one of Aaron Anthony's sons kicked his brother Perry in the head.

In October 1827, the sorting was done, and lawyers divided the slaves among the three heirs, maintaining family groupings so that Aunt Betsey and four of Harriet's children stayed in Tuckahoe as property of the abusive son, Andrew; Aunt Katy and her family went to Richard; Thomas Auld received Freddy's Aunt Milly and her four children, Freddy and his sister Eliza. To Freddy's relief Thomas sent him back to Baltimore, to Hugh and Sophia, and their two sons.[42]

Freddy stayed seven years with the Aulds, where he taught himself to read and write in secret.[43] **He was making many friends among the free colored people in Baltimore and became adept at learning to read and write on the fly. He found an old bluebook speller and while on errands for his mistress, asked little white boys how to spell words or what their meaning was. While out and about, he secretly earned small change by blacking boots and put those earnings toward his first book.**[44]

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[42] Burchard, *F. Douglass*, 32-33; McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 27-29; Fought, *Women in the World*, 31, and Preston, *Young F. Douglass*, 30.

[43] Douglass, *Narrative of the Life,* 35-36; *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 94-95.

[44] Howard Coles, *The Cradle of Freedom* (Rochester, New York: Riverside Book Bindery, 1941) 106.

When he was about 11, Freddy used to sneak Tommy's copybook to practice writing words when Sophia Auld went to her weekly Bible class. **For Freddy's work on the waterfront, Hugh Auld gave him a few pennies every week to buy candy, from which he saved fifty cents to toward a copy of *The Columbian Orator* of speeches and poems, from Knights bookstore on Thames Street.**[45]

Freddy had searched for God and found some of what he was looking for in the preaching of a white Methodist minister, but black drayman Charles Lawson encouraged him to cast his cares on God. In the depth of his despair over being a slave for life, Freddy had a conversion experience and for a time, the glow of his new faith softened how he saw his harsh surroundings and gave him a keen desire to study the Bible. Later he recalled gathering pages of the Bible from filthy gutters, washing and drying them and studying them when he had a chance. Despite Hugh Auld's threats of a whipping, Freddy went to Lawson's house as often as possible and considered him his spiritual father, calling him Uncle. Lawson told him God had great work for him to do, and that he needed to prepare himself to preach. Between 1831 and 32, Freddy joined Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and studied the Bible with Lawson, working and praying that God would deliver him from his bondage.[46]

The Columbian Orator: Containing a Variety of Original and Selected Pieces Together with Rules Calculated to Improve Youth and Others in the Ornamental and Useful Art of Eloquence, was a collection of speeches, dialogues and plays edited by Caleb Bingham and first published in 1797. It had many selections on freedom, democracy and courage**. Learning the**

[45] McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 34 and, Burchard, *F. Douglass*, 39.
[46] Douglass, *Autobiographies, My Bondage,* 231-33, and chronology, 1051.

meaning of the word "abolition," coupled with freedom, gave him hope for a new life beyond slavery. He practiced his penmanship diligently and began writing "free passes" for runaways.[47]

Up until the time of Freddy's birth, no member of his family had been sold down South. By the time he was 14, the economy had changed for the worse on the Eastern Shore. There had been a decline in shipbuilding, and wheat growing required many hands only during the mid-summer harvest. After his sister, two aunts, seven first cousins and at least five of his relations disappeared into the Deep South, he came to understand the horror of being "sold down to Georgia."[48]

Despite such separations, Douglass remained loyal to his own brothers and sisters who were the fifth generation of his lineage: Perry (b. 1813), Sarah (b. 1814), Eliza (b. 1816, himself (b. 1818), Kitty (b. 1820) Arianna (b. 1822) and Harriet (b. c. 1825).[49]

Stress in the Auld household grew after Sophia had two more children, Hugh's business was failing, and he drank more. Even though he and Sophia had grown apart, what separated them was Thomas Auld's resentment of owning Henny, a crippled slave, while Hugh had the advantage of Freddy's service. Thomas said if Hugh had Freddy, then he should also have Henny and sent her to Baltimore. Hugh sent her back, and Thomas, as owner of both, demanded that Hugh return Freddy.[50]

As they grew older, Freddy and Tommy Auld didn't get along; Freddy had also become a surly teenager. When Freddy was 15, Hugh Auld decided to return him to his brother Thomas at the

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[47] *Narrative*, O'Meally, note 25, 109.
[48] Preston, *Young F. D.*, 76.
[49] Ibid., appendix B, 206.
[50] Preston, *Young F. D.*, 104.

port of St. Michaels on Maryland's Eastern Shore where he couldn't escape easily.[51]

In March 1833, Freddy returned to Thomas Auld's household of eight, in the rundown shipbuilding village of St. Michael's. After Lucretia's death, Thomas had married a sickly woman who was stingy and cruel about feeding their slaves. The Aulds lived in the house behind Thomas' store, while Freddy, his younger sister Eliza, their Aunt Priscilla and cousin Henny, lived in a kitchen building. Freddy, now 15, was constantly hungry; Eliza taught him that the sin of stealing food did not apply to slaves.[52]

It was there Freddy started a Sabbath school for his peers that members of the Methodist Sabbath School, including Thomas Auld, broke up by beating them with sticks. The difference between the Methodists' preaching and their practices stung Freddy deeply and remained a life-long thorn for him.[53]

Years later at a time when his master denied ever having struck him or told anyone to do so, Douglass recalled in a letter to William Lloyd Garrison a time when Thomas Auld had beaten him until Auld had tired. He also wrote of the time between 1838 and 1840, when Auld released one of Douglass' cousins, Henny Bailey. After Thomas Auld had inherited her in 1826, he used to tie her up in the morning, quoted scriptures as he beat her, left her there and beat her again in the evening.[54]

The following January of 1834, he was serviced out to work for a year on Edward Covey's farm, where Freddy slept in an unheated attic and shivered through many cold nights. Covey was a

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[51] McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 39, and Preston, *Young F. D.*, 104-05.

[52] Preston, *Young F. D.,* 106-108; and *Narrative,* 42.

[53] Douglass, *My Bondage*, 114-5, 151-2, McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 43, and Preston, *Young F. Douglass*, 116.

[54] Douglass, *My Bondage*, 115; McKivigan, *F. D.s' Papers*, 110, footnote 7 and Preston, *Young F. D.*, 111.

hardworking, bullish and religious farmer who whipped or beat him weekly. In August, when he swooned on a sweltering day, Covey struck him to force him to get back to work, but instead Freddy ran to Thomas Auld for protection – which Auld refused. A few days later, Covey tried to tie him up for a beating, but Freddy fought back. After a long and vicious struggle, Covey told Freddy to get back to work and never lashed him again.[55]

When Freddy returned to Thomas Auld's home on Christmas Day, he saw how the tradition of slaves over-drinking until the New Year, kept them in place.[56] **After that brutal year which did not break Freddy's spirit and turned him into a first-rate field hand, Thomas Auld tried a different tactic and placed him with a more lenient master on the Freeland farm.** On the first of January 1835, he was hired out for the year on William Freeland's farm. His non-church-going master gave them enough food, time to eat it, and work hours from sunrise to sunset. It was there that Freddy assisted with a Sabbath school, where up to forty students met to learn the Bible on Sunday – a time he remembered with great fondness. When Freddy was rehired for another year's service at the Freeland farm, his determination to live *freely* grew.

William Freeland had the status of being "old family" on the Eastern Shore; he did not whip or starve his slaves, attend a church, nor expect his slaves to either. Freddy enjoyed friendships with young men like himself. He taught school there "in the woods, behind the barn and, and in the shade of trees on summer Sundays using Webster's speller and his *Columbian Orator*.[57]

He formed a plan with six other young men to steal an oyster-gathering canoe, stay along the Eastern Shore to a canal near North Point and slip into Pennsylvania. It failed. After Freddy spent

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[55] Douglass, *My Bondage*, F. D. Papers, Series Two, 117, 138-41, *Narrative*, 53-4.
[56] Douglass, *Narrative*, 55, *My Bondage*, 143, and McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 49.
[57] Douglass, *Narrative*, 152 and Preston, *Young F. Douglass*, 129-30.

a terrifying week alone in jail, Thomas Auld promised him possible freedom at age 25 and sent him to Baltimore to learn how to caulk holes in ships.

Freddy was now 18. There was more competition from freemen and white immigrants for jobs. After he was badly beaten by Irish boys, Hugh Auld helped Freddy completed his apprenticeship elsewhere and become a journeyman caulker. At age 20, Freddy became semi-independent, agreeing to pay Hugh Auld $3 a week whether he found work or not, to pay his own room and board and buy his own caulking tools. In the spring of 1838, he was in fine health and ready to work night and day.[58]

In the first apprenticeship he answered to seventy-five carpenters working on two warships. This awful arrangement ended when four white apprentices beat him so badly, he almost lost his left eye. Unlike Thomas Auld who had agreed with Covey's beatings, Hugh Auld stood up for him without success in the local courts, and as foreman in another yard, hired Freddy as caulking apprentice. Within a year, Freddy was able to hire himself out at the highest wage for experienced caulkers, and found that the more freedom he had, the more discontented he felt.[59] **In the summer of 1838 when Fred was living on his own and earning extra money he took on odd jobs. One of them was as a servant, Edward, who walked a son of Mr. Merriman (or Merryman) from their house on Calvert Street to the E.M.P Wells school of Mrs. Elizabeth Wells on Caroline Street that was close to where Anna Murray stayed. There's a chance they already had met around the Fells Point neighborhood or that she referred him for the position because he had a reputation as a valuable servant.**[60]

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[58] Douglass, *My Bondage*, 159-163, and McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 65.
[59] Douglass, *Bondage*, 163-65, 176, *Narrative*, 57-9, 66-70, McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 56, Burchard, *F. Douglass*, 66.
[60] Fought, *The Women*, 48.

Anna Murray's parents, Mary and Bambarra Murray, were slaves living on the Eastern Shore near the town of Denton in Caroline County, across from the Eastern Shore. They had 12 children, seven born into slavery and five born free. They were manumitted one month before Anna was born and she was their first free child.

At age 17 she went to work in Baltimore and worked for two years with the Montell family. Francis and Elizabeth Montell were a French creole family from the Bahamas that moved to Pratt Street in Baltimore with their eight children. Francis Montell was a merchant who had owned 25 slaves, but had sold them in 1832 and moved, possibly because of talk of emancipation in the West Indies, which happened in 1834. Francis and his son owned a shop on the Inner Harbor, (where Freddy Bailey had landed in 1826).[61]

Anna then worked in the home of Mr. Wells, Baltimore's postmaster, where she earned her reputation as a highly-skilled housekeeper. The Wells family lived on Caroline Street, a few blocks away from the Montell family. Anna worked there for several years and had fond memories of the them. Earlier in his life, Peter Wells had lived on Aliceanna Street (where Freddy Bailey lived for a time with the Aulds). After working for the post office in the 1820s and 30s, he and his family eventually moved to Caroline in Fells Point. In those days, families that had hired household help considered themselves middle class and Anna acquired training in middle class ways in both homes.[62]

Before then, Anna's mother would have trained her to do cooking and housework that would help her find steady work. Possibly the mistress of the house in both places would

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[61] Leigh Fought, *Women,* 43, 83.

[62] Rosetta Sprague, "My Mother As I Recall Her," paper given at Women's Christian Temperance Union, May 10, 1900, 6 and Burchard, *F. Douglass,* 69.

have shared the chores while giving her directions. Anna would have learned all the steps needed for gathering, storing and preparing foods in the country, but shopping on her own or with her mistress in Baltimore, she would have bought ready-made butter, cut meats, harvested produce, and pre-made candles. Just as her husband had learned to read from Tommy's mother and others around him, Anna learned the skills that later made her "the banker" of her family up North. Anna's reputation as a meticulous housekeeper with a neat appearance reflected well on the status of her employers as well as lifting her above the negative views of working class and poor black women. Over the years, she developed a stoic reserve to protect herself from working under close scrutiny in white households.[63]

Anna was a warm and generous woman who had a common background with Fred as natives of the Eastern Shore. They met sometime between 1836 and 1838, when during his off-time, he spent evenings at the East Baltimore Mental Improvement Society, a men's group of young caulkers who could read, write and cipher and were eager for self-improvement. Since it was a men's group, Anna most likely would have met him around the neighborhood in public places like the market or Strawberry Alley Church, or at mutual friends' homes.

Anna was described as tall, strong, with straight black hair, possibly part Native-American, and recognizing Fred's thirst for knowledge, gave him books and suggested he take violin lessons. [64] **He could have learned to play the violin from someone at the Wells School, but he received encouragement from Anna, who was a competent amateur violinist and worked in the Wells home**.[65]

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[63] Fought, *Women*, 44-45.
[64] Maria Diedrich, *Love Across Color Lines* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999) 175; and Fought, *The Women*, 47.
[65] McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 65-66, 101.

Anna knew how to play the violin and taught him "how to draw a bow and pluck a string." They liked to sing together and collected sheet music.[66] Since he was a boy, Fred had the skill of mimicry, which stayed with him for the rest of his life. Both saved money for his escape.[67]

In considering their future together, Anna had to weigh the challenges of being a free black woman who might not live with her husband because of living with her employers. If married to an enslaved man, they would face the threat of his being sent away. Depending on his line of work, her husband would have highs and lows in finding jobs, while she, like her peers, would have worked in others' homes as well as doing all the domestic chores in her own home. This was the norm for women in her station in life.[68]

In early spring of 1838, Thomas Auld who was in Baltimore on business, had refused Freddy's request to hire himself out and live on his own. In May, he persuaded Hugh Auld to let him move out while committing to pay Hugh weekly, no matter how little work he might have. By August Freddy stretched his privileges and lost the agreement. He then set September 3rd as the day he would flee. In the *Narratives*, he glosses over the details to protect those who aided him. After a nerve-wracking escape by train and ferry, he arrived in New York City, exhausted and survived alone and hungry before finding David Ruggles who took him in. Ruggles, a black activist in the anti-slavery cause, helped him decide to seek work as a caulker in New Bedford. Freddy wrote to Anna Murray who joined him there and they were married by the Rev. James W. C. Pennington on Sept. 15th. He had changed his name to Fred Johnson while

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[66] Burchard, *F. Douglass,* 69.
[67] McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 17, 66, 68.
[68] Fought, *Women*, 46.

fleeing Baltimore, but Douglass did not reveal these details until 1881.[69]

In contrast to the beginning of *Narrative of the Life of a Slave* in which Douglass later described his undocumented birth, and the rapes and beating of slave women, he ended *Narrative* with details about his marriage with a certificate, witnesses and the name of a legitimate minister. While slaves did not usually have last names, Fred and Anna took Johnson as their new last name in New York state.[70]

Romantic love was less of a consideration than whether each person balanced the economic and social demands of a household and family and their marriage fit the norms for black and working-class marriages at that time. Anna's skills as a housekeeper made her a strong partner with Fred's skills as a caulker with a high-paying job in the ship-building industry. Unlike most of their peers who lived in constant debt, they both knew how to save their wages. A conventional marriage was an option only for whites and a minority of blacks and was not an option for them in Baltimore.[71]

Fred married a strong woman who was as devoted as his mother, Harriet Bailey, and grandmother, Betsy Bailey. All the women he was later close to as an adult had the same strength, independence and devotion. He was not attracted to the Victorian model of a submissive child wife. White women with whom he later worked closely, like Julia Griffiths, Ottilie Assing and Helen Pitts, gave him the education and middle-class social skills that few black women could share, and that he wanted.[72]

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[69] Douglass, *My Bondage*, 187-191, *Narrative*, 72-76; 144; and McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 72-3.
[70] Fought, *Women*, 51-52.
[71] Fought, *Women*, 49-50.

[72] Diedrich, *Love Across*, 171-72.

After Fred and Anna took the train from New York City to New Bedford, they stayed with Mary and Nathan Johnson who introduced them to life in the North. The Johnson's house on Seventh Street had once been a Friends' meetinghouse where Mary ran a popular confectionery shop. Nathan, the only black member of the local library society, suggested Fred choose a different surname, taking a heroic name from Sir Walter Scott's popular poem, *Lady of the Lake*. Frederick chose Douglass, spelling it the way prominent black families in Baltimore and Philadelphia did.[73]

While New Bedford was a whaling and shipbuilding port city like Baltimore, in the 1830s, the city had a strong anti-slavery stance firmly based in the black community, which had private schools, a Christian society and an African Methodist Episcopal Zion church. It had boarding houses run by black men for black mariners; craftsmen like blacksmiths, and far-reaching connections to David Ruggles in New York City. This community helped former slaves and their families adapt to the changes they faced in the North.

Despite the absence of slavery, segregation on transportation, in churches, schools, and the courts was common, and crossing the color line was not accepted. Gradually though, black churches and Quakers mingled in integrated anti-slavery societies in increasing numbers. When Fred and Anna moved there, they fit into a community that matched what they had left behind in Baltimore. Despite losing contact with their relatives in the South, they found comfort with others in the same situation.[74]

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[73] Douglass, *Narrative*, chronology, 1053, and, McFeely, *F. D.*, 76.
[74] Fought, *Women*, 52-55.

Since their arrival from England in 1681, Quakers allowed women to hold leadership roles including preaching, being ordained, and holding office in church. Men and women met separately each month, to allow shyer women to speak more freely and all women were welcome at quarterly business meetings. At their meetings, men dealt with issues like new roads; while starting in their thirties, women took care of the poor and needy, and addressed issues of dress and behavior, leading by example.[75]

Because he was told he couldn't compete with skilled white men for work as a caulker, Fred borrowed a saw from Nathan and found work with saw, buck (sawhorse) and ax, chopping wood. He hauled heavy fittings and shoveled coal, dug cellars, cleared rubbish, worked on the wharves, loaded and unloaded vessels and scoured cabins. **For the first few months of their marriage, Anna worked as a live-in domestic, but quit that winter when she was pregnant**. **They moved out of the second floor of the Johnson's home to two rooms in a house on Elm Street where Anna began taking in laundry.** In the spring, Fred found work with set wages moving casks of whale oil – hard work that required the kind of strength that he was proud to have.[76]

In *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Douglass described the shock of not being to earn good wages as a caulker because of racism that was offset by the joy of keeping every penny he earned in any way he could, for three years. A few months after their arrival in New Bedford, he was offered a trial subscription to a weekly abolitionist paper called *The Liberator* which soon "took its place with me next to the bible." His first three years there were spent learning as much as he could about the anti-slavery cause. **Between 1838 and 1844 he read every antislavery publication he**

[75] Bjornlund, *Women of Colonial*, 75-76.
[76] Douglass, *Narrative*, 77-80; McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 76, 78-80; and Fought, *Women*, 55-56.

could find as well as biographies about and autobiographies by slaves. He registered to vote, joined a debating society and attended meetings of anti-slavery advocates.[77]

Fred and Anna settled into their new life in New Bedford. After attending a mostly-white Methodist church, he switched to Zion chapel, an African Methodist Episcopal Zion denomination, where Bishop Christopher Rush gave him authority to act as an exhorter. He said the days he spent in little Zion as sexton, steward, class leader, clerk and local preacher were among the happiest days of his life.

In March 1839, Fred had spoken up cautiously at a church meeting about what slavery was like and why slaves should be freed. Reading a notice about his own words in William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator* gave him his first taste of public attention. Shortly afterward, the Rev. Thomas James noticed Fred in the audience where he was speaking and invited Fred to share his story. This time Douglass spoke about his own life.

That April, Fred heard Garrison speak for the first time and heard a strong and passionate voice he never forgot. Although he felt inspired by Rev. James, Fred couldn't blend religion with his anti-slavery zeal and chose secular Garrison as a mentor.

It was in 1840 that the Rev. Thomas James had become pastor at Zion. James was ordained in 1833 by Bishop Rush and had merged his religious zeal with his drive to end slavery. James licensed Fred to preach as a lay preacher.

1841

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[77] *F.D Papers, Autobiographical Writings*, Vol 1, *My Bondage*, 203-204, 205, *Narrative*, 80, McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 84 and Douglass, *Autobiographies*, 659.

By 1841 the family was settled in New Bedford and had moved from their small house into a larger house on Ray Street where Anna had her garden and where in the evenings, Fred played Haydn, Mozart and Handel on his violin. It was close to the middle-class life Anna enjoyed in Baltimore. They were expecting a third child.[78]

Thomas James, (1804-1891) had come from Canada to Rochester in 1819 where he found work in a warehouse. He had become a member of the African Methodist Episcopal Society in 1823. He worked in a warehouse of the Hudson & Erie Line, using the winter months when the Erie Canal was closed to study. James was active in the anti-slavery movement from its beginnings in western New York and New England and had attended the first anti-slavery convention in Rochester in 1833 **along with William Bloss and Dr. J.W. Smith who organized an antislavery society and started a paper*, The Rights of Man*, with James as its subscription agent**.[79]

It was at Methodist prayer meetings that Frederick learned to speak in a way that made people listen and found out he spoke in a way that few others did. He knew the Bible better than most, read it frequently, and later said, "I am in the trade-winds of God. My bark was launched by God, and He is taking it into port."[80]

To the best of Douglass' recollection, he met Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1841 at a meeting of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society when she confronted him after the gathering. Stanton explained the great injustice of women's lack of right to vote for those who made

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[78] McFeely, *F. Douglass,* 81-84.
[79] James, "Autobiography of Rev. Thomas James" RH Vol 37:4, Oct. 1975, 4-5, 21, and McKelvey, "Lights and Shadows" RH vol 21 oct. 1959, #4, 2.
[80] Parker, *Reminiscences,* in Coles, *Cradle,* 159.

laws that shaped people's lives regardless of gender. At the time he hadn't given much thought to the topic, believing in conventional ideas of "women's sphere" and "natural division of duties." Years later, in their book, *The History of Woman Suffrage*, neither Susan B. Anthony nor Stanton remembered his being introduced to women's causes before the convention at Seneca Falls in 1848. The differences in their memories could be attributed to his perspective from a male-led black civil rights movement and theirs from a women's movement led mostly by white women.[81]

Frederick could have become a minister, in which case when Anna assumed the responsibilities of a minister's wife, this role would have increased her status and authority in their circle. But he couldn't stand the outright or muted tolerance for slavery in most churches and chose to keep his faith without membership in any denomination. He began to see himself as a black William Lloyd Garrison, working for the betterment of his race and supporting his family.[82]

At the age of 22 and the father of two children, he was familiar with speaking in front of men and women because in black churches and informal schools, men and women sat together. Integrated anti-slavery meeting presented the problem of "promiscuous" gatherings – men and women – as well as blacks and whites. Racist attitudes allowed white slave-owning women to treat him kindly while he was a child, but as adults, black men's maleness was perceived as a threat. From first hearing about something called abolition in Baltimore, to moving to New Bedford and reading the *Liberator*, his ideas about human rights developed gradually. His speech at the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Convention in

[81] Fought, *Women*, 152.
[82] Fought, *Women in the World*, 57, 71.

Nantucket in August of 1841 was his first before an unfamiliar group of mostly white people, which he admitted later, he was not used to.[83] Despite initial jitters, he let loose for two hours before a packed audience with a riveting account of his life. It is considered his first great public speech and was enhanced by Garrison's passionate call afterward, "Shall such a man be held a slave in a Christian land?" to which the audience of Quakers shouted, "No! No!"[84]

From its peak in 1762, when the Quaker community in Nantucket had about 2,400 members, the Quakers there were politically active, and many had become wealthy in the whaling industry. After the disruptions caused by the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 Quakerism on Nantucket declined, with a drop in the number of Quakers by the 1840s when members were expelled for marrying non-Quakers and for nonattendance.[85]

The Society of Friends were criticized as a group for "antinomianism" – their right to follow inner guidance as opposed to Biblical law. When civil or religious laws seemed inconsistent with their inner promptings, they relied on revelations by the Inner Light of God within each person, rather than Scriptures. They rejected civil legal authorities, laws like paying <u>tithes</u> to a State church and swearing of oaths, and pecking orders in clergy.[86]

As a "graduate from slavery, with his diploma written on his back," William Lloyd Garrison's devotees had everything to gain by enlisting Douglass under their banner, while through them, he found a way for advancement beyond the kind of day work that he had been doing.[87] Afterward

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[83] Fought, *Women*, 70-71.

[84] McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 88.

[85] /www.nha.org/library/faq/quakers.html.
[86] wikipedia.org/wiki/Antinomianism
[87] Parker, "Reminiscences of Frederick Douglass," in Coles, *Cradle of Freedom*, 160.

Frederick travelled for the **Rhode Island and Massachusetts Anti-Slavery societies for four years across New England: twice through New York and Pennsylvania, and once through Ohio and Indiana. He also attended annual meetings of the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York City**. **The middle-class values of these abolitionists were not the norm in the late 1830s and early 1840s, and their mixed race and sex gatherings attracted attackers who disrupted the speakers. White women generally counted on men to protect them, but black women who could not, had bonnets and shawls ripped off them.**

By the time of the Nantucket speech, women had years of active sustaining the anti-slavery movement. Those who formed the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, which was integrated from its beginning in 1838, teamed up with their sister society in Philadelphia, linking arms against a rioting mob that burned down the hall where they met. They stood up for Frederick, walked out when he was not allowed in public places, and gave him food and shelter as an equal in their homes. Black and white women who sheltered abolitionists had no sympathy or protection from law enforcers since their political actions were unacceptable. Anti-abolitionists, irate at the threat to conventional white-male rule and private property, saw all female abolitionists as undeserving of the protection given to middle-class white women.

Women's participation in public gatherings contradicted the norm of women's involvement in politics as being indelicate and un-lady-like – a convention that even Douglass had to overcome. After speaker Abby Kelley had been elected to the executive board of the AASS in 1841, a group broke off that did not accept women in leadership except in auxiliaries. **Kelley's behavior was considered outrageous at a time when women's names were**

publicized only when they married and died. Wherever he went, women were serving as leaders and expressing strong opinions in female-only and mixed gender groups.[88]

Theodore Weld (1803-1895) had become aware of racial injustice at school at the age of six. He attended the Oneida Manual Labor School in Whitestown, near Utica, New York, a work/study camp for ministers. After he became disappointed there, he and others left for Lane Seminary in Cincinnati, led by Presbyterian minister Lyman Beecher, where Weld converted to 'immediate abolition,' organized an anti-slavery group, and reached out to help the black community. Their shocking independence threatened the administration, and in protest Weld and others left the seminary. He then became agent and lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Society in Ohio, and was called "the most mobbed man in America." On May 14, 1838, when he and Angelina Grimke married themselves in front of friends and family in Philadelphia, he "abjured all authority, all government, save the influence which love would give to them over each other as moral and immortal beings." Their wedding in Pennsylvania Hall which was dedicated that day, opened a week of scheduled programs. Because abolitionists had so much trouble renting from churches and meetings halls for fear of mob violence, Philadelphia abolitionists had raised $40,000 to build their own meeting space. The Board of Managers had sold 2,000 shares for $20 each, in cash or trade and the wedding and dedication were the opening celebrations at a planned week of programs. The wedding guests included inter-racial couples and sympathetic abolitionists including Maria Weston Chapman, Abby Kelley Foster, William Lloyd Garrison, Gerrit Smith, Henry B. Stanton, and Lewis Tappan. A few days later, on May 18, a mob burned Pennsylvania Hall to the ground. Weld stopped lecturing after the

[88] Fought, *Women*, 71-74.

fire. He, Angelina and her sister Sarah, dedicated themselves to reading 20,000 southern newspapers for the experiences and words of white southerners as evidence against slavery. They compiled *American Slavery As It Is*, which was published in 1839, and influenced Harriet Beecher Stowe's later book. Weld died Feb. 3, 1895.[89]

Women had been excluded from politics since colonial times, in the belief they were intellectually unfit and that their delicate nature suited them only for the home and hearth. The rigors of the American Revolution had driven women to take on many untraditional roles, but their hopes of achieving a better-rounded status in society did not come to pass in the early 1800s. Most women still believed their lives should revolve around the home.[90]

In the fall of 1842, the family moved to a cottage in Lynn, Massachusetts that the Society helped them buy. Lynn was described as a pleasant town with "sweeping views of the distant shipping lanes." Most of the residents were white and many were liberal. Frederick wasn't home much because he often took the train into Boston. With help from friends, he bought a horse and buggy for Anna, and sent her money. She managed the household, raised the children and, as she had done in Baltimore, worked as a domestic.[91]

Frederick's work changed as he stepped away from prominence in a black community to apprenticeship in mostly-white abolitionist groups, and from day jobs to travelling for speaking engagements. When they moved about 70 miles away to Lynn, its anti-slavery

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[89] http://www.nationalabolitionhalloffameandmuseum.org/tweldhtml, and http://web.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/speccoll/quakersandslavery/commentary/organizations/pennsylvania_hall.php.
[90] Bjornlund, *Women of Colonial*, 80, 94.
[91] Burchard, *F. D.*, 80, McFeely, *F. D.*, 92, Fought, *Women*, 57; and Weidt, *Voice*, 35-37.

society and ladies' anti-slavery society were very active, but mostly white. Fred and Anna found a strong black community in Salem, six miles away, which actively opposed slavery and segregation. The move was not an easy change for Anna, who left behind a welcoming community at a time when her husband was away more often.[92]

Fred and Anna had worked under white owners or employers who ignored their right to a personal life. While neither had personal rights as workers, black women were scorned as prostitutes for working in public. For the first time in her adult life, Anna experienced privacy in her own home; but as Fred became better known, their home life and marriage were scrutinized. He needed quiet to prepare speeches; the task of setting boundaries fell on her, and who should have access to their home became a sore point between them.[93]

While on lecture tours through New England and the Northwest from 1842 to 1845, Fred and other black speakers were paid less that white speakers and privately seen by organizers as talented, but not trustworthy. Angry mobs harassed the speakers with insults, stones and eggs; he was beaten and had his hand broken. While he was touring, earning low pay, instead of taking in laundry, Anna took in piecework sewing shoe tops to soles for local factories, while living in constant dread of deadly harm to him.[94]

Later in life, Rosetta described her mother as a "recognized co-worker in the Anti-Slavery Societies of Lynn and Boston, and no circle was complete without her presence." Rosetta would have been young at the time -- three to six years old – and believed her mother went to weekly meetings, helped with refreshments, set aside some of her earnings as donations

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[92] Fought, *Women*, 58.
[93] Fought, *Women*, 58.
[94] Fought, *Women*, 58.

to the cause and that women in the societies helped Anna so she could attend meetings. There is no record of Anna attending meetings. Most of the women activists did not have several children like Anna, who had three, and they didn't work outside the home. Middle-class women were frowned on for having paid work, and those doing acceptable charitable work may have looked on Anna as a charity case. Their attempts to help her may have been thinly-veiled elitist and racist judgements of Anna's inability to manage her own home. If the help were kind-hearted, Anna might have accepted it; but if it were patronizing, then it was offensive.[95]

Douglass most likely met escaped slave and prominent abolitionist Jermain Wesley Loguen of Syracuse, New York, for the first time in the fall of 1842 when Fred was on a speaking tour around western New York state with Abby Kelley.[96] **Unlike most women anti-slavery advocates who worked locally and behind the scenes, Kelley lectured publicly, which was new for Fred. As a Quaker, she had been raised opposing slavery, and in 1836, when she was a teacher, she had joined the Lynn Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society. As corresponding secretary, she had advocated for petitioning campaigns at a time when it was considered disgraceful for women's names to appear in print and took to public speaking after the Philadelphia convention fire in 1838. During her first years on the lecture trail she was harshly criticized as a disreputable woman, but by 1842 was in demand by supporters and women's groups as a speaker and was encouraged to move to Utica, New York. When she and Fred had first met in 1841, she had been one of a few female lecturers. They toured for weeks in November and December 1841 in Rhode Island; from August to October 1842 in**

[95] Fought, *Women,* 61, 329, note 39; and 60-61.
[96] McKivigan, *Frederick Douglass Papers*, 474, note 1.

New York state; and other places in August 1843. The contrast between their styles – Kelley's "simple Quaker beauty … and wonderful earnestness" and Douglass' commanding presence and caustic wit, were sensational. In 1842, Lydia and Abigail Mott had warned Kelley, "Caution as you are traveling about with Fred Douglas[s]" – because of the violent reactions people had to the sight of them in public as peers. During their first few months on tour, they were both insulted verbally and physically. Because of Abbey Kelley's efforts, the Western and Central New York societies began between 1842 and 1843 at the time of Douglass' first and second visits there. Paulina Wright in Utica and Amy Post in Rochester rallied supporters.

During the four years that Douglass traveled, he witnessed the efforts that women devoted to the cause – from sewing items for fairs, to serving as officers in gender-integrated meetings to full-fledge leaders like Kelley and Chapman, often at personal risk. In May 1842, he met Lucretia Coffin Mott, another a highly-respected Quaker speaker, for the first time at the American Anti-Slavery Society convention in New York City.[97]

In 1843 the AAS had set a goal of planning one hundred anti-slavery meetings that year. Fred volunteered for the tour and nearly reached that goal in New England, upstate New York, Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania.[98] **That year he spoke in Rochester, where the first Anti-Slavery Society had been organized in 1838, at the newly-formed Western New York Anti-Slavery Society.**[99]

In September 1843, Fred mentioned in a letter to a friend that he had "received a few lines from my wife asking for means to carry on household affair[s]" and asked the friend to

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[97] Fought, *Women,* 74-78.

[98] McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*, 104; and, Weidt, *Voice*, 36.

[99] Howard Hosmer, *Monroe County 1821-1971* (Rochester, NY: Rochester Museum & Science Center: Flower City Printing, 1971) 23.

provide $25 or $30 for Anna.[100]

Fred and Anna's first four children were born in Massachusetts. Rosetta was born in their two-room home on Elm Street on June 24, 1839 and Lewis Henry, July10, 1840 in New Bedford; Frederick Jr., March 3,1842; and Charles, October 21, 1844 were born "in a nice little cottage" in Lynn.[101]

1845

Even though Douglass was becoming an acclaimed national speaker, people still doubted that anyone who spoke so well could ever have been a slave. To prove them wrong, over the winter of 1844-45 he wrote the story of his youth – without giving his former name or the names of those who had helped him flee. He shared his life story publicly at the annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York City in May 1845 and published the book at the end of the month. It was a bold move that threatened his freedom.[102] Neighbor Jane Marsh Parker later wrote, "As a Methodist exhorter he had learned to speak so fluently and well that it was no wonder that many who heard him in the anti-slavery meetings had doubts if had had ever been a slave, and said so openly."[103]

Five thousand copies of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself,* were released by the Anti-Slavery Office in Boston and sold for fifty cents each. By

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[100] McKivigan, *F. Douglass Papers*, 13.

[101] Sprague, "My Mother," 10, also, Diedrich, *Love Across*, 175, and, *F. Douglass Papers*, Series Three, Correspondence, Vol 1, John McKivigan, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) 126, note 5.

[102] Douglass, *F. D Papers, Correspondence*, xxvii, 84, and Burchard, *F. Douglass*, 88.

[103] Parker, "Reminiscences of Frederick Douglass" in Coles, *Cradle of Freedom*, 160.

the fall, 4,500 copies were sold in the United States and soon there were three European editions. Because of strong ties between the abolitionist societies in the United States and Great Britain, Maria Weston Chapman, William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips of the Anti-Slavery Society in Boston, decided it was more important to have him speak abroad than at home.[104] *Narrative* included a preface by his famous mentor, William Lloyd Garrison, **in which Garrison related how he became acquainted with Douglass.**[105]

Maria Weston Chapman, who had been educated in England, had strong ties with anti-slavery advocates there. She was a founding member of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society and served as an officer in the Massachusetts and American Anti-Slavery societies. In 1842, as her husband, a wealthy Boston merchant, was dying, he gave his approval for her to continue the work. With a sizable inheritance, she teamed up with her three sisters and activist women in England; but after the trauma of the burning of the anti-slavery hall in Philadelphia in 1838, she had put her efforts into writing and organizing. Chapman wrote three novels, several song books and co-authored the annual gift book, the *Liberty Bell*, published by the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society. It earned between $1,000 and $4,000 a year from 1835 to 1857 to pay for speakers, convention expenses and supported the National Anti-Slavery Standard and the *Liberator*.[106] Like such gift books, it contained letters, poems and essays from notables like John Quincy Adams, Henry Wadsworth

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[104] McFeely, *F. Douglass,* 116-18.

[105] Douglass, *F. D. Papers, Narrative*, 3-9, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Benjamin Quarles, editor (Washington: Associated Publishers, 1948) 17, and *My Bondage* 210.

[106] Fought, *Women*, 74-75.

Longfellow and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. They sold it at their annual fair to support abolitionism as well as attract supporters to their cause.[107]

In those days, autobiographies were considered a higher form of literature than fiction[108] and *Narrative of the Life* was the most widely-reviewed black autobiography before the Civil War. It was praised in newspapers and magazines in the United States, British Isles and Europe,[109] but slaveholders in Talbot County, Maryland were furious. A man who had known Freddy Bailey during the time he had worked under Edward Covey considered Freddy nothing but a lowly slave and defended the character of Colonel Lloyd, Thomas Auld and others.[110]

***Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* included a preface by William Lloyd Garrison, in which he described the first time he heard Douglass speak in Nantucket in 1841. It also had a letter from Wendell Phillips, in which he asked Douglass if he remembered the fable "The Man and the Lion," in which the lion complained that he not be misrepresented "when the lions wrote history." Phillips wrote, "I am glad the time has come when 'lions write history.' We have been left long enough to gather the character of slavery from the involuntary evidence of the masters.**[111]

Although Douglass seldom mentioned it in his letters, when he sailed on a steam packet called the *Cambria* from Boston on Aug. 16, 1845, he went with James Buffam, whom the Boston Anti-Slavery Society leaders had chosen as traveling companion to Ireland, England and

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[107] McGivigan, *F. D. Papers*, 43, note 2.
[108] *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, notes by John Chua (Lincoln, Neb.: Cliff Notes, 1996) 46.

[109] Douglass, *F. D. Papers, Narrative*, xxxiii.

[110] Preston, *Young F. Douglass*, 171.

[111] Benjamin Quarles, *Narrative of the Live of F. Douglass,* (Washington: Associated Publishers, 1948) 17.

Scotland. Buffam, who was a successful carpenter from Lynn, was described as a pleasant and mild-mannered man, a loyal friend and abolitionist. He had booked a double room in first class, but the shipping agent wouldn't allow a black man to travel with whites. They both slept in a modest room in steerage and considered the downgrade a thrifty move. Not only did Buffum smooth the bumps along the way, he also handled the money.[112]

Except for the first-class stateroom, Frederick was free to come and go on the rest of the ship and took long walks alone on the upper decks, later writing, **"You cannot write the bloody laws of slavery on those restless billows. The ocean, if not the land, is free."** If the seas were too rough, he and Buffam relaxed in the second-class saloon with the Hutchinson Family Singers and other passengers.[113]

Judson, John Wallace, Asa and Abigail Jemina Hutchinson were four of thirteen of Polly and Jesse Hutchinson's children who performed as a musical quartet. They were from the Lynn area, where Frederick had inspired them to join the movement. After the crossing, Douglass went to Dublin where the Hutchinsons later met him to perform at meetings.[114]

The Hutchinson Family Singers were children of Mary and Jesse Hutchinson who was a farmer from Milford, New Hampshire. The quartet sang about rural life as well as abolition, temperance, politics, war and women's suffrage. The Hutchinsons began as

[112] McKivigan, *F.* Douglass Papers, 77, note 11, McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 120-21.

[113] Burchard, *F. Douglass*, 89-90, Douglass, *My Bondage*, 210.

[114] McKivigan, *F. Douglass Papers*, 23, note 8, and 59, note 10.

ordinary farmers who became well-respected performers. Much of their music was about idealism, reforms, equal rights, self-improvement, local activism and love of country.[115]

On the last day of the crossing, shipmaster **Captain Judkins**, invited Douglass to talk informally about slavery on the second deck. The scene that followed was written up in the English papers. A sympathizer wrote that drunken American slave-holders heckled him and then threatened to throw him overboard. Captain Judkins quickly intervened and news of Douglass' safe arrival spread quickly. After the *Cambria* docked on August 28th in the port of Liverpool, Douglass, Buffum and the Hutchinson singers stayed in a hotel for two days, without incident. Then the *Cambria* sailed across the Irish Sea to Dublin, where Fred was to begin his tour. **Dublin was a busy port, full of dingy buildings underneath a thick smoky haze; the dock workers looked ragged and the children he saw were scrawny and pale.**[116]

In his first talk in the prosperous town **of Celbridge**, he saw a carpet mill that matched anything comparable in New Bedford; but Castletown House's opulence surpassed Wye House on the Lloyd Plantation. **In that talk Douglass spoke to a temperance group about the evils of drinking and made the link between a drunken society that tolerated slavery and a sober society that rejected it.** [117]

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[115] http://www.amaranthpublishing.com/hutchinson.htm

[116] Burchard, *F. Douglass*, 91, and McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 120 and McGivigan, *F. D. Papers, 46.*

[117] McFeely, *F. Douglass*, 124.