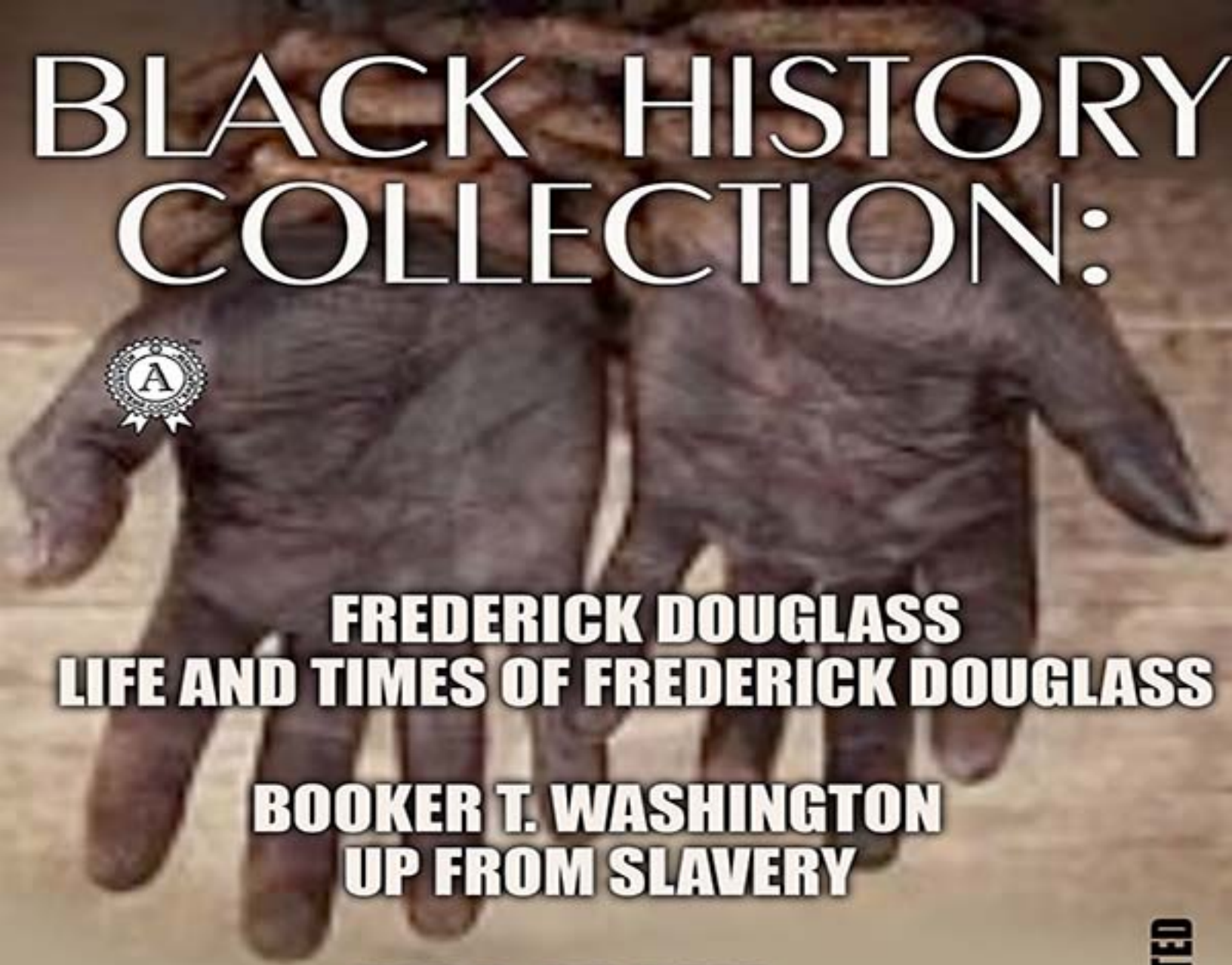
# BLACK HISTORY COLLECTION:



FREDERICK DOUGLASS
LIFE AND TIMES OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
UP FROM SLAVERY

W.E.B. DU BOIS
THE GIFT OF BLACK FOLK

CARTER G. WOODSON
THE MIS-EDUCATION OF THE NEGRO

SOJOURNER TRUTH
THE NARRATIVE OF SOJOURNER TRUTH

ILLUSTRATED

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## Frederick Douglass - Life and Times of Frederick Douglass

## Booker T. Washington - Up from Slavery

## W.E.B. Du Bois - The Gift of Black Folk

## Carter G. Woodson - The Mis-Education of the Negro

## and

## Sojourner Truth - The Narrative of Sojourner Truth

## Illustrated

*America's black intellectuals - writers, historians, educators, and community activists - have made major contributions to the struggle for equality and human rights throughout American public life.*

*The key streams of thought that gave rise to the intellectual traditions associated with African Americans emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries. These same traditions continue to develop and influence social and political processes today.*

*This tome presents the collected writings of those titans of thought who laid the intellectual, cultural, and even emotional foundations for the modern African American movement.*

*Frederick Douglass; Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*
*Booker T. Washington; Up from Slavery*
*W.E.B. Du Bois; The Gift of Black Folk*
*Carter G. Woodson; The Mis-Education of the Negro*
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# Frederick Douglass

# Life and Times of Frederick Douglass

*OF WRITTEN BY HIMSELF. HIS EARLY LIFE AS A SLAVE, HIS ESCAPE FROM BONDAGE, AND HIS COMPLETE HISTORY TO THE PRESENT TIME, INCLUDING HIS CONNECTION WITH THE ANTISLAVERY MOVEMENT; HIS LABORS IN GREAT BRITAIN AS WELL AS IN HIS OWN COUNTRY; HIS EXPERIENCE IN THE CONDUCT OF AN INFLUENTIAL NEWSPAPER; HIS CONNECTION WITH THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD; HIS RELATIONS WITH JOHN BROWN AND THE HARPER'S FERRY RAID; HIS RECRUITING THE 54TH AND 55TH MASS. COLORED REGIMENTS; HIS INTERVIEWS WITH PRESIDENTS LINCOLN AND JOHNSON; HIS APPOINTMENT BY GEN. GRANT TO ACCOMPANY THE SANTO DOMINGO COMMISSION-ALSO TO A SEAT IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA; HIS APPOINTMENT AS UNITED STATES MARSHAL BY PRESIDENT R. B. HAYES; ALSO HIS APPOINTMENT TO BE RECORDER OF DEEDS IN WASHINGTON BY PRESIDENT J. A. GARFIELD; WITH MANY OTHER INTERESTING AND IMPORTANT EVENTS OF HIS MOST EVENTFUL LIFE; WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY MR. GEORGE L. RUFFIN, OF BOSTON.*

## Introduction to the 1892 Edition

JUST WHAT this country has in store to benefit or to startle the world in the future, no tongue can tell. We know full well the wonderful things which have occurred or have been accomplished here in the past, but the still more wonderful things which we may well say will happen in the centuries of development which lie before us, is vain conjecture; it lies in the domain of speculation.

America will be the field for the demonstration of truths not now accepted and the establishment of a new and higher civilization. Horace Walpole's prophecy will be verified when there shall be a Xenophon at New York and a Thucydides at Boston. Up to this time the most remarkable contribution this country has given to the world is the Author and subject of this book, now being introduced to the public-Frederick Douglass. The contribution comes naturally and legitimately and to some not unexpectedly, nevertheless it is altogether unique and must be regarded as truly remarkable. Our Pantheon contains many that are illustrious and worthy, but Douglass is unlike all others, he is sui generis. For every other great character we can bring forward, Europe can produce another equally as great; when we bring forward Douglass, he cannot be matched.

Douglass was born a slave, he won his liberty; he is of Negro extraction, and consequently was despised and outraged; he has by his own energy and force of character commanded the respect of the Nation; he was ignorant, he has, against law and by stealth and entirely unaided, educated himself; he was poor, he has by honest toil and industry become rich and independent, so to speak; he, a chattel slave of a hated and cruelly wronged race, in the teeth of American prejudice and in face of nearly every kind of hindrance and drawback, has come to be one of the foremost orators of the age, with a reputation established

on both sides of the Atlantic; a writer of power and elegance of expression; a thinker whose views are potent in controlling and shaping public opinion; a high officer in the National Government; a cultivated gentleman whose virtues as a husband, father, and citizen are the highest honor a man can have.

Frederick Douglass stands upon a pedestal; he has reached this lofty height through years of toil and strife, but it has been the strife of moral ideas; strife in the battle for human rights. No bitter memories come from this strife; no feelings of remorse can rise to cast their gloomy shadows over his soul; Douglass has now reached and passed the meridian of life, his co-laborers in the strife have now nearly all passed away. Garrison has gone, Gerrit Smith has gone, Giddings and Sumner have gone,-nearly all the abolitionists are gone to their reward. The culmination of his life work has been reached; the object dear to his heart-the Emancipation of the slaves-had been accomplished, through the blessings of God; he stands facing the goal, already reached by his co-laborers, with a halo of peace about him, and nothing but serenity and gratitude must fill his breast. To those, who in the past-in ante-bellum days-in any degree shared with Douglass his hopes and feelings on the slavery question, this serenity of mind, this gratitude, can be understood and felt. All Americans, no matter what may have been their views on slavery, now that freedom has come and slavery is ended, must have a restful feeling and be glad that the source of bitterness and trouble is removed. The man who is sorry because of the abolition of slavery, has outlived his day and generation; he should have insisted upon being buried with the “lost cause” at Appomatox.

We rejoice that Douglass has attained unto this exalted position-this pedestal. It has been honorably reached; it is a just recognition of talent and effort; it is another proof that success attends high and noble aim. With this example, the

black boy as well as the white boy can take hope and courage in the race of life.

Douglass' life has been a romance-and a fragrance-to the age. There has been just enough mystery about his origin and escape from slavery to throw a charm about them. The odd proceedings in the purchase of his freedom after his escape from slavery; his movements in connection with the John Brown raid at Harpers Ferry and his subsequent flight across the ocean are romantic as anything which took place among the crags and the cliffs, the Roderick Dhus and Douglasses of the Lady of the Lake; while the pure life he has led and his spotless character are sweet by contrast with the lives of mere politicians and time-serving statesmen. It is well to contemplate one like him, who has had "hair-breadth escapes." It is inspiring to know that the day of self-sacrifice and self-development are not passed.

To say that his life has been eventful, is hardly the word. From the time when he first saw the light on the Tuckahoe plantation up to the time he was called to fill a high official position, his life has been crowded with events which in some sense may be called miracles, and now since his autobiography has come to be written, we must understand the hour of retrospect has come-for casting up and balancing accounts as to work done or left undone.

It is more than forty years now that he has been before the world as a writer and speaker-busy, active, wonderful years to him-and we are called upon to pass judgment upon his labors. What can we say? Can he claim the well done good and faithful? The record shows this, and we must state it, generally speaking, his life had been devoted to his race and the cause of his race. The freedom and elevation of his people has been his life work, and it has been done well and faithfully. That is the record, and that is sufficient. No higher eulogium can be pronounced than that Longfellow says of the Village Blacksmith:-

"Something attempted, something done,

Has earned a night's repose."

Douglass found his people enslaved and oppressed. He has given the best years of his life to the improvement of their condition, and, now that he looks back upon his labors, may he not say he has "attempted" and "done" something? and may he not claim the "repose" which ought to come in the evening of a well spent life?

The first twenty-three years of Douglass' life were twenty-three years of slavery, obscurity, and degradation, yet doubtless in time to come these years will be regarded by the student of history the most interesting portion of his life; to those who in the future would know the inside history of American slavery, this part of his life will be specially instructive. Plantation life at Tuckahoe as related by him is not fiction, it is fact; it is not the historian's dissertation on slavery, it is slavery itself, the slave's life, acts, and thoughts, and the life, acts, and thoughts of those around him. It is Macauley (I think) who says that a copy of a daily newspaper [if there were such] published at Rome would give more information and be of more value than any history we have. So, too, this photographic view of slave life as given to us in the autobiography of an ex-slave will give to the reader a clearer insight of the system of slavery than can be gained from the examination of general history.

Col. Lloyd's plantation, where Douglass belonged, was very much like other plantations of the south). Here was the Great House and the cabins, the old Aunties, and patriarchal Uncles, little picanninies and picanninies not so little, of every shade of complexion, from ebony black to whiteness of the master race; mules, overseers, and broken down fences. Here was the Negro Doctor learned in the science of roots and herbs; also the black conjurer with his divination. Here was slave-breeding and slave-selling, whipping, torturing and beating to death. All this came under the observation of Douglass and is a part of the education he received while under the yoke of bondage. He was there in

the midst of this confusion, ignorance, and brutality. Little did the overseer on this plantation think that he had in his gang a man of superior order and undaunted spirit, whose mind, far above the minds of the grovelling creatures about him, was at that very time plotting schemes for his liberty; nor did the thought ever enter the mind of Col. Lloyd, the rich slaveholder, that he had upon his estate one who was destined to assail the system of slavery with more power and effect than any other person.

Douglass' fame will rest mainly, no doubt, upon his oratory. His powers in this direction are very great, and, in some respects, unparalleled by our living speakers. His oratory is his own, and apparently formed after the model of no single person. It is not after the Edmund Burke style, which has been so closely followed by Everett, Sumner, and others, and which has resulted in giving us splendid and highly embellished essays rather than natural and not overwrought speeches. If his oratory must be classified, it should be placed somewhere between the Fox and Henry Clay schools. Like Clay, Douglass' greatest effect is upon his immediate hearers, those who see him and feel his presence, and, like Clay, a good part of his oratorical fame will be tradition. The most striking feature of Douglass' oratory is his fire, not the quick and flashy kind, but the steady and intense kind. Years ago, on the antislavery platform, in some sudden and unbidden outburst of passion and indignation, he has been known to awe-inspire his listeners as though Ætna were there.

If oratory consists of the power to move men by spoken words, Douglass is a complete orator. He can make men laugh or cry, at his will. He has power of statement, logic, withering denunciation, pathos, humor, and inimitable wit. Daniel Webster, with his immense intellectuality, had no humor, not a particle. It does not appear that he could even see the point of a joke. Douglass is brim full of humor, at times, of the dryest kind. It is of a quiet kind. You can see it

coming a long way off in a peculiar twitch of his mouth. It increases and broadens gradually until it becomes irresistible and all-pervading with his audience.

Douglass' rank as a writer is high, and justly so. His writings, if anything, are more meritorious than his speaking. For many years he was the editor of newspapers, doing all of the editorial work. He has contributed largely to magazines. He is a forcible and thoughtful writer. His style is pure and graceful, and he has great felicity of expression. His written productions, in finish, compare favorably with the written productions of our most cultivated writers. His style comes partly, no doubt, from his long and constant practice, but the true source is his clear mind, which is well stored by a close acquaintance with the best authors. His range of reading has been wide and extensive. He has been a hard student. In every sense of the word, he is a self-made man. By dint of hard study he has educated himself, and today it may be said he has a well-trained intellect. He has surmounted the disadvantage of not having a university education, by application and well-directed effort. He seems to have realized the fact, that to one who is anxious to become educated and is really in earnest, it is not positively necessary to go to college, and that information may be had outside of college walks; books may be obtained and read elsewhere. They are not chained to desks in college libraries, as they were in early times at Oxford. Professors' lectures may be bought already printed, learned doctors may be listened to in the lyceum, and the printing-press has made it easy and cheap to get information on every subject and topic that is discussed and taught in the university. Douglass never made the mistake (a common one) of considering that his education was finished. He has continued to study, he studies now, and is a growing man, and at this present moment he is a stronger man intellectually than ever before.

Soon after Douglass' escape from Maryland to the Northern States, he commenced his public career. It was at New Bedford, as a local Methodist preacher, and by taking part in small public meetings held by colored people, wherein antislavery and other matters were discussed. There he laid the foundation of the splendid career which is now about drawing to a close. In these meetings Douglass gave evidence that he possessed uncommon powers, and it was plainly to be seen that he needed only a field and opportunity to display them. That field and opportunity soon came, as it always does to possessors of genius. He became a member and agent of the American Anti-Slavery society. Then commenced his great crusade against slavery in behalf of his oppressed brethren at the South.

He waged violent and unceasing war against slavery. He went through every town and hamlet in the Free States, raising his voice against the iniquitous system.

Just escaped from the prison-house himself, to tear down the walls of the same and to let the oppressed go free was the mission which engaged the powers of his soul and body. North, East, and West, all through the land went this escaped slave, delivering his warning message against the doomed cities of the South. The ocean did not stop nor hinder him. Across the Atlantic he went, through England, Ireland, and Scotland. Wherever people could be found to listen to his story, he pleaded the cause of his enslaved and down-trodden brethren with vehemence and great power. From 1840 to 1861, the time of the commencement of the civil war, which extirpated slavery in this country, Douglass was continually speaking on the platform, writing for his newspaper and for magazines, or working in conventions for the abolition of slavery.

The life and work of Douglass has been a complete vindication of the colored people in this respect. It has refuted and overthrown the position taken by some writers, that colored people were deficient in mental qualifications

and were incapable of attaining high intellectual position. We may reasonably expect to hear no more of this now, the argument is exploded. Douglass has settled the fact the right way, and it is something to settle a fact.

That Douglass is a brave man there can be little doubt. He has physical as well as moral courage. His encounter with the overseer of the eastern shore plantation attests his pluck. There the odds were against him, everything was against him. There the unwritten rule of law was, that the Negro who dared to strike a white man must be killed; but Douglass fought the overseer and whipped him. His plotting with other slaves to escape, writing and giving them passes, and the unequal and desperate fight maintained by him in the Baltimore ship yard, where law and public sentiment were against him, also show that he has courage. But since the day of his slavery, while living here at the North, many instances have happened which show very plainly that he is a man of courage and determination. If he had not been, he would have long since succumbed to the brutality and violence of the low and mean-spirited people found in the Free States.

Up to a very recent date it has been deemed quite safe, even here in the North, to insult and impose on inoffensive colored people, to elbow a colored man from the sidewalk, to jeer at him and apply vile epithets to him. In some localities this has been the rule and not the exception, and to put him out of public conveyances and public places by force was of common occurrence. It made little difference that the colored man was decent, civil, and respectably clad, and had paid his fare. If the proprietor of the place or his patrons took the notion that the presence of the colored man was an affront to their dignity or inconsistent with their notions of self-respect, out he must go. Nor must he stand upon the order of his going, but go at once. It was against this feeling that Douglass had to contend. He met it often. He was a prominent colored man traveling from place to

place. A good part of the time he was in strange cities, stopping at strange taverns-that is, when he was allowed to stop. Time and again has he been refused accommodation in hotels. Time and again has he been in a strange place with nowhere to lay his head until some kind antislavery person would come forward and give him shelter.

The writer of this remembers well, because he was present and saw the transaction, the John Brown meeting in Tremont Temple, in 1860, when a violent mob, composed of the rough element from the slums of the city, led and encouraged by bankers and brokers, came into the hall to break up the meeting. Douglass was presiding. The mob was armed; the police were powerless; the mayor could not or would not do anything. On came the mob, surging through the aisles, over benches, and upon the platform. The women in the audience became alarmed and fled. The hirelings were prepared to do anything; they had the power and could with impunity. Douglass sat upon the platform with a few chosen spirits, cool and undaunted. The mob had got about and around him. He did not heed their howling nor was he moved by their threats. It was not until their leader, a rich banker, with his followers, had mounted the platform and wrenched the chair from under him that he was dispossessed. By main force and personal violence (Douglass resisting all the time) they removed him from the platform.

It affords me great pleasure to introduce to the public this book, “The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass.” I am glad of the opportunity to present a work which tells the story of the rise and progress of our most celebrated colored man. To the names of Toussaint L’Overture and Alexander Dumas is to be added that of Frederick Douglass. We point with pride to this trio of illustrious names. I bid my fellow countrymen take new hope and courage. The near future will bring us other men of worth and genius, and our list of

illustrious names will become lengthened. Until that time the duty is to work and wait.

Respectfully,

GEORGE L. RUFFIN.

# First Part

## CHAPTER 1

## Author’s Birth

IN TALBOT County, Eastern Shore, State of Maryland, near Easton, the county town, there is a small district of country, thinly populated, and remarkable for nothing that I know of more than for the worn-out, sandy, desertlike appearance of its soil, the general dilapidation of its farms and fences, the indigent and spiritless character of its inhabitants, and the prevalence of ague and fever. It was in this dull, flat, and unthrifty district or neighborhood, bordered by the Choptank River, among the laziest and muddiest of streams, surrounded by a white population of the lowest order, indolent and drunken to a proverb, and among slaves who, in point of ignorance and indolence, were fully in accord with their surroundings, that I, without any fault of my own, was born, and spent the first years of my childhood.

The reader must not expect me to say much of my family. Genealogical trees did not flourish among slaves. A person of some consequence in civilized society, sometimes designated as father, was, literally unknown to slave law and to slave practice. I never met with a slave in that part of the country who could tell me with any certainty how old he was. Few at that time knew anything of the months of the year or of the days of the month. They measured the ages of their children by spring-time, winter-time, harvest-time, planting-time, and the like. Masters allowed no questions concerning their ages to be put to them by slaves. Such questions were regarded by the masters as evidence of an impudent curiosity. From certain events, however, the dates of which I have since learned, I suppose myself to have been born in February, 1817.

My first experience of life, as I now remember it, and I remember it but hazily, began in the family of my grandmother and grandfather, Betsey and Isaac Bailey. They were considered old settlers in the neighborhood, and from certain circumstances I infer that my grandmother, especially, was held in high esteem, far higher than was the lot of most colored persons in that region. She was a good nurse, and a capital hand at making nets used for catching shad and herring, and was, withal, somewhat famous as a fisherwoman. I have known her to be in the water waist deep, for hours, seine-hauling. She was a gardener as well as a fisherwoman, and remarkable for her success in keeping her seedling sweet potatoes through the months of winter, and easily got the reputation of being born to “good luck.” In planting-time Grandmother Betsey was sent for in all directions, simply to place the seedling potatoes in the hills or drills, for superstition had it that her touch was needed to make them grow. This reputation was full of advantage to her and her grandchildren, for a good crop, after her planting for the neighbors, brought her a share of the harvest.

Whether because she was too old for field service, or because she had so faithfully discharged the duties of her station in early life, I know not, but she enjoyed the high

privilege of living in a cabin separate from the quarters, having imposed upon her only the charge of the young children and the burden of her own support. She esteemed it great good fortune to live so, and took much comfort in having the children. The practice of separating mothers from their children and hiring them out at distances too great to admit of their meeting, save at long intervals, was a marked feature of the cruelty and barbarity of the slave system; but it was in harmony with the grand aim of that system, which always and everywhere sought to reduce man to a level with the brute. It had no interest in recognizing or preserving any of the ties that bind families together or to their homes.

My grandmother's five daughters were hired out in this way, and my only recollections of my own mother are of a few hasty visits made in the night on foot, after the daily tasks were over, and when she was under the necessity of returning in time to respond to the driver's call to the field in the early morning. These little glimpses of my mother, obtained under such circumstances and against such odds, meager as they were, are ineffaceably stamped upon my memory. She was tall and finely proportioned, of dark, glossy complexion, with regular features, and amongst the slaves was remarkably sedate and dignified. There is, in Prichard's Natural History *of Man*, the head of a figure, on page 157, the features of which so resemble my mother that I often recur to it with something of the feelings which I suppose others experience when looking upon the likenesses of their own dear departed ones.

Of my father I know nothing. Slavery had no recognition of fathers, as none of families. That the mother was a slave was enough for its deadly purpose. By its law the child followed the condition of its mother. The father might be a freeman and the child a slave. The father might be a white man, glorying in the purity of his Anglo-Saxon blood, and the child ranked with the blackest slaves. Father he might

be, and not be husband, and could sell his own child without incurring reproach, if in its veins coursed one drop of African blood.

## CHAPTER 2

## Removal from Grandmother’s

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. I knew many other things before I knew that. Her little cabin had to me the attractions of a palace. Its fence-railed floor-which was equally floor and bedstead-upstairs, and its clay floor downstairs, its dirt and straw chimney, and windowless sides, and that most curious piece of workmanship, the ladder stairway, and the hole so strangely dug in front of the fireplace, beneath which grandmamma placed her sweet potatoes, to keep them from frost in winter, were full of interest to my childish observation. The squirrels, as they skipped the fences, climbed the trees, or gathered their nuts, were an unceasing delight to me. There, too, right at the side of the hut, stood the old well, with its stately and skyward-pointing beam, so aptly placed between the limbs of what had once been a tree, and so nicely balanced, that I could move it up and down with only one hand, and could get a drink myself without calling for help. Nor were these all the attractions of the place. At a little distance stood Mr. Lee’s mill, where the people came in large numbers to get their corn ground. I can never tell the many things thought and felt, as I sat on the bank and watched that mill and the turning of its ponderous wheel. The mill-pond, too, had its charms, and with my pin-hook and thread-line, I could get amusing nibbles if I could catch no fish.

It was not long, however, before I began to learn the sad fact that this house of my childhood belonged not to my dear old grandmother, but to some one I had never seen, and who lived a great distance off. I learned, too, the sadder

fact, that not only the home and lot, but that grandmother herself and all the little children around her belonged to a mysterious personage, called by grandmother, with every mark of reverence, “Old Master.” Thus early did clouds and shadows begin to fall upon my path.

I learned that this old master, whose name seemed ever to be mentioned with fear and shuddering, only allowed the little children to live with grandmother for a limited time, and that as soon as they were big enough they were promptly taken away to live with the said old master. These were distressing revelations, indeed. My grandmother was all the world to me, and the thought of being separated from her was a most unwelcome suggestion to my affections and hopes. This mysterious old master was really a man of some consequence. He owned several farms in Tuckahoe, was the chief clerk and butler on the home plantation of Colonel Lloyd, had overseers as well as slaves on his own farms, and gave directions to the overseers on the farms owned by Colonel Lloyd. Captain Aaron Anthony, for such is the name and title of my old master, lived on Colonel Lloyd’s plantation, which was situated on the Wye River, and which was one of the largest, most fertile, and best appointed in the State.

About this plantation and this old master I was most eager to know everything which could be known, and, unhappily for me, all the information I could get concerning him increased my dread of being separated from my grandmother and grandfather. I wished that it was possible for me to remain small all my life, knowing that the sooner I grew large the shorter would be my time to remain with them. Everything about the cabin became doubly dear and I was sure that there could be no other spot on earth equal to it. But the time came when I must go, and my grandmother, knowing my fears, and in pity for them, kindly kept me ignorant of the dreaded moment up to the morning (a beautiful summer morning) when we were to start; and,

indeed, during the whole journey, which, child as I was, I remember as well as if it were yesterday, she kept the unwelcome truth hidden from me.

The distance from Tuckahoe to Colonel Lloyd's, where my old master lived, was full twelve miles, and the walk was quite a severe test of the endurance of my young legs. The journey would have proved too severe for me, but that my dear old grandmother (blessings on her memory) afforded occasional relief by "toting" me on her shoulder. Advanced in years as she was, as was evident from the more than one gray hair which peeped from between the ample and graceful folds of her newly and smoothly-ironed bandana turban, grandmother was yet a woman of power and spirit. She was remarkably straight in figure, and elastic and muscular in movement. I seemed hardly to be a burden to her. She would have "toted" me farther, but I felt myself too much of a man to allow it. Yet while I walked I was not independent of her. She often found me holding her skirts lest something should come out of the woods and eat me up. Several old logs and stumps imposed upon me, and got themselves taken for enormous animals. I could plainly see their legs, eyes, ears, and teeth, till I got close enough to see that the eyes were knots, washed white with rain, and the legs were broken limbs, and the ears and teeth only such because of the point from which they were seen.

As the day advanced the heat increased, and it was not until the afternoon that we reached the much-dreaded end of the journey. Here I found myself in the midst of a group of children of all sizes and of many colors-black, brown, copper-colored, and nearly white. I had not before seen so many children. As a newcomer I was an object of special interest. After laughing and yelling around me and playing all sorts of wild tricks, they asked me to go out and play with them. This I refused to do. Grandmamma looked sad, and I could not help feeling that our being there boded no good to me. She was soon to lose another object of

affection, as she had lost many before. Affectionately patting me on the head, she told me to be a good boy and go out to play with the children. They are “kin to you,” she said, “go and play with them.” She pointed out to me my brother Perry, and my sisters, Sarah and Eliza. I had never seen them before, and though I had sometimes heard of them and felt a curious interest in them, I really did not understand what they were to me or I to them. Brothers and sisters we were by blood, but slavery had made us strangers. They were already initiated into the mysteries of old master’s domicile, and they seemed to look upon me with a certain degree of compassion. I really wanted to play with them, but they were strangers to me, and I was full of fear that my grandmother might leave for home without taking me with her. Entreated to do so, however, and that, too, by my dear grandmother, I went to the back part of the house to play with them and the other children. Play, however, I did not, but stood with my back against the wall witnessing the playing of the others. At last, while standing there, one of the children, who had been in the kitchen, ran up to me in a sort of roguish glee, exclaiming, “Fed, Fed, grandmamma gone!” I could not believe it. Yet, fearing the worst, I ran into the kitchen to see for myself, and lo! she was indeed gone, and was now far away, and “clean” out of sight. I need not tell all that happened now. Almost heartbroken at the discovery, I fell upon the ground and wept a boy’s bitter tears, refusing to be comforted. My brother gave me peaches and pears to quiet me, but I promptly threw them on the ground. I had never been deceived before and something of resentment mingled with my grief at parting with my grandmother.

It was now late in the afternoon. The day had been an exciting and wearisome one, and I know not where, but I suppose I sobbed myself to sleep, and its balm was never more welcome to any wounded soul than to mine. The reader may be surprised that I relate so minutely an

incident apparently so trivial, and which must have occurred when I was less than seven years old; but, as I wish to give a faithful history of my experience in slavery, I cannot withhold a circumstance which at the time affected me so deeply, and which I still remember so vividly. Besides, this was my first introduction to the realities of the slave system.