Frederick Douglass

By: Genesis Castro

Did you know Frederick Douglass fought against a slave owner to protect himself? Frederick Douglass inspired others to flee to freedom even though it was dangerous. I chose this topic because Frederick Douglass stood up for himself and I wanted to learn more about him. I will be introducing Frederick Douglass, discussing how he planned his freedom, and describing how he inspired others to go into to freedom.

Frederick Bailey or as we know him, Frederick Douglass, was born in Bay-Side Talbot County, Maryland in 1818. His mother died at a very young age. Fredrick did not see her often before she died. The only family he had was his grandmother, Betty Baily. But even then, he was soon separated from her as well at the age of seven. Imagine the terrifying time he endured being taken away from the only family he ever knew and had. Frederick was sent to Baltimore to serve Mr. and Mrs. Auld. After some time, he later described Mrs. Auld as a kind hearted woman.

Mrs. Auld illegally taught Frederick the alphabet. Mr. Auld warned his wife that she would be severely punished if she continued to teach Frederick, as he continued learning. He might develop the idea of freedom. Fredrick overhead the discussion the couple had, and he promised himself that he would learn how to read and write to escape slavery and on to freedom.

Mr. Auld knew Frederick had the idea of freedom in his mind. He sent him to Edward Covey; he was known to break a slave’s spirit. Frederick Bailey was sixteen at the time. Frederick attempted to escape many times but failed and was severely punished. Edward Covey continued to whip Frederick, but he could take it no more. Finally, Frederick fought against Edward Covey and defended himself when Covey was trying to whip him. Edward no longer attempted to whip Frederick Bailey.

Frederick attempted one last time to escape to freedom on September 3, 1838. With help from his closest friends, he managed to get a sailor’s uniform. They were able to attain papers to identify him as a seaman. He traveled for some time getting off and on ferries, trains, and steamboats. Finally, he arrived in New York and married a free slave named, Anna Murray.

After arriving in New York he soon realized it was still dangerous to use the name Bailey, so he changed his name to Frederick Johnson. He asked Nathan Johnson (a good friend) if he should change his name once again. Nathan replied he should change Johnson to Douglass. In 1839 Frederick and Anna Douglass had their first child, her name was Rosetta. After some time they had Lewis Henry, Frederick Jr., Charles Remand, and daughter Annie. When Frederick attended an abolitionist meeting he met Lloyd Garrison. Lloyd encouraged Frederick to speak informally at this meeting. He soon started speaking more at other meetings and he traveled to different places.

When Frederick was only 27, he published his first book in 1845. Its title was, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave. Frederick Douglass was famous as soon as the book was published. It was translated in Dutch, and French. He traveled around the British Isles promoting the idea of freedom. He met Abraham Lincoln a few times. Lincoln treated Frederick with respect not as a slave. Abraham wanted to hear the opinion of Frederick and he took it very seriously.

Frederick Douglass inspired people in many ways. Some of those ways were by his life, literature, his courage, and finally, his faith. Sadly, Frederick Douglass died on February 20, 1895. His wife was left with the fortune he made over the years. But of course none of that mattered because Frederick died a life well lived, helping others to freedom.

# References

Haskens, J. (1993). Get On Board. In J. Haskens, *Get On Board* (p. 152). New York: Scholastic.

Society, F. H. (n.d.). *Frederick Douglas*. Retrieved from Frederick Douglas Honor Society: http://www.frederickdouglasshonorsociety.org/douglass-history.html

War.org, C. (n.d.). *Frederick Douglass*. Retrieved from Civil War Trust: http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/biographies/frederick-douglass.html