



## Frederick Douglass

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### Author Profile

Born a slave, Frederick Bailey escaped to freedom in 1838, changed his name to Douglass, and soon began delivering speeches throughout the North for William Lloyd Garrison's American Antislavery Society. In 1845 the society published *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*. The book became a best seller and secured Douglass' position as the leading black abolitionist in the United States. The volume was also published overseas, despite the efforts of Douglass' British publisher to censor his criticism of Christian slaveholders as hypocrites.

In 1847 Douglass split with Garrison and began publishing an antislavery newspaper, *The North Star* (renamed *Frederick Douglass' Paper* in 1851). Garrison's supporters tried unsuccessfully to prevent Douglass from producing a periodical to rival *The Liberator*, the American Antislavery Society's journal. Douglass editorialized in his newspapers about slavery, prejudice, politics, and other issues. In 1855 he published *My Bondage and My Freedom*, which was more critical of slavery and slaveholders than the *Narrative* had been.

After the Civil War Douglass stood as the most influential African American of his era. He later served as marshal of the District of Columbia and U.S. minister to Haiti.

### Bibliography

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McFeely, William S. *Frederick Douglass*. New York: Norton, 1991. (See Magill's Literary Annual review) A solid and well-researched biography with a lengthy bibliography.

Martin, Waldo E., Jr. *The Mind of Frederick Douglass*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984. An excellent study of the evolution of Douglass's thought.

Preston, Dickson J. *Young Frederick Douglass: The Maryland Years*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980. Recommended, especially as background to the *Narrative of Frederick Douglass*.

Starling, Marion Wilson. *The Slave Narrative: Its Place in American History*. 2d ed. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1988. A consideration of the *Narrative of Frederick Douglass* in its larger historical context.

Stone, Albert E. "Identity and Art in Frederick Douglass's *Narrative*." *CLA Journal* 17 (1973). A seminal article; Stone's analysis is probably the first to consider Douglass's 1845 autobiography as a major work of literary art.

## Frederick Douglass: Frederick Douglass

Sundquist, Eric J., ed. *Frederick Douglass: New Literary and Historical Essays*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Provides essays on Douglass from a variety of perspectives.

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