# Frederick Douglass Collection (AC123)

***Introduction:***

The Frederick Douglass Collection is a small collection that includes programs, a flyer, a newspaper clipping, and an article featuring Frederick Douglass's 1852 speech "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July. "

***Descriptive Summary:***

Creator: FIC

Title: Frederick Douglass Collection

Date Range: 1972, 1978 & 2022

Size: 0.209 (linear feet)

Collection Number: AC123

***Donor Information:***

Found in Collection.

***Citation Note:***

Frederick Douglass Collection (AC123), Black Archives of Mid-America, Kansas City, Missouri

***Administrative Information:***

Reproduction Restrictions: Unrestricted.

Access Restrictions: Unrestricted.

***Original Language Statement:***

The Black Archives of Mid-America follows the widespread practice of using the language provided by speakers and writers of historical documents. Using the speaker's or writer's language can be very informative and provide pivotal contextual information about cultural and societal customs of previous time periods. As a result, researchers may encounter descriptive language, which often includes verbiage that contains obvious bias, or outdated and stereotypical

terminology, and/ or content. Contemporary readers and researchers might find this language harmful or offensive.

***Biographical Sketch:***

Douglass was an American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. He became the most important movement leader for African American rights during the 19th century.

*Early Life and Slavery:*

Frederick Douglass escaped from slavery and became one of the most influential African American spokespeople of his time. He was born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey on February 14, 1818, in Cordova, Maryland. In 1838, Douglass escaped slavery by disguising himself as a sailor and boarding a northbound train to Philadelphia.

*Career:*

Frederick Douglass was a prominent abolitionist who played various roles in the fight for the rights of African Americans and women. He is well-known for attending the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 as the only Black man present. Following the Civil War, Douglass was appointed to several political positions due to his vital contributions: he served as U.S. Marshal for Washington, D.C. from 1871 to 1881, as Recorder of Deeds for D.C. from 1881 to 1886, and as Minister Resident and Consul General to Haiti from 1889 to 1891.

In 1850, Douglass was elected vice president of the American League of Colored Laborers. The following year, in 1852, he delivered a powerful address to the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society. His speech, titled "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July," is now regarded as one of the greatest speeches in American history. Douglass also authored three autobiographies: "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave, Written by Himself" (1845), "My Bondage and My Freedom" (1855), and "The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass" (1881, 1892).

*Family Life*:

Douglass married his first wife in 1838, Anna Murray Douglass, an abolitionist who assisted with the Underground Railroad. They were married until she died in 1882. Frederick and Anna

were married for 44 years and had five children: Rosetta, Lewis Henry, Frederick Douglass, Jr, Charles Remond, and Annie. In 1883, Douglass remarried Helen Pitts, a white American suffragist twenty years younger than Douglass. Their marriage certainly caused havoc within both of their families. Douglass died February 20th, 1895, and is buried at the Mount Hope Cemetery in Rochester, NY.

***Scope and Content Note:***

**Series 1: Flyer**

This series contains a flyer produced by Yale University Press. The flyer is an advertisement and order form for Frederick Douglas Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews. *Volume I: 1841-1846*.

**Series 2: Newspaper Clipping**

This series consists of an editorial newspaper clipping from the Kansas City Call on July 7th, 2022. The editorial reprinted Frederick Douglass' speech "The Meaning of July Fourth for The Negro on July 5th, 1852". (Douglass' speech has been given several different titles.)

**Series 3: Article**

This series features a speech written by Frederick Douglass titled "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July," delivered on July 5, 1852. The identity of the article's producer is unknown. Many historians now consider this speech one of the finest political addresses in American history. In 1852, Douglass spoke to a group of antislavery women in Rochester, New York, highlighting the grotesqueness of enslavement and the never-ending promise of freedom.

**Series 4: Programs**

This series includes two programs: "Frederick Douglass: A Lecture on Our National Capital" by Frederick Douglass, published by the Smithsonian Institute Press, City of Washington, in 1978, and "Frederick Douglass, Kansas City, Missouri," from 1972.

***Collection Inventory:***

**Series 1: Flyer**

f. 1 Frederick Douglas Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews. *Volume I: 1841-1846*.

**Series 2: Newspaper Clipping**

f. 2 "The Meaning of July Fourth for The Negro on July 5th, 1852". The Call, July 7th, 2022.

**Series 3: Article**

f. 3 "What to the Slave is the July Fourth of July", July 5th, 1852". The identity of the article's producer is unknown.

**Series 4: Programs**

**f. 4** Programs

a. Frederick Douglass: A Lecture on Our National Capital by Frederick Douglass, Smithsonian Institute Press, City of Washington, 1978 (2 copies).

b. Frederick Douglass, International Afro-American Museum, Detroit, MI, 1972.

**Processed by Kat Miller, Assistant Archivist, January 2025.**

**Sources:**

Douglass, Frederick. 1852. "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July? (1852) | Constitution Center." National Constitution Center – Constitutioncenter.org. 1852. https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution/historic-document-library/detail/frederick-douglass-what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july-1852.

"Frederick Douglass National Historic Site (U.S. National Park Service)." 2016. Nps.gov. 2016. https://www.nps.gov/frdo/index.htm.