

# The BROAD AX

HEW TO THE LINE.

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## The 90th Anniversary of the Birth of Frederick Douglass

His Life and Times Vividly Portrayed by Charles W. Chesnutt.

So far something like twenty books and pamphlets have been written and published pertaining to the rise of Frederick Douglass, from the lowest depths of slavery and poverty, to the highest prominence in all the affairs of this great nation, and while all of these books or pamphlets have been exceedingly instructive as to the doings of Frederick Douglass, none of them can surpass the latest life of that great historical character by Charles W. Chesnutt, who is the foremost Afro-American writer in America, and his classical literary productions should find their way into the homes of every race or liberty loving Negro throughout this broad land.

In his new book on the Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Mr. Chesnutt very vividly and fascinatingly traces or portrays his stormy career from the slave pen to the lecture platform, the editor's chair, and on up to United States Marshal and Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia.

The biographical sketch of the Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, as set forth by Mr. Chesnutt, is as follows: Frederick Douglass was born at Tuckahoe, near Easton, Talbot County, Maryland, the latter part of February, in 1817, and if he was on earth today he would be ninety years old. The first few years of his boyhood days were spent with the other slaves on the farm and in March, 1825, he was sent to Baltimore to live with a relative of his master, and in 1833, he was taken to St. Michael's, Md., to live again with his master.

January, 1834, he was sent to live with Edward Covey, a slave-breaker, with whom he spent the year; but the slave-breaker could never break Frederick Douglass, and each day or every time the slave-breaker attempted to whip him, he stood up like a brave man and fought him to a standstill. In 1835-36 he was hired to William Freeland; he made his first unsuccessful attempt to escape from slavery, was sent to Baltimore to learn the ship-calker's trade; in 1838, he hired his own time and worked at his trade.

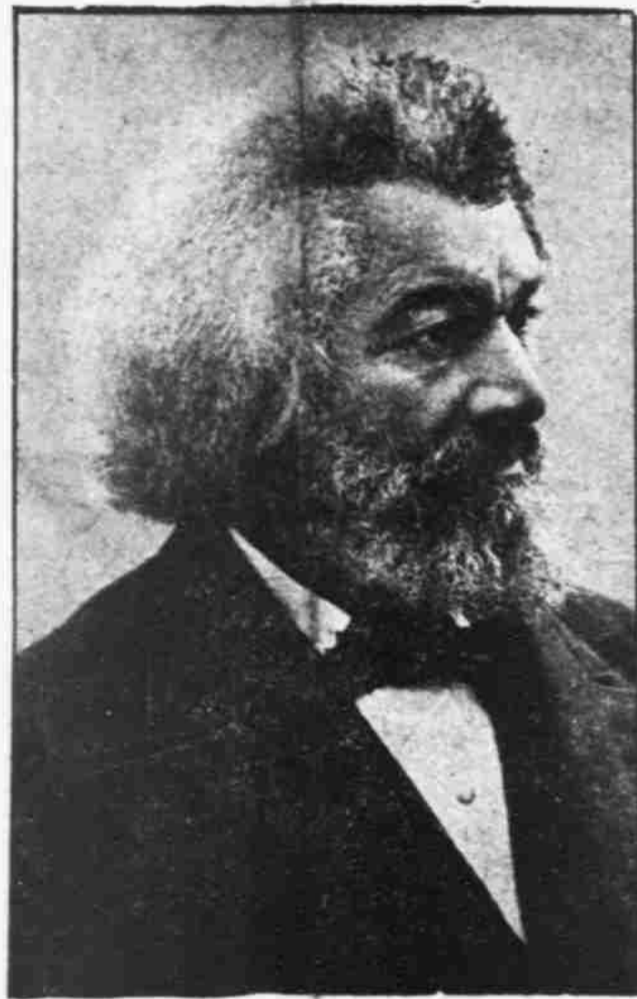
September 3, 1838, Frederick Douglass escaped from slavery and went to New York City where he became united in marriage to Miss Anna Murray. From that city he went to New Bedford, Mass., and assumed the name of "Douglass." In 1841 he attended an anti-slavery convention at New Bedford, and swayed the meeting to and fro with his matchless eloquence; later on he was employed as agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, and from that time onward he was a conspicuous figure in the Anti-Slavery movement on both continents. In 1842, he took part in the Rhode Island campaign against the Dorr constitution. He continued to lecture on slavery, and moved to Lynn,

Mass., in 1843, and took part in the famous "One Hundred Conventions" of the New England Anti-Slavery Society; in 1844 he lectured with William Lloyd Garrison, Parker Pillsbury, Foster, and others, and the first part of 1845 he published his Narratives.

In 1845-46 he visited Great Britain and Ireland, remaining in Europe two years lecturing on slavery and other subjects, and while in England he was presented with sufficient money to purchase his freedom, and to establish a newspaper. On returning to the United States in 1847, he moved with his family to Rochester, New York. Where he established his paper, The North Star, or Frederick Douglass' Paper, which he ably edited for seventeen long years, and he mortgaged his home and all his possessions for the purpose of raising money in order to keep it going, for then as now the vast majority of the free Colored People residing in the North had not the faintest conception of the power and influence which newspapers exert over the minds of the people, in the discussion of all subjects effecting their rights and their liberties.

In 1848-49 he visited John Brown, at Springfield, Mass., and lectured on slavery and Woman Suffrage, and assisted in the escape of fugitive slaves. In 1852, he supported the Free Soil Party, and was elected delegate to the Free Soil convention at Pittsburgh, Pa., and delivered speeches along with John P. Hale, the Jeffersonian Democrat who was the nominee of the Free Soil Party for President of the United States in 1852, and who was appointed as minister to Russia by Abraham Lincoln. In 1856 Frederick Douglass supported Fremont and Dayton for President and Vice-President of the United States, established Douglass' monthly, entertained John Brown at his home in Rochester, visited England for the second time in 1859, lectured and spoke in England and Scotland for six months, and arrived in this country in time to assist in the election of Abraham Lincoln President of the United States.

In 1863, he assisted in recruiting the Fifty-fourth and Fifty-fifth Colored regiments of Massachusetts, and in that same year he was invited to visit President Lincoln, and to confer with the President as to the status of the Negro during the progress of the war; in 1866 he was active in procuring the franchise for the freedmen; elected delegate from Rochester to the National Loyalists' Convention which met in Philadelphia; in 1869 he moved to Washington, D.C., and established the New National Era; in 1870 he was appointed secretary of the Santo Domingo Commission by President Grant; in 1877 chosen Marshal for the District of Columbia by President Hayes; that same year he visited his old slave home in Maryland,



FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

Whose matchless oratory or eloquence swayed the people on two continents during the agitation of the slavery question in America and whose labors in behalf of his fellow creatures in chains will never grow dim in the hearts of those who truly love justice and liberty!

and met his old master; in 1878, Frederick Douglass placed in Sibley Hall of Rochester University; he spoke against the proposed Negro exodus from the South; in 1881, he was selected as Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia by President Garfield; August 4, 1882, death of Mrs. Frederick Douglass; in 1884, Frederick Douglass married Miss Hellen Pitts; in May, 1886, he lectured on John Brown at Music Hall, Boston; Sept. 10, he attended a dinner given in his honor by the Wendell Phillips Club of Boston; in 1886-87, he and Mrs. Douglass visited Great Britain, France, Italy, Greece and Egypt.

In 1889, he was appointed United States Minister, Resident and Consul-General to the Republic of Haiti; and charge d'affaires to Santo Domingo, by President Harrison; in 1890 he resigned as Minister to Haiti; and in 1893, he acted as commissioner for Haiti at the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago.

Feb. 20, 1895, death of Frederick Douglass at his elegant residence on Anacostia Heights, Washington, D. C., his funeral which was attended by distinguished men and women of both races, was one of the largest ever held at the Capital of the nation, and his remains were transported to his old home at Rochester, New York, for interment, where a substantial monument has been erected to his memory.

The latter part of February, 1888, the writer and Mrs. Taylor had the honor and the extreme pleasure of attending the 71st birthday anniversary of Frederick Douglass at the Metropolitan Church, Washington, D. C., and for one hour we had the honor of sitting by his side, and Mr. Douglass related to us some of the trials and hardships he endured while lecturing throughout the North and West, and he said that "away back in the 50's he visited Peoria, Ill., for the purpose of delivering an anti-slavery oration, but there was not one hotel or lodging house in that town which would sell him anything to eat or a bed to sleep in for love or money. Col. Robert G. Ingersoll, the infidel, whose father was a Presbyterian minister, was the only man in Peoria who had the courage to frown upon the Christians, and he entertained Mr. Douglass at his home,

and from that time to the death of Frederick Douglass he and Col. Ingersoll were fast friends. He visited St. Paul, Minn., about the same time, and he was confronted with the same conditions there which he had met with at Peoria, and Patrick Kelly, who was for many years the head and front of the Democratic party in the Northwest, and member of the Democratic National Committee, entertained Mr. Douglass at his home.

The last time we met Mr. Douglass was during the World's Fair, and as soon as he laid his eyes on us he extended his hand and called us by name, for he prided himself on being able to remember the names of all those with whom he had come in contact.

For many years the Free Thinkers or the Infidels claimed Mr. Douglass as one of their own, as he did not take much stock in the religion of the cross, for he contended that the Christian religion fosters and encourages race prejudice and race hatred, therefore it must be a false system of religion. He was the first or the only Afro-American to be honored by President Grover Cleveland, or by any other President, with an invitation to attend a diplomatic dinner and reception at the White House.

Throughout his long official career he was never charged with committing one dishonest act, and from the cradle to the grave, figuratively speaking, in season and out of season, he manfully contended for the full manhood rights of all men regardless of their race or nationality. Today, while celebrating the 90th anniversary of his birth, it is well to remember that he never used strong liquor nor tobacco in any manner, shape or form; that his language was always pure and as clean as a snow-white lily; that he held all decent women in the highest esteem, and in these respects it would be well if all men and many women followed in the footsteps of Frederick Douglass!

The ball given by the K. of P.'s at the First Regiment Armory Thursday night, was largely attended by members of the order and their friends. A large amount of money was realized which will be used in building the Pythian Temple at 33rd and State streets.

## The Investigation Into the "Shooting Up" Of Brownsville, Tex.

SHOWS THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE 25TH REGIMENT WERE NOT GUILTY OF THAT ACT.

THAT HEINOUS CRIME WAS PERFORMED BY THE WHITE CITIZENS OF THAT TOWN IN ORDER TO CAST ODIUM ON THE NEGRO SOLDIERS.

SENATOR FORAKER HAS SO FAR BEEN VINDICATED BY THE COURAGEOUS STAND HE HAS TAKEN IN THE MEMORABLE FIGHT IN THIS RESPECT.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT IS NOT REAPING ANY GLORY OUT OF THE AFFAIR.

The investigation into the alleged "shooting up" of Brownsville, Texas, by members of the 25th Regiment, by the committee on military affairs in the United States Senate, so far proves beyond a reasonable doubt that none of the Colored soldiers participated in that act, and the testimony of many important witnesses clearly establish the fact that white citizens of that town performed that heinous crime in order to cast odium on the Negro soldiers.

Sergeant Israel Harris of Company D was among the first witnesses to appear before the committee, and he declared that every man in Company D was present and answered roll call, and that "when the gun racks of his company were opened all of the guns were found in place, which, he declared, proved that none of the guns of that company could have been used in the riot. When asked if it was not possible for the soldiers to have cleaned the guns while they were returning from patrolling the town, the witness said it was not because of the length of time required to clean one of the new Springfield rifles."

In reply to questions he said: "On that night we had some disturbances—some shooting, I mean. I was asleep in D barracks and at about 12 o'clock I was aroused by the noise of guns. I put on my trousers and shoes, but no blouse or leggings. Then there was the sound to arms and D company got dressed and we started for our guns."

The witness then told of getting the guns in the dark, after the racks had been opened. He described the racks and showed that there is but one key to a rack and that this key will unlock only one rack and that the keys are in the possession of noncommissioned officers.

The witness said that when the company formed outside Captain Lyons of company D was present and immediately called the roll and personally counted his men and that none was absent. He said that no persons had joined the company after the formation and he declared that no men could have fired from D barracks without having been detected.

Jacob D. Fraser, former first sergeant of company D, was the next witness and he testified that all the members of his company on the night of August 13, was either present or accounted for at roll call. He swore that "he did not know of any member of his company being engaged in "shooting up" Brownsville; that he had not withheld no information; that there was no con-

spiracy of silence, and he stated it as his belief that the citizens of Brownsville had themselves "shot up" the town to drive the soldiers away." Senator Overman asked: "Do you think citizens would kill one of their own number—commit murder—to get you away?"

He replied: "I don't know whether anyone was killed. They wanted us away. Colored men would spend very little money in the saloons on account of their treatment and the citizens of Brownsville wanted white soldiers who would spend money."

In further explanation of his theory that the citizens had done the shooting the witness said it was possible for them to get ammunition from the soldiers.

Right at this point it may not be out of place to state that no one living in Brownsville, Texas, on the night of August 13, 1906, has so far been able to give the name of one white citizen who was supposed to be shot to death by the Negro troops at that time, and no funeral services were held over the remains of any white Christian gentleman who lost his life at the time referred to, and as long as Southern gentlemen do not hesitate to paint their faces black, to enable them to rape their own women and then turn around and fasten the crime on the Negro, they would not be above "shooting up" Brownsville, Texas, nor shrink from committing any other crime in order to down the "Nigger."

George Jackson, who was duty sergeant of company B was the third witness.

He was the noncommissioned officer in charge of B quarters on the night of the affray and had possession of the keys to the racks holding the company arms. On this account great interest was attached to his testimony. He described the locks and the keys, each rack having two locks. The locks were all different and there was only one key to each. Mr. Jackson insisted that he counted the guns before he took charge for the day and night of Aug. 13 and said that all of the company guns were safely deposited and locked.

**Fail to Trap Witnesses.**  
Walker McCurdy, formerly quartermaster sergeant of company B, who had charge of the issuance of ammunition, was the next witness. Mr. McCurdy and Mr. Jackson gave clear accounts of their duties on that night and the sharpest kind of cross examination failed to trap them in any way. Both Senators Warner and Foster, who conducted the cross examination, remarked at the conclusion that

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