

Primary Resource 5

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey was born into slavery near Easton in Talbot County, Maryland in either 1817 or 1818. As a young boy, he was sent to Baltimore to be a house servant. He was taught to read and write by his master's wife, Mrs. Auld. During his youth and early adulthood, he worked for several owners. In 1838 he escaped from slavery by travelling on a train headed for New York City disguised as a sailor with a freed friend's identification papers. There he married Anna Murray, a free African American woman whom he had met in Baltimore. He eventually changed his name to Frederick Douglass. During his lifetime, he became well known for his passionate and eloquent speeches about the right of liberty for African-Americans and even women. He wrote about his life as a slave in the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. During the Civil War, he served as an advisor to President Lincoln and helped recruit African-American soldiers for the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Regiments. Later in life he served as a US marshal for the District of Columbia and became an American representative to the Republic of Haiti.

Chapter XI of the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

In writing to a dear friend, immediately after my arrival at New York, I said I felt like one who had escaped a den of hungry lions. This state of mind, however, very soon subsided; and I was again seized with a feeling of great insecurity and loneliness. I was afraid to speak to any one for fear of speaking to the wrong one, and thereby falling into the hands of money-loving kidnappers, whose business it was to lie in wait for the panting fugitive, as the ferocious beasts of the forest lie in wait for their prey.

Analyze the words selected by Douglass to describe his arrival in New York after his escape. What images are evoked through his analogies? Do you think his analogies are effective in communicating how he feels about being a fugitive slave?

Why is Douglass' narrative considered a primary resource?

What impact did Douglass' experiences as a slave have on the development of the anti-slavery movement?

Reexamine Primary Resource 4, Anthony Burns' Notice 1854.

Why do you think the word "**kidnapper**" is used in **both of these primary resources** (Anthony Burns' notice and Frederick Douglass' narrative)?
