

# The contributions of frederick douglass

Business



Frederick Douglass contributed in many regional and national suffrage organizations by touring Europe while lecturing about anti-slavery, convincing Lincoln to allow African Americans to serve in the military during the civil war, and preaching about women's rights all over the country ("Western New York Suffrages"). Without his contributions, many things in America's history might not have turned out the same. His touring of Europe put a pressure on the United States to change their policy on African Americans. The Civil War might have had a different outcome, if African Americans were not allowed to fight.

Finally, if Frederick Douglass wasn't a part of the Women's Rights Movement, then it could have taken much longer for women to get any kind of rights. Frederick Douglass started out as a slave. Owned by Captain Aaron Anthony, he started to work at the plantation at only six years old. He had been taught to read and write by the wife of his owners, but it was stopped by her husband because he believed it would deem him unfit to be a slave ("Americans in America"). Even though his owner's wife stopped teaching him, Douglass continued to study on his own because he realized it could be the key to his freedom (Danzer 249). Douglass learned the debate over slavery by reading newspapers.

At around the age of thirteen, he taught himself about public speaking by reading the book *The Columbian Orator*, which he purchased for himself. In 1838, Douglass escaped slavery and went to New York City. In New York, he had many speeches about anti-slavery. In 1845, he released his autobiography, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*. Because of this book, Douglass' freedom was put

to risk because it told about him being a slave, which meant his owners could search for him and take him back into slavery. Douglass escaped to Europe and did a 20 year lecture tour.

His tour included England, Scotland, and Ireland (Tindall 291-292). While there, many European anti-slavery advocates raised money for Douglass to purchase his freedom (Lee). When he returned to America, he purchased his freedom, and even had enough money to start his own anti-slavery newspaper (Danzer 250). Because of his tour in Europe, his name and support became even bigger. There was foreign support on his side, and the United States had more pressure from international abolitionists ("Africans in America"). Frederick Douglass played a major role in making the freedom of African Americans a goal of Lincoln in the Civil War.

It was Douglass who convinced President Abraham Lincoln to consider the freedom of African American Slaves an objective of the Civil War. Douglass also fought for the right and persuaded Lincoln to allow African Americans to fight in the Civil War ("Western New York Suffrages"). With this, Douglass created a slogan for recruiting posters. The slogan was "Men of Color, To Arms." With these extra men, this gave the Union more man power and an edge in the war (Lee).

Although at first the African Americans fighting in the war were not treated well, they were later treated better due to Douglass' meetings with Lincoln. All African Americans were allowed to fight, whether you were a free African American from the North, or an enslaved African American liberated from the South. This, and the fact that Frederick Douglass helped push the

Emancipation Proclamation, led to the freedom of all African Americans after the end of the war (“Africans in America”). Even though they were free, they didn’t get the right to vote until about three years after the Civil War (Lee). With his role in the Women’s Rights Movement, Frederick Douglass really helped to spread the belief of equality. In 1848, he took part in the very first Women’s Rights Convention in Seneca Falls.

He signed the Declaration of Sentiments while there in Seneca Falls. After returning from the convention, Douglass wrote, “The History of Women Suffrage.” This was an editorial that was featured in *The North Star* (Tindall 292). Douglass was a very close friend to Susan B. Anthony and her family. He visited their home often, and helped Susan with many Women’s Rights rallies.

When Susan’s father died, Douglass gave a eulogy. Susan and Douglass had a disagreement over the passing of the Fifteenth Amendment. Douglass liked the fact that it gave African Americans more rights, but Susan disliked the fact that it left out women. Frederick Douglass believed that it was important to secure the rights of African Americans before working to pursue women rights (“Western New York Suffrages”). As soon as the Fifteenth Amendment was confirmed, Douglass continued his work on Women’s Rights. He fought for and wrote an article about women’s right to vote.

In this article, Douglass called for an amendment giving this right to women. This work was called “Women and the Ballot,” which was published in 1848 (Lee). Douglass’ help in the Women’s Rights Movement really helped speed up the process of giving women what they wanted. It showed that it wasn’t

about a group of women that wanted more power for themselves, but that there were men that also believed that women weren't being treated right and deserved more rights ("Africans in America"). Frederick Douglass accomplished an unbelievable amount of goals when it comes to suffrage organizations in his life time. He managed to escape slavery, travel Europe preaching about anti-slavery, convince Lincoln to let African Americans serve in the military, abolish slavery, and help the Women's Rights Movement become more credible and noted.

All of these accomplishments helped shape the United States into the country it is today. He also proved that African Americans can make a big change in society. He fought for equality of all men and women alike, whether they were different color, sex, or ethnicity. He took part in reuniting the country into one nation through his involvement in the Civil War. Without his contribution, the dark and savage days of slavery could have lasted longer than they already did.