



HISTORIC BRIGHTON

CELEBRATING OUR TOWN'S HISTORY AND
EDUCATING OUR COMMUNITY ABOUT BRIGHTON'S PAST

Volume 18

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Number 1

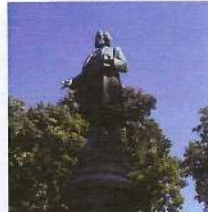
Newsletter and Journal



Douglass gave Susan B. Anthony this photograph of himself, taken in May 1848. Albert Cook Myers Collection, Chester County Historical Society



Photo of Susan B. Anthony for 1901 calendar. Note that 1848 daguerreotype of Douglass is not among the photo portraits



Douglass was the first African American to have a statue

Some African-Americans in Brighton History, pp 14, 15, 16

Myrtilla Miner and Frederick Douglass, p. 13

5th of July Speech — the consummate anti-slavery oration "What To the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" (1852) was written when Douglass lived in Brighton and delivered in Convention Hall, pp. 10, 11, 12

SAVE THE DATES
18th ANNUAL MEETING OF HISTORIC BRIGHTON
Sunday, January 29, 2017 at 2:00 PM
followed by a special presentation
Brighton Town Hall Main Auditorium
2300 Elmwood Avenue
Verdis Robinson:
"Ghosts of the Old Seventh Ward:
A Virtual Walking Tour of
Memory and Legacy"

COMING IN APRIL:
"Digging for Our Dutch Roots:
The Forgotten Legacy."
A look at how a people influenced
art and culture in Brighton and beyond



The pioneering novella, Douglass's only fiction, The Heroic Slave (1853) was in a gift book commissioned and published by Griffiths



Probably Julia Griffiths although sometimes labeled Harriet Beecher Stowe



Julia Griffith bankrolled The North Star; How about Douglass's Brighton home?



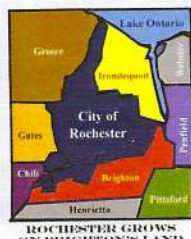
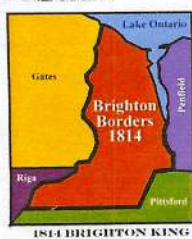
John Brown stayed with the Douglasses in Brighton for three weeks in February 1858. The Legend of John Brown Portfolio by artist Jacob Lawrence painting was exhibited at the Memorial Art Gallery most recently August-November 2015.



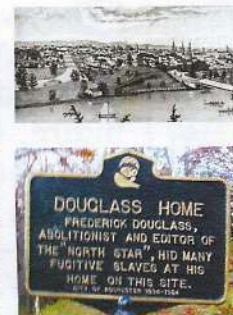
Julia M. Griffith bought 20 lots in the Third Ward between Ford Street and the Erie Canal and Troup and Atkinson Streets. Did she also buy a farm on a dirt road off South Avenue in Brighton for Frederick Douglass?

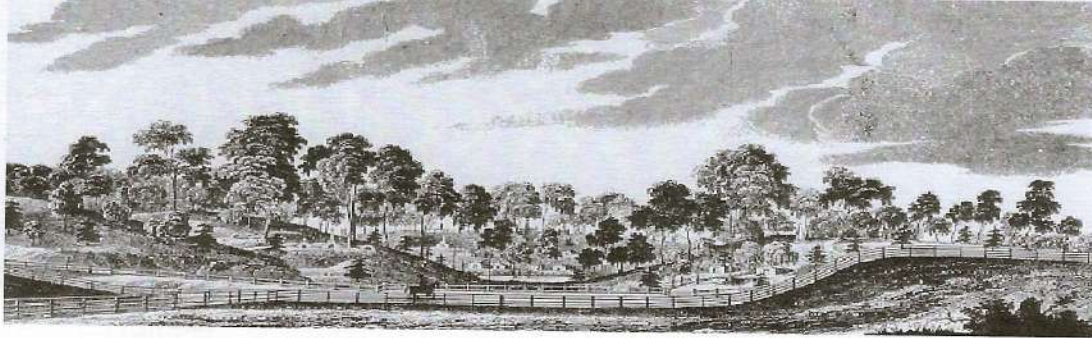


Douglass returned to Rochester in 1892 with Republican president Benjamin Harrison to dedicate the statue of Lincoln in Washington Park. Here the party visits Kodak Park (below)

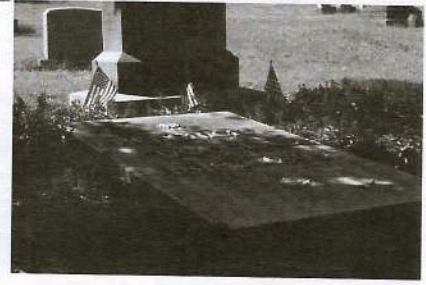


The shrinking of Brighton borders from 1814 to the present and the growth of the City of Rochester is illustrated graphically by Leo Dodd. At the time that Frederick Douglass bought or built his farm on South Avenue where School 12 now stands, that land was still in Brighton, just outside city limits.

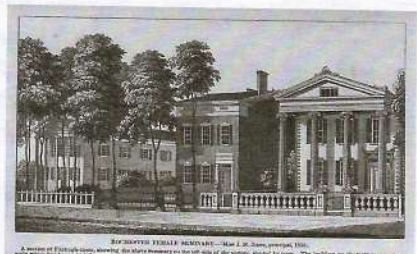




INTEGRAL TO MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY, ROCHESTER, N. Y.
Egyptian Revival gate



Douglass was buried in Mount Hope in 1895. When daughter Annie died unexpectedly in 185 Dougless was in England. She was buried in the Samuel and Susan Farley Porter's plot. Perhaps that led Frederick Douglass to purchase a family plot.

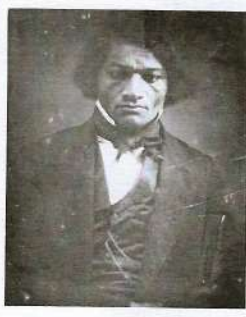


The Porter family home (center) on Fitzhugh Street

Mount Hope Cemetery was Originally in Brighton

When the village of Rochesterville was chartered in 1817, it was located entirely in the Town of Gates, west of the Genesee. East of the river was Brighton, chartered in 1814. As the tiny cemetery on Buffalo (now West Main) Street filled, land for burials was sought. The highlands were not suitable for farming, so in 1836 Brighton offered the western portion of its Pinnacle Hills. There were five cemeteries along the Pinnacle Range. In 1838 Mount Hope opened with the latest architectural novelty—an Egyptian Revival gate (top right). In 1840 the wild and beautiful land set aside for Mount Hope was annexed by the city.

Before Brighton for Frederick Douglass

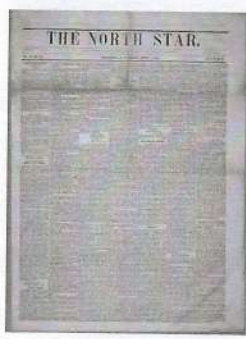


Daguerreotype; perhaps the earliest photo of Douglass

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in Maryland in 1818. He escaped at age 20 and settled in Rochester in 1847 in order to publish an abolitionist newspaper he called *The North Star*. His home on Alexander Street soon became a major stop on the Underground Railroad, especially after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 that targeted runaway slaves.

Believing that he needed a more secluded spot than Alexander Street for the 150 runaways that passed through his "station" each year, in 1852 Douglass bought or built a secluded farm on a hillside at the end of the Pinnacle Range in Brighton, just outside city limits. The 20 years that he considered Brighton his home, 1852-1872, were the most important and productive of his entire life.

The Pinnacle Range in Brighton was wild and hilly land, unsuitable for farming but just right for hiding fugitive slaves and getting them by night in Quaker bonnets or hidden under bales of hay to Kelsey's Landing on the nearby Genesee River where Canadian ships could pick them up. The house burned to the ground in 1872, a victim, Douglass said, of "coloraphobia." He then moved with his wife Anna to the Washington D. C. area but always maintained about the Rochester area: **"I shall always feel more at home there than in anywhere in the country."**



Number 4 (later 279) Alexander Street



We have no pictures of what the Douglass farm at 999 South Avenue looked like

Douglass's explanation of why he chose the Rochester area to settle in 1847 after visiting and speaking here in 1843

"They were not more amiable than brave, for they never seemed to ask, 'What will the world say,' but walked straight forward in what seemed to them the line of duty, please or offend whomsoever it might. Many a poor fugitive slave found shelter under their roof when such shelter was hard to find elsewhere, and I mention them here in the warmth and fullness of earnest gratitude."

Beginning in Maryland: Childhood as a Slave

Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey was born, probably in 1818, into slavery on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay in Talbot County, Maryland. His birthplace was likely the mud-floor shack of his grandmother, Betsy Bailey. Until the age of six he shared this cabin with siblings, cousins, and grandparents.

Beginning in Maryland: Childhood as a Slave

Mother Harriet Bailey and Grandmother Betsy Bailey

Freddy Bailey's mother was a field slave; he saw little of her and was more attached to his grandmother, known to all as "Aunt Betsy." Unlike Eliza in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Freddy's mother had not crossed a river on ice floes to hold on to him. Freddy scarcely knew his mother. When his grandmother, for whom he professed closeness, was forced to abandon him, she simply disappeared from his life. He cried and cried for the rest of the day and then went on with his life.

Baltimore and Sophie Auld

At age 6, Freddy Bailey was delivered by "Aunt Betsy" to his master (and most believe, his biological father) Aaron Anthony who gave Freddy to his daughter Lucretia Auld and son-in-law Thomas Auld. Lucretia in turn sent the child slave to Baltimore, 1826-1831, to be a companion to her nephew Tommy Auld, young son of Sophia and Hugh Auld. (Before puberty, slaves were part of the family.) Freddy soon learned to regard Sophia Auld as something more akin to a mother than a slaveholding mistress. As Sophia read Bible stories to the little boys and taught Tommy the alphabet, Freddy's fascination with learning to read grew but cruelly came to an end when Hugh discovered what was transpiring. A scene of domestic violence ensued. Slaves were not allowed to read.

In Baltimore, Freddy became the light-colored slave boy living with a family that owned no slaves. Without knowing exactly what she was doing, Sophie Auld began the end of slavery for this particular slave. Without realizing it, Sophie was a dangerous subversive, raising the expectations of a slave to a point beyond which bondage was not endurable. Even after Hugh Auld had put an end to his wife's teaching sessions, Frederick continued to teach himself to read. He bought a used copy of famous orators and practiced reading their speeches. For the rest of his life Freddy loved to read and to converse about books with others, particularly women, whom he never found intimidating.

When he was 18, Freddy and a friend opened a Sunday School to teach Blacks to read. Thomas Auld learned of it and quickly put an end to it.

According to a scholarly biographer, William McFeeley, Frederick Douglass "looked to women as confidants, companions, and sources of strength. They, rather than men, could be comprehended and counted on to be able."

Escape to the North, New Bedford and Lecturing

Douglass first tried to escape from one master, who had hired him out, but was unsuccessful. In 1836, he tried to escape from his new master, but failed again. In 1837, Douglass met and fell in love with Anna Murray, a free black woman in Baltimore about five years older than he. Her free status strengthened his belief in the possibility of gaining his own freedom.

Anna Murray, a free house servant, provides her meager savings to facilitate Frederick's escape and gains 44 years of marriage and five children

Douglass's books have no hint about emotional relationships with women other than relatives, real or surrogate. According to biographer William McFeeley, the first one we meet is his wife of 44 years, Anna Murray, who he introduces as almost an afterthought: "It's almost as if Dear Reader is told, Oh by the way, needing money for a train ticket in order to escape, I borrowed it from a good lady. We were married a few weeks later in New York."

On September 3, 1838, Douglass successfully escaped by boarding a train to the great northern cities. Young Douglass reached Havre de Grace, MD. Though this placed him some 20 miles from the free state of Pennsylvania, it was easier to travel through Delaware, another slave state. Dressed in a sailor's uniform provided to him by Murray, who also gave him part of her savings to cover his travel costs, he carried identification papers that he had obtained from a free black seaman. Douglass crossed the wide Susquehanna River by the railroad's steam-ferry, then continued by train across the state line to Wilmington. From there he went by steamboat along the Delaware River further northeast to the "Quaker City" of Philadelphia, PA an anti-slavery stronghold, and continued to the safe house of noted abolitionist David Ruggles in New York City. His entire journey to freedom took less than 24 hours. Once Douglass had arrived, he sent for Murray to follow him north to New York. She brought with her the necessary basics for them to set up a home. They were married on September 15, 1838. At first, they adopted Johnson as their married name, to divert attention. The couple settled in New Bedford, MA.



The last time Frederick saw his mother. From *Life and Times*, 1881.

"My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant.... I do not recollect ever seeing my mother by the light of day. ... She would lie down with me, and get me to sleep, but long before I waked she was gone."



MISS AULD TEACHING HIM TO READ.

Hugh Auld's wife Sophie started teaching him the alphabet. Douglass described her as a kind and tender-hearted woman, who treated him "as she supposed one human being ought to treat another."



Anna Murray Douglass

The Runaway Leaves MA, Goes Abroad to England, Scotland and Ireland

In New Bedford, MA, Douglass regularly attended abolitionist meetings and subscribed to William Lloyd Garrison's weekly journal *The Liberator*. So deep was this influence that Douglass confessed later that Garrison's "paper took a place in my heart second only to The Bible." Garrison was likewise impressed with Douglass as early as 1839. In 1841, Douglass was unexpectedly invited to speak. After telling his story, he was encouraged to become an anti-slavery lecturer. Then 23 years old, Douglass conquered his nervousness and gave an eloquent speech about his rough life as a slave. In 1843, he joined other speakers in the American Anti-Slavery Society's "Hundred Conventions" project, a six-month tour at meeting halls throughout the Eastern and Midwestern United States, including a stop in Rochester where he met Amy and Isaac Post. Douglass' friends and mentors feared that the publicity would draw the attention of his ex-owner, Hugh Auld, who might try to get his "property" back. They encouraged Douglass to tour Ireland and Great Britain, as many former slaves had done. Douglass set sail for Liverpool in August 1845. While he encountered racism aboard ship, once in the British Isles Thomas and Ann Jennings of Cork with their eight children--five girls and three boys--reported that "Frederick won the affection of every one of us." Two Quaker women, Ellen and Anna Richardson of Newcastle upon Tyne purchased his freedom. British women wrote to Maria Chapman in Boston to praise "our beloved friend Frederick whom we love and cherish as a dear brother"

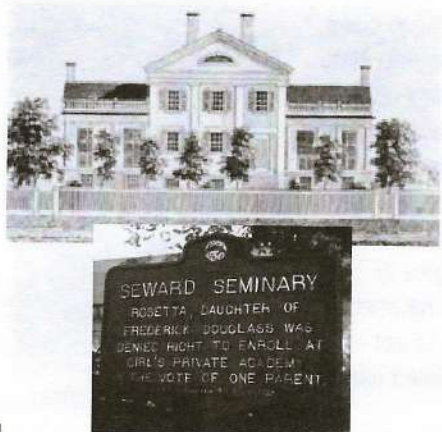
During his English stay Douglass considered his future, including staying in England and sending for his family. The project closest to his heart was starting a newspaper and being hailed as "Mr. Editor," but eventually he decided he couldn't do it in Boston because his mentor, William Lloyd Garrison, thought Douglass should stick to speaking tours. But he eventually determined to start a paper in Rochester because of his cordial reception there in 1843. On 28 October 1847, Douglass wrote to Amy Post, "I have finally decided to publish *The North Star* in Rochester."



The Frederick Douglass home on Alexander Street in 1936
FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE ROCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY LOCAL HISTORY DIVISION



Left: Rosetta Douglass Above: Jane Marsh Parker Below: The Seward Seminary



A New Start in Rochester, 1847

Frederick Douglass's first Rochester house, purchased from historian Jane Marsh Parker's father at 4 (later 297) Alexander St.. The adjoining houses to the north and south were also owned and occupied by the abolitionist Parkers. Future novelist and historian, Jane Marsh Parker, was eight years of age when the Douglasses moved in. The Douglass residence was carefully chosen for its added purpose of a station on the Underground Railroad, where escaping slaves could be hidden until it was safe to send them to a Lake Ontario port for shipment to Canada. At this time, 162 black families lived here..

Douglass enrolled his oldest child, Rosetta, in Miss Julia Tracy's private school that stood where Genesee Hospital would rise. However, Rosetta was segregated in a separate room from white students, due to protests by a parent, Judge Horatio Gates Warner (who lived in Warner's Castle, now the Rochester Garden Center) Douglass was furious.

After returning to the US, Douglass started publishing the *The North Star*, from the basement of the Memorial AME Zion Church. The paper's motto was "Right is of no Sex – Truth is of no Color – God is the Father of us all, and we are all brethren." The AME Church and *The North Star* vigorously opposed the mostly white American Colonization Society and its proposal to send blacks back to Africa. This and Douglass's later abolitionist newspapers were mainly funded by English supporters, who gave Douglass five hundred pounds to use as he chose. Douglass also soon split with Garrison, perhaps because *The North Star* competed with Garrison's *National Anti-Slavery Standard*.

In 1848, Douglass was the only African American to attend the Seneca Falls Convention, the first women's rights convention, in upstate New York.[48][49] Elizabeth Cady Stanton asked the assembly to pass a resolution asking for women's suffrage.[50] Many of those present opposed the idea, including influential Quakers James and Lucretia Mott.[51] Douglass stood and spoke eloquently in favor; he said that he could not accept the right to vote as a black man if women could not also claim that right. He suggested that the world would be a better place if women were involved in the political sphere.

"In this denial of the right to participate in government, not merely the degradation of woman and the perpetuation of a great injustice happens, but the maiming and repudiation of one-half of the moral and intellectual power of the government of the world."

After Douglass's powerful words, the attendees passed the resolution.

Julia Griffiths, a British abolitionist working with Frederick Douglass.

The two met in London, England, during Douglass' tour of the British Isles in 1845-47. In 1849, Griffiths joined Douglass in Rochester, to edit, publish and promote his work.

Julia and her sister landed in New York early in May, 1849, and Douglass met them. The English ladies soon cancelled their registration at the Franklin Hotel on learning that Negroes could not register there. Benjamin Quarles, Douglass' biographer, says that the worst fracas occurred on the trip up the Hudson from New York to Albany on their way to Rochester. When Douglass and the two sisters entered the dining room of the ship, he was ordered to get out. The sisters followed him out of the dining room. Once in Rochester, Julia plunged with fervor into the work of putting *The North Star* on its feet financially. Douglass "owed much of his literary precision to Miss Griffiths' blue-penciling" even though he had "an inherent sensitiveness to language forms." There is no question that Douglass learned a great deal about language from Julia, but at the same time his "sensitiveness to language" is thoroughly apparent in his pre-Julia publications. Julia says, "I am the Banker for the paper -- I know, always, PRECISELY, how the accounts stand -- ." The note of calm assurance must have been most helpful in sustaining Douglass in his project in the face of his self-doubts, his fears, and the various material obstacles of all kinds that he had to overcome. Julia persisted in her efforts to raise money, sustained by her devotion to Douglass and to the cause of abolition.

Julia Griffiths developed resources to aid Douglass and his paper. Taking advantage of the anti-slavery sentiment in Rochester, which was strong, and of the practice of holding bazaars and other affairs to raise money in the cause of abolition, Julia characteristically decided to give these activities a more firm direction. In an effort to improve the financial base of *The North Star* Julia set out to raise a thousand dollars from the sale of a gift book of 65 pages, *Autographs for Freedom*, which she edited. In the book appeared material of various types from prominent abolitionists and sympathizers over their autographs printed in facsimile. Frederick Douglass contributed "The Heroic Slave" his only attempt at fiction. Emerson sent a poem entitled, "On Freedom." Jay, Greeley, John Greenleaf Whittier, Seward, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Beecher, Willard, Gerrit Smith, Dr. J. McCune Smith, the well-known reformer and educator, also sent selections for the book. A second series of the book was issued the following year. She never deviated from her devotion to Douglass and his cause. Not everyone, even among the abolitionists, was so dedicated to working for the freedom of the slaves as Julia Griffiths. Even though she was quite realistic about the difficulties relating to emancipation in the United States, she was deeply pained whenever she encountered opposition from any quarter from which she might have expected sympathy. She was astounded by the attitude of Jenny Lind: "Of course, you are aware of Jenny Lind's presence in this city - I did obtain a private interview with her - universally benevolent as she is decent, the colored people are regarded by her as beneath humanity - and too unworthy to be educated. . . Jenny Lind," she concluded, "is thoroughly pro-slavery."

When there were items left over from the bazaars Julia frequently took them across the lake to Canada, to sell. She was also involved in the Underground Railroad, an activity she seemed to experience with considerable relish. Douglass described how he "dispatched" Julia to Kelsey's Landing on the Genesee River to arrange for the passage to Canada of three fugitives. Julia wrote, "I drove to the LANDING - to make necessary inquiries concerning Canada, Boats, etc. -- Frederick consulted with Mr. S. D. Porter first. . . . The men at first proposed driving the fugitives to Lewiston by night," but she "felt that the unusual mode would attract attention." She added that if a boat at the landing proved to be an "English boat it would be safer to put them on board." Luckily, there was an English boat at the landing, and she made arrangements with the black who kept the landing to give a special signal should any trouble occur at their approach.

One of the most difficult tasks concerning the relationship between the two abolitionists is to assay the exact nature of their feelings for each other, Palmer writes. From time to time discontent was expressed concerning Douglass' free association with Julia and Eliza. This criticism was to be expected from pro-slavery and rough elements, but it was heightened for others by the fact that the two sisters resided with Douglass at his home at 4 (297) Alexander Street. Julia's removal to another location after three years' residence there helped to confirm the suspicion in some minds that all was not well with the Douglass family. It is evident, of course, that their intellectual companionship, close business relationship, and their commitment to the cause

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A rare picture of Julia Griffiths from the internet.



Douglass pursued a lifetime of imagining and attaining a world of grace and elegance



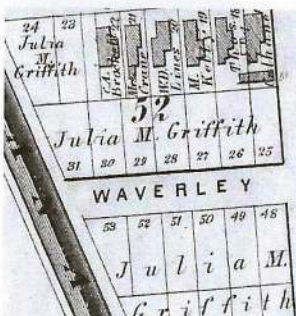
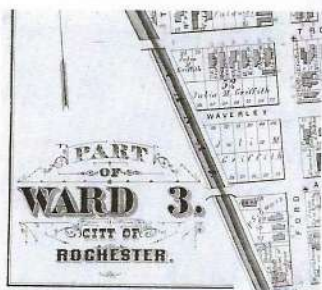
Jenny Lind, the "Swedish Nightingale," raised money for many Rochester charities but was pro-slavery



Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote a series of sketches she called Uncle Tom's Cabin in 1852. She felt the need "to hear from a laborer in the cotton fields." Replying, Douglass politely omitted to mention that Marylanders did not work in the cotton fields. The exchange of letters began a lifelong friendship.

Frederick Douglass pays tribute to Julia Griffiths Crofts:

"But to no one person was I more indebted for substantial assistance than to Mrs. Julia Griffiths Crofts. She came to my relief when my paper had nearly absorbed all my means, and was heavily in debt, and when I had mortgaged my house to raise money to meet current expenses; and by her energetic and effective management, in a single year enabled me to extend the circulation of my paper from 2,000 to 4,000 copies, pay off the debts and lift the mortgage from my house. Her industry was equal to her devotion. She seemed to rise with every emergency, and her resources appeared inexhaustible. I shall never cease to remember with sincere gratitude the assistance rendered me by this noble lady, and I mention her here in some humble measure to 'give honor to whom honor is due'." (*The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, Hartford CT, 1882)



Julia M. Griffith bought 20 lots in the Third Ward between Ford Street and the Erie Canal and Troup and Atkinson Streets. Did she also buy a farm on a dirt road off South Avenue in Brighton for Frederick Douglass?



Anna Douglass was not happy that Julia Griffith had moved into the Douglass house but probably did not write the letter saying so as she was illiterate

Continued from the last page

of emancipation would throw the ex-slave and the English lady into constant and extremely close association. Julia wrote about the "home trials" which Douglass suffered. In order to comfort him and to ease his tribulations, she read to him evenings. She nursed him in sickness. She was constantly at his side in his office, at home, and at the paper. In view of the closeness of Julia and Frederick, Anna would of necessity occupy the background on perhaps too many occasions. This no doubt rankled Anna deeply. The rising chorus of public comment, in addition to his home situation, caused Douglass as early as 1849 to castigate editorially those who suggested immorality

Garrison's *Anti-Slavery Standard* of September 24, 1853 which spoke of Julia as a "Jezebel" finally provoked Douglass to devote a large part of an issue of his paper to a rebuttal. This in turn caused Garrison to attack Douglass and Julia openly in an editorial in *The Liberator*, heading it with the caption, "The Mask Entirely Removed" and excoriating Douglass for his defection from Garrisonianism." One of the first results of the Garrison attack was that a note, purportedly from Mrs. Anna Douglass, denying that "the presence of a certain person in the office of Frederick Douglass causes unhappiness in his family" was received by Garrison. Although he printed the letter and expressed regret in a following editorial for "having implied anything immoral," he had nevertheless said that he could bring "a score of witnesses" to prove his point.

The situation was complicated by the fact that many knew that Anna Douglass could neither read nor write. Elizabeth Cady Stanton was convinced that the letter had been "concocted by Fred and Julia," and sent in Anna Douglass's name. Furthermore, Mrs. Stanton felt that Mrs. Douglass would never sign a paper denying Julia's having caused domestic discord in the Douglass household, because Mrs. Douglass had told another friend "Garrison is right - it is Julia that has made Frederick hate all his old friends . . . I don't care anything about her [Julia] being in the OFFICE, but I won't have her in my home.."

Despite their difficulties, Frederick and Julia weathered the storm and remained close friends all their lives. Apparently, the affair made absolutely no difference in their working relationship or in their mutual personal regard, and she bolstered him at every opportunity.

When the Civil War broke out and turned out to be white soldiers of the North fighting white soldiers of the South, Douglass sorely wanted a commission so he could go off to war. But Julia advised: "The pen is your weapon! Let the Americans kill one another -- YOU have no country to fight for, dear Frederick. . . ." Julia's fears were groundless because the commission never came. On almost the thirtieth anniversary of Douglass' departure from England, Julia wrote from Gateshead-on-Tyne and offered an interesting side-light on his attitude toward whiteness, one which might find some appeal today: ". . . this is 1877- and 30 years ago this March (1847) we had an anti-slavery London soiree and Eliza pinned that white carnation on your coat and the naughty brother Frederick never rested til he knocked off the beautiful white flower leaving only the green leaves. . . ."

"There were disappointments, but Julia could have the satisfaction of knowing that she had labored fully and well in the cause of freedom" Palmer concluded.

This segment about Frederick Douglass and Julia Griffiths is a condensation of an article in the University of Rochester Library Bulletin, Volume XXVI, Autumn-Winter 1970-71 · Numbers 1 & 2: "A Partnership in the Abolition Movement"--by ERWIN PALMER, Professor of English, State University of New York, Oswego

Julia Griffith's ability was recognized by Booker T. Washington who said that many friends had come to Douglass' rescue, but that the most important of them was, Miss Julia Griffiths. . . . Because of her, the circulation increased from two thousand to four thousand and enough money was realized to pay off all indebtedness and lift the mortgage on Douglass's home. The sisters had been helpful in raising the original \$2,500 which Douglass had used in starting his paper.

While the Douglass home on Alexander Street was near other homes and businesses, it was not private enough for Frederick's activities as major conductor on the Underground Railroad, especially after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. So in 1852 Douglass moved his family to the farming and brick factory community of Brighton just outside city limits where law enforcement was less likely to apprehend runaway slaves. There they lived and he operated in relative peace for twenty years.

Douglass's new Brighton house stood in "a neighborless place, its only roadway at the time the private road leading to his door. The farm's roadway connected with the dirt road leading into the city from the southeast," William McFeeley wrote. More than 150 fugitives a year went through this new house and on into Canada.

We know from correspondence that Julia Griffiths bankrolled The North Star and a mortgage on the Alexander Street house. Douglass has been called "the most photographed man in the 19th century." How about Douglass's new Brighton home? WHY ARE THERE NO PHOTOS OR RECORDS?

Where Douglass got this idea for buying a farm two miles from the center city and where he got the money to pay for it is not known. According to McFeeley, "The Monroe County records shed no light on the original purchase, but do document his acquisition in 1863 and 1865 of two adjacent lots. The Alexander Street house was not sold; it was held as the first of several real-estate investments which became for the Douglasses, as for many prosperous African American families, the foundation of financial security." Although the Posts understanding of domesticity of Julia and Frederick was more tolerant than that of other anti-slavery friends, by 1855 the criticism was so shrill the two could no longer withstand the pressure. So Julia packed her bags went back to England where she contributed a regular column to the *Douglass Monthly* which had started as a British supplement.

Almost immediately Julia was replaced by a handsome German woman Ottilia Assing who called at the Talman Building in 1856 then made the half-hour trek up the hill. She would translate his works and sell them in Europe. Unlike with Julia, Frederick did not invite Ottilia to move in with his family. Instead she found rooms in the German quarter of Hoboken and made endless trips to Rochester and Brighton.



Booker T. Washington



Amy Post



Ottilia Assing



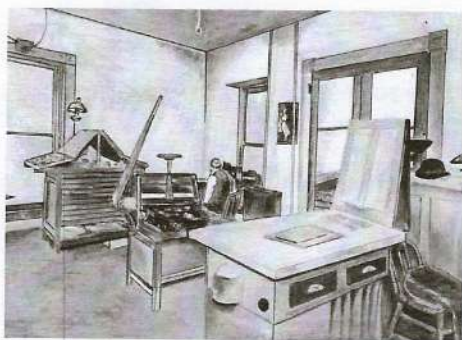
The Third Ward as seen from across the Genesee River and up the Brighton hill to the Douglass farm, where the family lived for twenty years, 1852-1872. The pathway across the Clarissa Street Bridge that continued by turning right to the left of the Genesee led to Kelsey's Landing below the lower falls where Canadian boats could reach or beyond there to Charlotte on Lake Ontario.

The Onerous Fugitive Slave Law of 1850

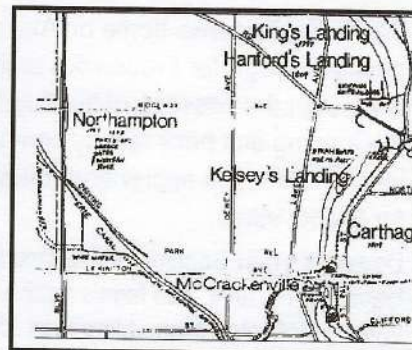
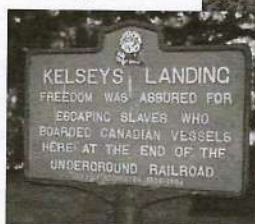
Millard Fillmore of nearby Aurora could have been our most famous President—an Abraham Lincoln. Instead, he was an accidental President—one who signed the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 that brought on the Civil War a decade later.

Rochester newspaper editor Thurlow Weed wrote: "The act was so revolting to every sentiment of justice and humanity, it was thought impossible that it should find approval with Mr. Fillmore. In signing it he signed his own political death warrant and having served out President Taylor's term, passed into retirement from which he never emerged."

Kelsey's Landing: Jumpoff for Canada



The pressroom for The North Star and other Douglass publications in the Talman Building



In addition to Charlotte and Kelsey's Landing, Canadian ships anchored to the east at Webster or to the west at Hilton

John Brown and the House on the Brighton Hill

Perhaps the most famous boarder at the Brighton farm, other than Douglass himself, was John Brown,

John Brown and Frederick Douglass first met in 1848 in Springfield MA. He was 29, Brown 47. Brown had invited Douglass to stop on his way from Boston to Rochester. Expecting a richly furnished upper middle class home like most of his white patrons, Douglass was surprised by the working class house and neighborhood; He noted that Brown, the patriarch of a large family, was lean, strong, sinewy, built for times of trouble. They agreed that abolishing slavery was the main goal but Douglass, and incidentally Garrison, thought it could be achieved through moral suasion and governmental action, while Brown believed violence was necessary. The battleground shifted to Kansas in 1850s where the white settlers were quarrelling over slavery. In 1855 John Brown joined his sons in the border warfare between the pro-slavery and anti-slavery settlers in Missouri and Kansas. A year later Rochesterians were startled to read that Brown and his band had massacred five pro-slavery settlers in retaliation for the murder of some anti-slavery proponents.

Other Rochesterians had participated in the massacre including Merritt Anthony, brother of Susan B. Anthony. Brown spent the night before the raid in young Anthony's cabin. The boy had been ill and told to remain in bed if trouble arose, but when the firing started he rushed out with the others, later crawling back to the cabin where he lay ill without care for some days. The Anthonys, learning from telegraphic dispatches that Merritt took part in the raid, but hearing nothing from him, feared that he was killed. But then a letter from Merritt was published in several Rochester newspaper. Susan B. picked up her pen and wrote to her younger brother:

"Your letter is in today's Democrat and another one in this morning's 'Shrieker for Freedom.' The tirade is headed 'Bleeding Kansas.' The Advertiser, Union and American all ridicule reports from Kansas and say your letters are gotten up in the Democrat office for political effect. I tell you, Merritt, we have border ruffians here at home—a little more refined in their ways of outraging and torturing the lovers of freedom, but no less fiendish."

Other Rochesterians were captured in Kansas raids, placed on a boat and ordered to return east.

In 1856 John Brown climbed the Brighton hill to tell Douglass about the possibilities he was considering. Brown envisioned two different scenarios: one an enhanced Underground Railroad from Virginia to Rochester and on to Canada and the other a black state in Appalachian mountains where escaping slaves would settle.



RP150088. JPC Rochester Public Library, Division of Local History

Another Brighton station on the Underground Railroad was the Thomas Warrant house. C. F. Warrant told the story of his father taking him to the loft where the slaves were hidden so he could place his hands on the welts sustained from a beating.



John Brown and the House on the Brighton Hill (continued)

Douglass remembered from Maryland days how it felt for an escape to fail. His first attempt at escape from Maryland had been unsuccessful. In 1836, he had tried to escape from a new master and that too failed and led to a terrible beating. Nevertheless Douglass decided it was worth hearing about and worth the friendship with the militant white abolitionist.

During the mid-1850s, John Brown was the leader of one of the Free Soil bands fighting the pro-slavery forces in Kansas. But Brown wanted to start a slave revolt in the South. In 1859, he decided to lead an attack on the northern Virginia town of Harpers Ferry, seize the weapons stored in the nearby federal armory, and hold the local citizens hostage while he rounded up slaves in the area. Gathering a small force of white and black volunteers, Brown rented a farm near Harpers Ferry and made his preparations for attack. From the farm, Brown wrote to Douglass, asking him to come to a meeting in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, in August. There Brown announced his plans and urged Douglass to join in the attack. Douglass refused. He had agreed with Brown's earlier ideas, but he knew that an attack on federal property would enrage most Americans.

This was the last time Douglass and Brown met. On October 16, 1859, Brown and his men seized Harpers Ferry. The next night, federal troops led by Colonel Robert E. Lee marched into the town and stormed the armory where Brown's band was stationed. Brown was captured, and two of his sons were killed in the fighting. In less than two months, Brown was tried for treason, found guilty, and hanged. Douglass was lecturing in Philadelphia when he received the news about Brown's raid, and he was warned that letters had been found that implicated him in the attack. The headlines for the newspapers' accounts of the incident featured his name prominently. Knowing that he stood little chance of a fair trial if he were captured and sent to Virginia, Douglass fled to Canada. While in Canada, Douglass wrote letters in his own defense, justifying both his flight and his refusal to help Brown. One of the men captured during the raid said that Douglass had promised to appear at Harpers Ferry with reinforcements. Douglass denied this accusation, saying that he would never approve of attacks on federal property. But though he could not condone the raid, he praised Brown as a "noble old hero."

In November 1859, Douglass sailed to England to begin a lecture tour, a trip he had planned long before the incident at Harpers Ferry. The news of his near arrest only increased his popularity with his audiences, and his lectures helped to stir up more sympathy for the antislavery cause. In May 1860, just as he was about to continue his lecture tour in France, word reached him that his youngest child, Annie, had died. Heartbroken over the loss of his daughter, Douglass decided to go home. Glad to be back with his family again, Douglass knew that he was home - and home included not just Rochester but all of America, including the states in the South. It was a home filled with strife, but it was his, and he embraced it all: the land, the people, the Constitution, the Union.



John Brown



The Legend of John Brown Portfolio by artist Jacob Lawrence. This painting and others from the portfolio were exhibited at the Memorial Art Gallery most recently August-November 1915



The Arsenal at Harpers Ferry

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"The city was and still is the center of a various, intelligent, enterprising, liberal, and growing population. . . . Its people were industrious and in comfortable circumstances — not so rich as to be indifferent to the claims of humanity, and not so poor as to be unable to help any good cause which commanded the approval of their judgment."

—Frederick Douglass on Rochester in his autobiography



Artist's conception of the burning of the Douglass's Brighton home in 1872. Apparently no photographs survive of the farm where 500 fugitives found food and shelter. Below, Rochester School 12 occupies the site today



Fire! - 1872

Guided by the light in the night sky, a fire company raced up the South Avenue hill....

Lost—were the only existing complete runs of the North Star, Frederick Douglass' Paper, and Douglass' Monthly....

The morning paper stated flatly, "The fire is attributed to an incendiary."

Douglass blamed "Northern colorphobia"....

Douglass reported that \$11,000 in securities had burned. He said nothing of the friendship of the Posts and Porters, or of the neighbors who had carried out the lamps and chairs—nothing of almost twenty-five years of an extraordinarily rich life in Rochester.

Bill McFeeley sums it up: "Weeds took over Anna's flower beds; brush choked the orchard. Rejecting the pleas of friends, including Susan B. Anthony, that he rebuild, and turning his back on the town that had been home for a quarter of a century, Douglass moved his family irrevocably to Washington.



John Howe Kent



John Howe Kent

George Eastman once said that when he took up photography in approximately 1877, there were two professional photographers in Rochester.. One was the portrait photographer John Howe Kent whose Main Street studio was where all the other amateur photographers hung out. Sam Wardlow, Kent's assistant, told ruefully how Eastman liked to drop a pepper-box lens and catch it with his foot before it crashed.

Rochester's most acclaimed portrait photographer John Howe Kent was born in 1827 in Plattsburgh, NY. A gifted painter of landscapes, he moved to Brockport NY to teach oil painting at the Brockport Normal School and to open a small art gallery. He married Julia Ainsworth. Their daughter Ada became a talented painter. In 1868, he moved to Rochester, which became his permanent location, and where he operated nine different studios. He photographed many celebrity visitors to Rochester, most notably suffragette Susan B. Anthony and abolitionist Frederick Douglass. Mr. Kent tended to highly romanticize his subjects with a heavy emphasis upon "grace and elegance," and delighted in featuring props that characterized the Victorian Age.

Source: Historic Camera , History Librarium



Two Washington D.C. houses where the Douglasses lived were on A Street (left) and in Anacostia (below). The second is now a National Historic site.



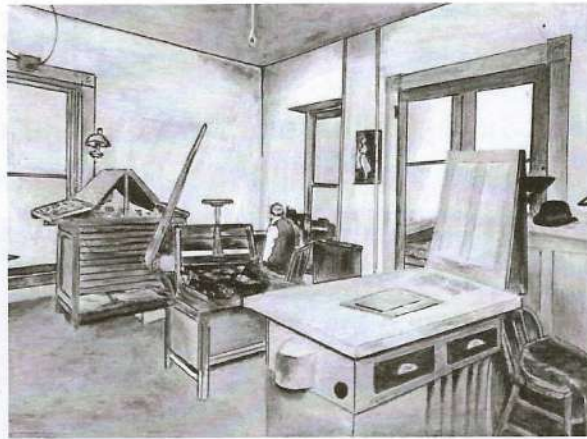
In 1892, Douglass accompanied President Benjamin Harrison to Rochester to dedicate the Civil War Monument in Washington Square ("You know its Washington Square because the statue of Lincoln is there" is an old Rochester saying.) Douglass was the US minister to Haiti, 1889-91.



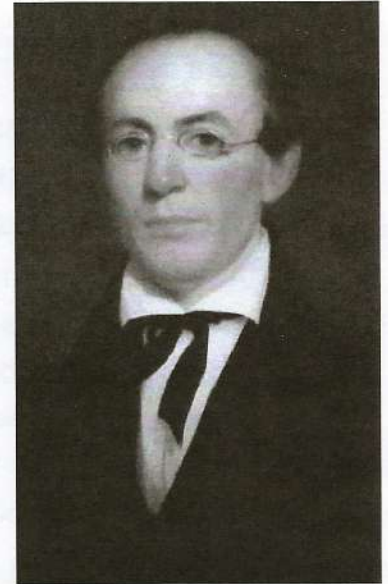
Susan B. (right) and sister Mary Anthony



First Douglass paper, The North Star



Douglass's printing office in downtown Rochester



William Lloyd Garrison gave Frederick Douglass his first chance:- Douglass planned to publish in Boston but the attitude there discouraged him. Instead he chose Rochester, the last safe stop on the Underground, and named the paper *The North Star*—the richest image of the resolute, hopeful trek of runaways to freedom.

In his own words: Frederick Douglass Quotes

North Star masthead: "Right is of no sex - Truth is of no color - God is the Father of us all, and we are all Brethren ."

"If there is no struggle, there is no progress."

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

"I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and to incur my own abhorrence."

"Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground."

"I prayed for twenty years but received no answer until I prayed with my legs."

"People might not get all they work for in this world, but they must certainly work for all they get."

Blacks, Frederick Douglass said, would have to pay a heavy price to win their freedom. "We must do this by labor, by suffering, by sacrifice, and if needs be, by our lives and the lives of others."

"To my Old Master Thomas Auld: Your wickedness and cruelty committed in this respect on your fellow creatures are greater than all the stripes you have laid upon my back or theirs. It is an outrage upon the soul, a war upon the immortal spirit, and one for which you must give account at the bar of our common Father and Creator."

Frederick Douglass on his years in England: "For a time I was made to forget that my skin was dark and my hair crisped." In Garrison's circle he was a token symbol. As for Rochester, "I know of no place in the Union where I could have located at the time with less resistance or received a larger measure of sympathy and cooperation."

Direct Descendant:



Lucia Garrison Norton Valentine was the direct descendant of William Lloyd Garrison and the wife of University of Rochester President Alan Valentine, 1935-1950

The Famous Fifth of July Speech

Douglass's famous 5th of July 1852 speech was a searing prophecy of what the nation's fate would be in less than a decade. He also pointed a haunting finger at the civil rights crises of a century hence:

"The 4th of July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice; I must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated Temple of Liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony. Do you mean, citizen, to mock me, by asking me to speak to you today.

"Would you have me argue that man is entitled to his liberty? And that he is the rightful owner of his own body? You have already declared it. Must I argue the wrongfulness of slavery? Is that a question for Republicans? Fellow-citizens! There is no matter in respect to which, the people of the North have allowed themselves

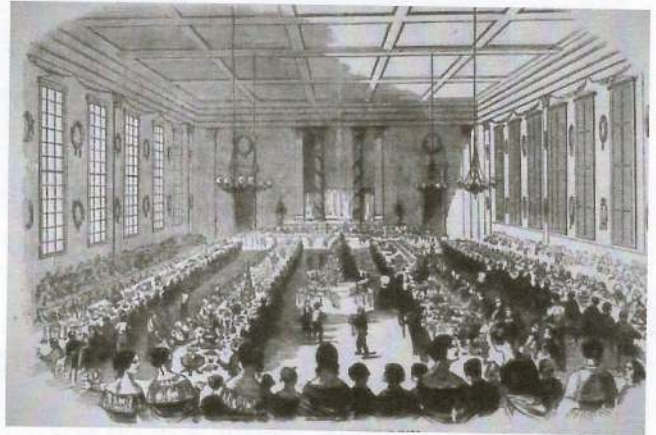
to be so ruinously imposed upon, as that of the pro-slavery character of the Constitution. In that instrument I hold there is no warrant, license, nor sanction of the hateful thing, but interpreted as it ought to be interpreted, the Constitution is a GLORIOUS LIBERTY DOCUMENT.

"The 4th of July is the first great fact in your nation's history—the very ring bolt in the chain of your yet underdeveloped destiny. From the round top of your ship if state dark and threatening clouds may be seen. Heavy billows like mountains in the distance disclose to the leeward huge forms of flinty rocks! That bolt drawn, that chain broken, and all is lost. Cling to this day—cling to it and its principles, with the grasp of a storm-tossed mariner to a spar at midnight.

"There is consolation in the thought that America is young. Great streams are not easily turned from channels worn deep in the course of ages. They may sometimes rise in quiet and stately majesty and inundate the land, refreshing and fertilizing the earth with their mysterious properties. They may also rise in wrath and fury and bear away on their angry waves the accumulated wealth of years of toil and hardship. They, however, gradually flow back to the same old channel, and flow on as serenely as ever. But while the river may not be turned aside, it may dry up and leave nothing behind but the withered branch and the unsightly rock to howl in abyss-sweeping wind, the sad tale of departed glory. As with rivers so with nations."

When the long, learned, carefully crafted speech was over and Douglass took his seat, the audience rose to cheer him. According to William McFeeley, "Douglass's Rochester neighbors had heard perhaps the greatest antislavery oration ever given."

Rhetorically, Douglass was a master of irony, as illustrated by his famous Fifth of July speech in 1852: "This Fourth of July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn," he declared. Then he accused his unsuspecting Rochester audience of mockery for inviting him to speak and quoted Psalm 137, where the children of Israel are forced to sit down "by the rivers of Babylon," there to "sing the Lord's song in a strange land."



Corinthian Hall in downtown Rochester: where the speech was given

Dear Sir—The Ladies of the “Rochester Anti Slavery Sewing Society,” desire me to return you their most sincere thanks for the eloquent and able address delivered in Corinthian Hall, on the 5th of July . Anticipating its speedy publication in Pamphlet form, they request that you will furnish them with one hundred copies for distribution :

In behalf of the Society,
SUSAN F. PORTER, President.

Probably the most moving passage in all of Douglass’s speeches:

What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sound of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants brass fronted impudence; your shout of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanks-givings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy — a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States, at this very hour.

Within the now-famous address is what historian Philip S. Foner has called “probably the most moving passage in all of Douglass’ speeches.”



South Avenue, coming up the Brighton Hill

During the 1850s, Frederick Douglass typically spent about six months of the year traveling extensively, giving lectures. During one winter -- the winter of 1855-1856 -- he gave about 70 lectures during a tour that covered four to five thousand miles. And his speaking engagements did not halt at the end of a tour. From his home in Brighton he took part in local abolition-related events.

Myrtilla Miner Makes her Belated Mark on Frederick Douglass

By Monica Gilligan



Myrtilla Miner



Celestia Angenette Bloss



The Clover Street Seminary

It's a bit of a chestnut to say that teachers never know where their influence ends. In the cases of Celestia Bloss head teacher of the Clover Street Seminary and her pupil and protégé Myrtilla Miner, we can see how this became a firm belief. The Bloss family were all early abolitionists, and Celestia Bloss was also an innovative and inspiring teacher. In her day, the 1840's, the library at the University of Rochester was closed to women. To do research for her books, Miss Bloss talked the trustees into making an exception for her, no doubt urging not only her intellect, but also her beauty and considerable charm.

Myrtilla Miner had the intellect, but sadly neither of the other two.

Miss Miner, however, had a passion; to educate the children of enslaved African Americans. That would have been absolutely impossible so many years before the Emancipation Proclamation. However, she wanted to do the nearly impossible, educate the children of former slaves, the so-called freedmen. To find out how to make this happen, she took the horsecars from East Avenue down to the office of Frederick Douglass at his newspaper, The North Star. In the 1880's, he wrote this about the meeting: One day forty years ago, while publishing "The North Star newspaper in Rochester, N.Y., a young lady called at my office to consult with me and to obtain my opinion as to the feasibility of establishing here in Washington a school for the education of colored girls. She said she had an idea of establishing such a school herself. I was at the time busily engaged in mailing my paper, but the purpose announced was so novel and startling as to cause me to stop my work and look up with amazement at the lady.

"The word 'crank' now in common use was employed only to designate a certain part of machines. But had it been in use as now, I should at the moment pronounced this lady a full member of that large and growing family. I however soon saw that she was not thus to be disposed of. She possessed those qualities which never fail to command respectful attention. She was educated. She was refined, dignified and in earnest. I said too that my amazement of the boldness of her enterprise had but little effect on her, so I began to argue against her undertaking. I pointed out the dangers and hardships that awaited her and the certainty of failure of the measure.

"She listened to all I had to say, but finally and firmly responded 'I shall try it.' And try it she did. She encountered all the dangers and hardships I predicted, but she persevered and victory crowned effort.

"Some of her pupils still live here and are among our most highly regarded ladies. It remains only to tell the name of the person to whom I have referred. She was Miss Myrtilla Miner, the lady who founded what is now known as the Miner Normal School, a lady to be held by us in grateful memory."

It's said that tiny Miss Miner, in fragile health most of her life, had so many threats against her young pupils by racist toughs and bullies that she took to accompanying the children from home to school, armed with what was called a horse pistol. No one who knew her would have doubted that, in defense of her girls, she'd have used it. Her force of personality was said to be such that she never had to fire a shot. As the girls grew, the academy grew and became a teacher training school, a normal school as they were known in those days.

Frederick Douglass himself has suggested grateful memory of this Clover Street Seminary educated teacher who could not be persuaded away from early civil rights activism.

Just to remind us all that the influence of a great teacher never stops, the Miner Normal School she founded is still going strong. It is the University of Washington, D.C.

Some African-Americans in Brighton History

Asa Dunbar of the 'Lost City of Tryon'

By Mary Jo Lanphear

Asa Dunbar was the second of six children born in Braintree, Massachusetts, to Sampson Dunbar and Patience Crouch. Born in 1754, he and his brothers, Joshua, born in 1760, and Samuel, born in 1762, are said to have participated in the Revolutionary War. In 1784, Asa married Elizabeth Odel in Sutton, MA. Joshua Dunbar married her sister, Lydia. Lydia's application for a widow's pension based on Joshua's war service provides the information that neither she nor her husband were ever slaves. This statement would apply to Asa and Elizabeth Dunbar, then, due to the familial relationship of the two couples.

By several accounts, Asa's home county, Berkshire, in the western part of Massachusetts, was a diverse place with a mix of religious sects, farmers, laborers, African Americans, and native Americans whose varied traditions and old and new ideas pulled in different directions. Other authors point to the gradual departure of native peoples as newly-freed blacks came into the Berkshires after the American Revolution. It would seem to have been an ideal community in which to live for a mixed race family but for some reason, Asa Dunbar packed up his family and moved west in 1791, settling on Irondequoit Bay.

Although he had been a charcoal-maker in Massachusetts, Asa provided for his family on the Bay by hunting and fishing and selling fruit to Canada from the remnants of old Seneca orchards. He is also described as making salt from the marshy areas along the Bay. Salt was a necessary commodity for the preservation of food and gave Asa something to sell or barter.

After John Tryon developed his commercial village at the Irondequoit Landing in 1797, he persuaded the Dunbars to come and live there. Asa had skills important to the new community and, at six feet, seven inches, his height alone was an asset. When helping to raise a log cabin, it was said that he was able to raise his end of a log to a height of five feet while it required three ordinary men to hoist the opposite end.

Much of what we know about Asa Dunbar comes from early government records. There are numerous civil court cases involving Asa Dunbar between 1794 and 1818. Many of them concern trespass, an all-purpose term that's described in Black's Law Dictionary as "unlawful interference with one's person, property, or rights. At common law, trespass was a form of action brought to recover damages." In Asa's case, it was used most often to recover money he owed. On the frontier in this period, cash was short. Purchases at Tryon's store, for example, were most often made on a barter system. Barrels of wheat, ashes, whiskey, or other produce could be traded for tools, fabric, spices, medicine, candy, school books, china, or bed cord. In 1802 Hannah Dunbar, Asa's daughter, bought a straw bonnet, adding to Asa's tab at the Tryon store. Tryon & Adams Company sued Asa for debt in 1802. That same year, Asa was appointed a high-way overseer for Northfield, likely an unpaid position.

Asa Dunbar sued people for trespass and collected damages on several occasions. One notable case was his 1810 suit against Joseph Northrup who allegedly broke into Asa's stable and stole a horse and bridle which he later sold.

Asa collected \$150.00 in damages. In 1812, when he was fifty-eight years old, Asa was attacked and severely beaten by two men in Lima, New York. They also kept him tied up for twenty-four hours. Presumably, Asa was in Lima on business for Tryon & Adams, his employer, who had a store at the Landing and at Lima. Asa's suit against the two men sought damages for pain and suffering as well as replacement for his attire, "one coat, one waistcoat, one pair of breeches, one cravat, one shirt, one pair of stockings, and one hat...of the value of \$50.00." Asa Dunbar dressed as a gentleman. Asa's suit against Peter Moon and Rufus Webber, the muggers, sought \$500.00 in damages. The jury awarded \$150.00 plus court costs of \$.06.

Some accounts describe Asa Dunbar as a "squatter." The circumstances of the time would indicate that might be true for the first few years of his residence. When Asa arrived at the Landing in 1791, the county seat and location for deed registration was Canandaigua, a long distance from the Landing. The assessment rolls indicate that Asa owned improved land worth \$1225 in 1813 and in 1818 owned 100 acres in township 14, range 7, an area that became Irondequoit in 1839. The latter roll reflects the location of Asa's first residence on Irondequoit Bay which would mean he owned the land on which he is said to have been a squatter.

After 1818, there is no record of Asa Dunbar. He would have been sixty-four years old that year. The Dunbar genealogists believes that he died in Peterborough, Ontario.



Tryon residents looked at their settlement as a "city." Actually it was a well-planned village which did not survive the coming of the Erie Canal



Smugglers Cove photo by Ron Richardson

Some African-Americans in Brighton History

Austin Steward

By Mary Jo Lanphear

Austin Steward was born in 1793 to slave parents Robert and Susan Steward in Prince William County, Virginia. He had one sister. The Stewards were purchased about 1800 by Captain William Helm. Austin was put to work in the plantation house as an errand boy. Austin Steward recalled Capt. Helm during this period as a kind, pleasant, and humorous man and not a harsh master. Nonetheless, the Stewards were enslaved.

When Austin was about eight or nine years of age, Helm sold his Virginia plantation and moved his family, his household goods, and his thirty slaves to New York State, first to Sodus then, three years later, to Bath. Land agent Charles Williamson, also from Virginia, had invested heavily in the Genesee Country and encouraged Helm to settle in Bath. There Helm bought several farms and a gristmill that his slaves operated. Helm also hired out Austin and another slave to work for Henry Tower who ran a large grist mill and distillery in Lyons. Austin worked for Tower until about 1812 when he was hired out to another master. It was at about this time, when he was about twenty years old, that he began to plan for his freedom. He purchased a spelling book and taught himself to read. He questioned his slave status because, in New York State, there were two laws in effect that would help him. One dating from 1785 banned the sale of slaves brought into New York and the other, passed in 1799, provided for the gradual emancipation of slaves in New York. A court decision in 1800 further helped his status because it forbade the hiring out of slaves based on the 1785 law.

Determined to achieve freedom, Austin obtained Capt. Helm's permission to visit friends in Geneva and Canandaigua in the winter of 1814. While there, Austin met with Darius Comstock, president of the local manumission society, who agreed to help him. Steward was taken in by Darius' brother, Otis Comstock of Farmington, who gave him a home and employment and arranged for him to attend school in the winter.

By September 1817, according to his autobiography, Austin Steward had moved from Farmington and opened a grocery store in Brighton. The 1818 and 1819 assessment rolls for Brighton show Austin Steward owning 1/8 acre of land in lot 10, section A in the village of Brighton. This was the first village of Brighton, the little community on the east bank of the Genesee River that existed until the first annexation of land in Brighton by the village of Rochester in 1823. The 1820 assessment roll indicates that he had added 1/8 acre more to his holdings, paying taxes on 1/4 acre in Brighton village.

Steward's store was not welcomed by some of the neighboring butcher shops. In his autobiography he says that "sometimes they tore down my sign, others painted it black, and so continued to annoy me until I had one of their number arrested which put a stop to their unmanly proceedings." His business grew and by 1818 he was able to purchase land on Main Street on which he had built a large two-story building. His shop was on the first floor and the family lived upstairs.

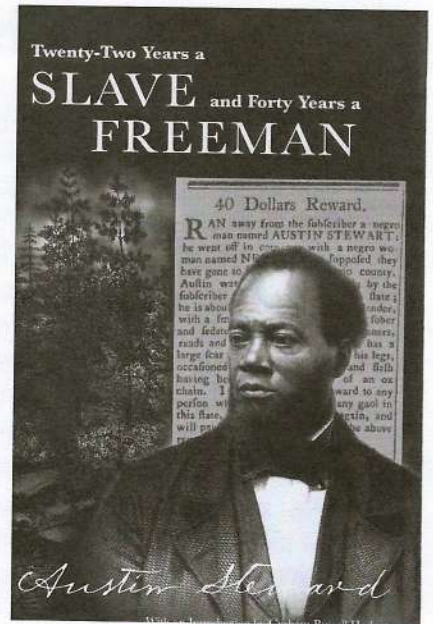
For the next ten years Austin worked at his business, taught Sunday school, sheltered fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad, and involved himself with the Society for the Improvement of the Free People of Color. His participation in this group eventually led to the question of American and Canadian colonization. Ultimately, the organization selected Canada and to that end Austin Steward began working toward the establishment of a colony there.

Austin Steward continued to purchase land in Brighton, buying another lot near the grocery store in Section G of Brighton Village in 1820 and three lots in section N in 1821. The latter he sold in 1822 to Everard Peck. In 1825 Austin Steward married Patience Susan Butler, the daughter of Lewis and Barbara Butler of Canandaigua. The Butlers sold Austin a 1/4 acre lot in Canandaigua in that same year. In 1830, in anticipation of moving to Canada, the Stewards sold the Canandaigua lot back to the Butlers.

The Wilberforce Colony in Upper Canada, now known as the province of Ontario, occupied Austin Steward's time and resources for the next seven years to the point where he sold his business in Brighton in 1830 and made plans to emigrate to Canada. What seemed like a good idea in the 1820s, however, did not materialize in the 1830s. Instead of 4,000 acres, the Canadian government sold the organizers 800 acres. Poor leadership and lack of funds doomed the project from the beginning. By 1837 Austin Steward was back in the Rochester area but was unable to reestablish his business in Brighton so he and his family moved to Canandaigua. He continued work with anti-slavery groups, traveling all over the state to speak for abolition and the betterment of life for African Americans.

Austin Steward died in Canandaigua in 1869. He was 76 years old. Patience Susan lived another year, dying in 1870 at the age of 66.

Mary Jo Lanphear is Town of Brighton Historian, 9 September 2016



Some African-Americans in Brighton History

Isabella Dorsey

By Mary Jo Lanphear

Isabella Dorsey wasn't born in Brighton but much of her important life's work occurred here.

About 1910, Mrs. Dorsey began opening her home on Bronson Avenue to orphaned and neglected children. She supported the home by doing washing and domestic service; Mr. Dorsey worked as a chauffeur but often during 1914 the Home was without coal and food.

That year a local newspaper reporter learned about Mrs. Dorsey's situation and went to interview her about the home. He learned that she was interested in having a board oversee the operations so he went to Rochester Police Chief Joseph M. Quigley to enlist his support. Quigley formed a group made up of leading citizens and community members.



From the Albert R. Stone Negative Collection, Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester, N.Y.

Some of the original participants were Chief Quigley, Mrs. J. Warren Cutler, wife of the mail chute manufacturer; Mrs. George Hollister, wife of a real estate developer; Mrs. Abram Katz, policewoman Nellie McElroy; James McMullen, pastor of the AME Zion Church; Dr. Edward Mulligan; Daniel B. Murphy, business executive; Augustine O'Neill, rector of Immaculate Conception Church; Rebecca Rosenberg, and Armand Wyle, superintendent of the Jewish Orphan Asylum. The board incorporated the Home on June 5, 1913. In June of 1914 the board assisted the Dorseys in relocating to larger quarters on a farm south of Forest Lawn when the house on Bronson Avenue became over-crowded. Twenty-four children lived in the farmhouse at Forest In 1916 Mrs. Dorsey made a Christmas appeal for toys and clothing for the children. Some of the older boys used the farm acreage to grow vegetables for the home's kitchen but the location was proving unsuitable so the decision was made in 1918 to purchase for \$15,000 the Highland View Stock Farm in Brighton on the southeast corner of Clinton and Elmwood Avenues where McQuaid Jesuit High School is now. The property consisted of a large farm house on twenty-six acres with an orchard but extensive work was necessary to make the place livable for the large group. In 1919 the board of the Dorsey Home for Dependent Colored Children expended \$10,000 for a large addition on the east side of the house, the installation of electricity, plumbing, and modern bathrooms. These improvements enabled the Home to care for 35 children from the ages of two to sixteen. The farm had horses, cows, pigs, and chickens and produced enough vegetables, fruit, and eggs to feed the children. Raising pigs for market added needed cash for the Home as did the growing of hay, wheat, oats, and beans.

The older children attended Brighton #2 school at the corner of Elmwood and Clover but the youngest attended kindergarten in a remodeled tenant house on the farm.

Even with an administrative board, the care of the children fell to Mr. and Mrs. Dorsey, a teacher, and a few general helpers. A newspaper in that era reported that the Dorsey Home was the only "colored" orphanage in the state outside New York City. Funding for the day-to-day operation of the Home came from children with relatives able to contribute to their care. Children sent by governments and other public agencies paid \$5.00 per week per child but the amount was insufficient for the actual cost of care. The local Community Chest, the forerunner of the present-day United Way, made up the difference. Local doctors provided medical care when necessary at no charge to the Home.

By 1922, Isabella Dorsey had enough day-to-day help in running the home that she was able to consider opening a similar facility in another community. The Seventh-Day Adventists from Quaker Bridge, NY, offered her two buildings on the grounds of the old Fernwood Academy to establish the Bella Dorsey Home and Industrial School. Although newspaper accounts of the Quaker Bridge facility state that Mrs. Dorsey did not stay on to direct the new institution another article in 1922 indicated that, on her return to this area for a visit, she stayed at a house on Charlotte Street in the city.

The Dorsey Home on Clinton Avenue in Brighton did not survive the Depression. Children sent from other communities, including many from the New York metropolitan area, were insufficiently funded and the local Community Chest could not make up the difference in the face of diminishing resources in the Depression.

Isabella Dorsey died at her home in Carr's Corners on June 2, 1932. The funeral was in Randolph and burial in Steamburg Cemetery,

Mary Jo Lanphear is the Town of Brighton Historian, 28 March 2014



Fanny Johnston came here to photograph Susan B. She also took the last photo of McKinley before his assassination



One of the earliest known photographic images of Frederick Douglass is on loan to the University of Rochester as part of a nanotechnology research project. A team of conservators, curators and researchers were present to receive the daguerreotype, an early form of photography. This pocket-sized Douglass portrait is on loan from the Chester County Historical Society in West Chester, Pennsylvania, whose records describe it as: "Frederick A. Douglass presented by him to Susan B. Anthony whose niece Miss Lucy E. Anthony gave it to Albert Cook Myers."

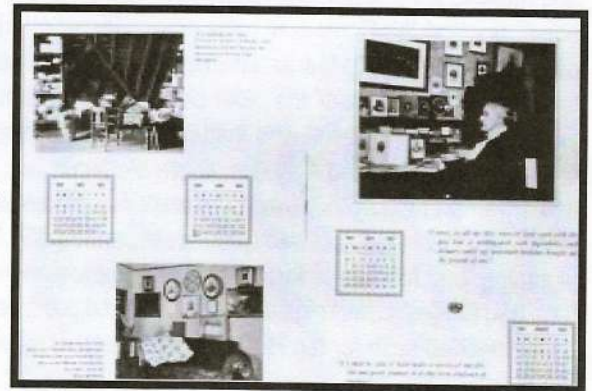
The photo of Miss Anthony at right was taken in 1900 in preparation for the 1901 Women's Rights Calendar (below right) by Frances Benjamin Johnston, "photographer of the American Court," whose childhood was spent in Rochester. It shows Miss Anthony seated at her desk with of photos of other members of the movement. Note that the Frederick Douglass daguerreotype is not present.



In 1962, Frederick Douglass's home in Anacostia (Washington, DC) became part of the National Park System and in 1988 was designated the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site.



Douglass' coffin was transported back to this area where he had lived for 25 years, longer than anywhere else in his life. He was buried next to Anna in the Douglass family plot of Mount Hope Cemetery, and Helen joined them in 1903. Susan B. Anthony's is the cemetery's other most often-visited gravesite.



Womens Rights Calendar of 1901, photography by Frances Benjamin Johnston

The site should be here in Brighton: Just think of the movies that could be made re-enacting the fugitives' flights to Kelsey's Island ahead of the slave catchers



Frederick Douglass was the first black to enter the White House as other than a servant and Susan Brownell Anthony is the only Rochesterian enshrined in the National Hall of Fame.

Second Marriage

In 1884, Douglass married Helen Pitts, a white feminist from Honeoye, New York who was the daughter of an abolitionist colleague and friend of Douglass. A graduate of Mount Holyoke College, Helen Pitts had worked on a radical feminist publication.

The honeymoon took place at Niagara Falls (left). Douglass countered criticism of the bi-racial marriage by saying, "My first wife was the color of my mother. My secpmnd sife is the color of my father."



Douglass won over his Alexander Street neighbors by his violin playing and rich baritone voice during summer evenings. He was proud of grandson Joseph who became a concert violinist. Photo, 1893

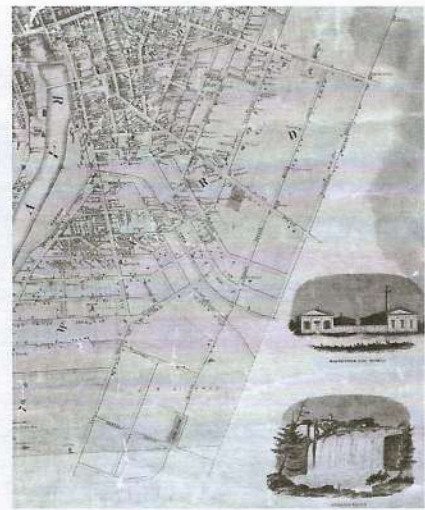


The Porter home on Fitzhugh Street is in the center

The Friendly Home, which is sponsoring this issue of the *Historic Brighton Newsletter and Journal*, shares an historical connection to Frederick Douglass through the Porters. Back when it was the Home for the Friendless (1849-1918) Susan Farley Porter was a founder and manager of the Home and also the Secretary of the Ladies Abolitionist Sewing Circle which invited Douglass to give his Fifth of July Speech—that turned out to be his most famous speech. Susan's husband, Samuel Porter, was a close friend of Douglass who made his barn available as a station on the Underground Railroad and personally scolded Douglass for spending too much time with Julia Griffith. Samuel Porter was also a trustee of the Home back in the day before women could vote or sign contracts.



Douglass's second wife is seated; her sister is standing



An 1840s map showing that the South Avenue farm was at the edge of the city

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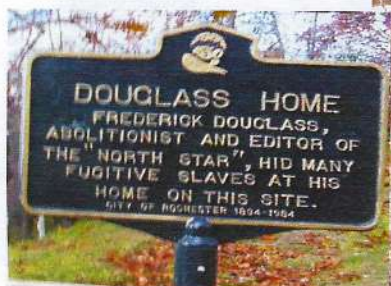
A Century later: Still searching for the Brighton home



The Frederick Douglass National Site is not here.



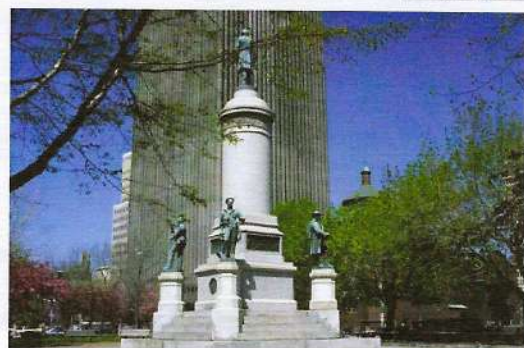
Oliver Brayer Davis leads the visitors through the woods to the site of the Douglass farm atop a South Avenue hill in the early 1990s. The location of the house is now believed to be part way down the hill to where School 12 now stands



The search for the Douglass home in Brighton recalls this Kipling poem and Kipling himself (seen here with King George V) recalls that he married a Rochesterian:- Caroline Balestier (near right)

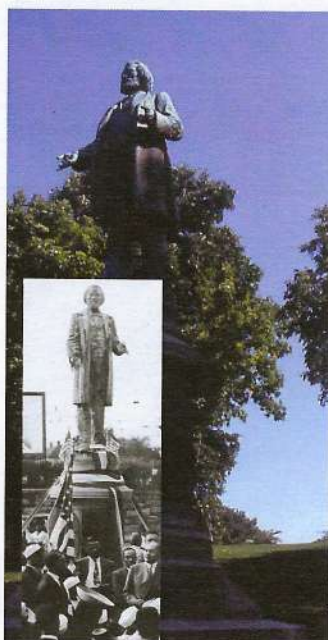


Rudyard Kipling, left, and King George V, by a photographer for The Daily Sketch.



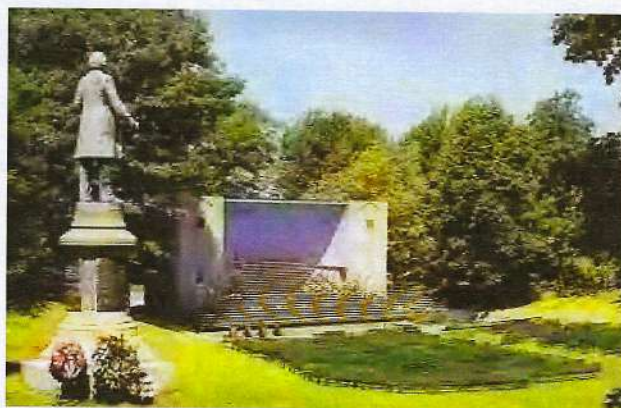
In 1892, Douglass accompanied President Benjamin Harrison to Rochester to dedicate the Civil War Monument in Washington Square. Douglass was the US minister to Haiti, 1889-91.

Rosetta Douglass said of her parents' graves' nearness to the former Brighton farmsite on South Ave.: "Together they rest side by side and most befittingly within sight of the dear old home of hallowed memories and from which the panting fugitive, the weary traveler, the lonely immigrant of every clime, received food and shelter." In 1941 the statue of Douglass was moved from center city to a point between the graves and the former farm cum Underground Railroad station.



THEY shut the road through the woods
Seventy years ago.
Weather and rain have undone it again,
And now you would never know
There was once a road through the woods
Before they planted the trees.
It is underneath the coppice and heath,
And the thin anemones.
Only the keeper sees
That, where finest hour the ring-dove broods,
And the badgers roll at ease,
There was once a road through the woods.
Yet, if you enter the woods
Of a summer evening late,
When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed pools
Where the otter whistles his mate,
(They fear not men in the woods,
Because they see so few.)
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,
Steadily cantering through
The misty solitudes,
As though they perfectly knew
The old lost road through the woods.
But there is no road through the woods.

Rudyard Kipling's Rochester-born wife, Caroline Starr Balestier Kipling (1862-1939), was the fourth cousin of Helen Pitts (1837-1903) of nearby Honeoye, Frederick Douglass's second wife. By a strange coincidence, so was Jenny Jerome (1854-1919), mother of Sir Winston Churchill. Jenny Jerome's parents, Leonard and Ada? Hall, were Brightonians and many accounts, including the New York Times and sometimes even Sir Winston, wrote that Jenny was born here.



Postcard view of the Highland Park Bowl with Douglass statue overlooking. At Susan B.'s insistence the statue was moved from facing South to facing North