Always on My Mind: Frederick Douglass's Nebraska Sister

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Article Summary: Frederick Douglass had an adopted sister, Ruth Cox Adams, renamed for and until recently confused with Harriett Bailey, Douglass's mother. Adams escaped from slavery as Douglass did and learned to read and write, but she never knew economic security. Her experiences may have affected Douglass's conviction that the full liberation of African Americans required the political empowerment of women.

Cataloging Information:

Names: Frederick Douglass (born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey), Harriet Bailey, Ruth Cox Adams (aka Harriet Bailey), Anna Murray Douglass, Perry Adams, Rosetta Douglass, Roger B Taney, James Theodore Holly, Matilda Ann Vanderzee, William Vanderzee, Ida B Wells, Ruth Elizabeth McWilliams, Alice Coffee, Annie Douglass

Place Names: Lloyd Plantation, Talbot County, Maryland; Port-au-Prince, Haiti; Omaha, Nebraska; Norfolk, Nebraska; Lincoln, Nebraska; Washington, DC

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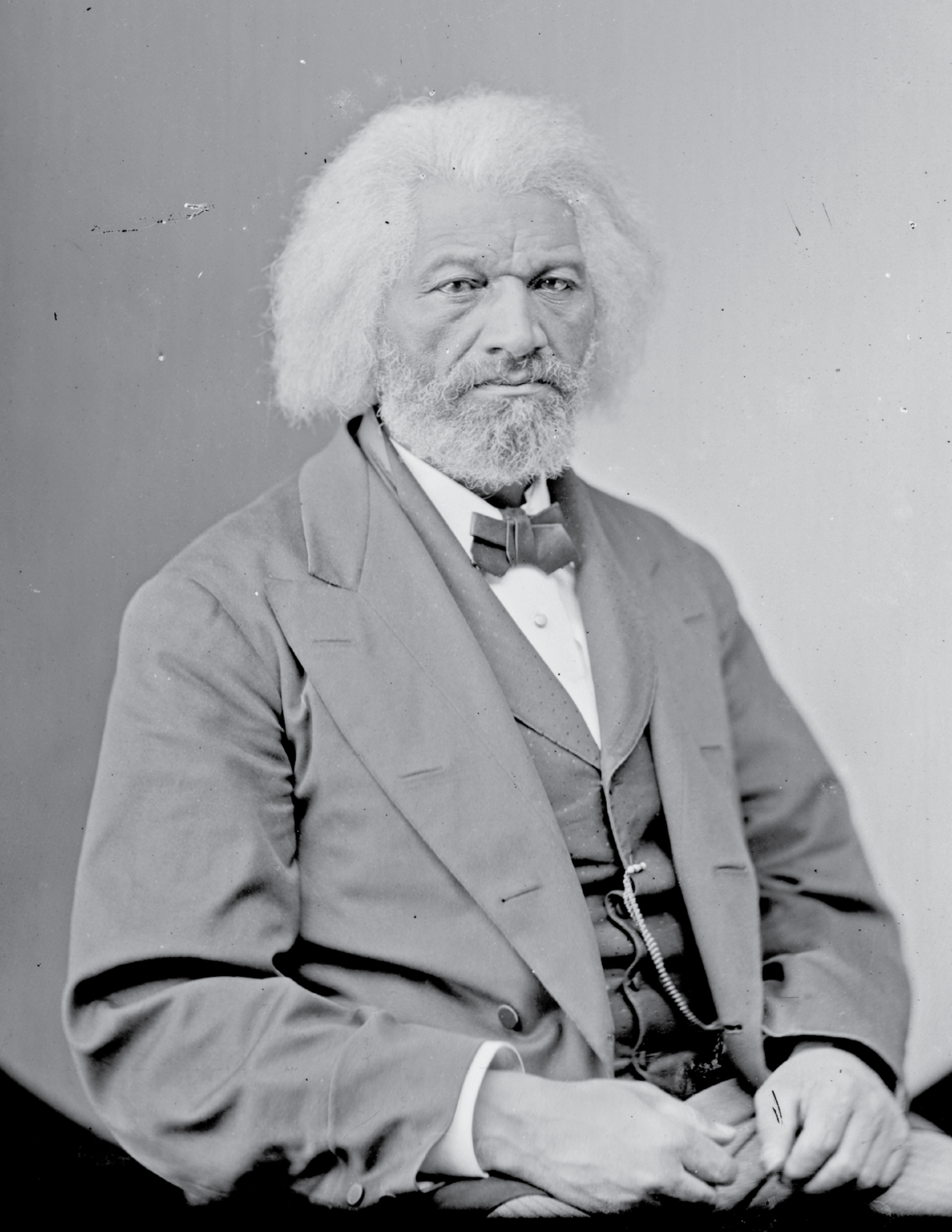
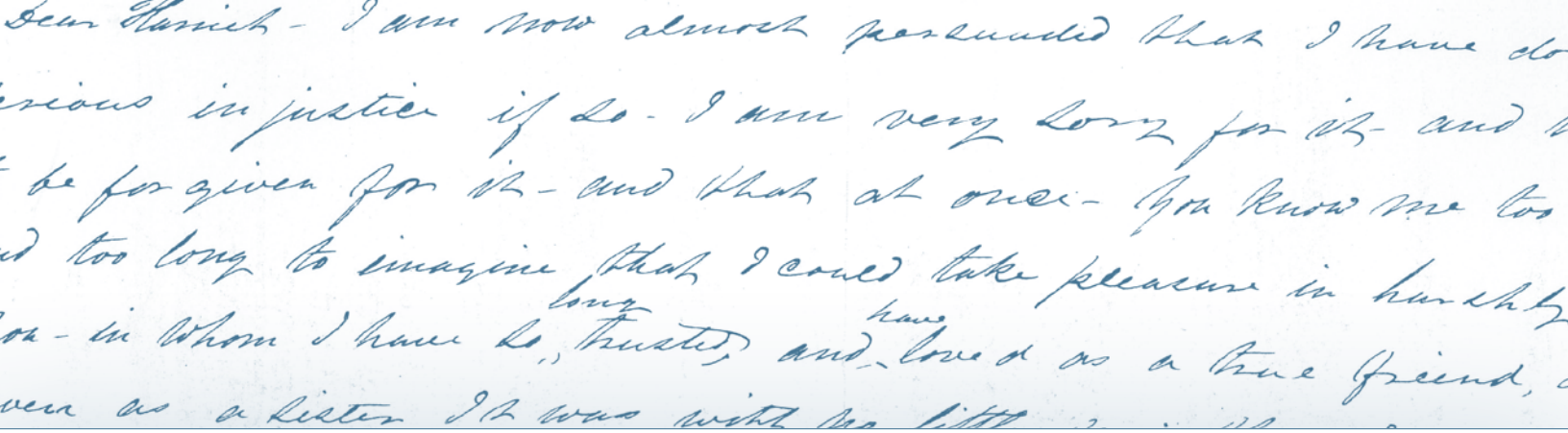
Photographs / Images: photograph of Frederick Douglass; partial text of letter handwritten by Douglass to his sister Ruth Cox Adams, addressed as "Harriet"; sewing box that Douglass gave to Adams (2 views); note that Adams attached to a lock of Douglass's hair; the lock of hair; sidebar: quotation from Douglass's letter to Adams regarding her marriage, August 18, 1846; image of Douglass on sheet music of 1845 song composed in his honor; sidebar: quotations from the last Adams-Douglass letters, March 1894; Adams's grave marker in Wyuka Cemetery, Lincoln

Date: 1/24/2019





Always on My Mind: Frederick Douglass's Nebraska Sister

By Tekla Ali Johnson,
John R. Wunder,
and Abigail B. Anderson

Biographers of Frederick Douglass have long misunderstood the importance of African American women in his life, and therefore miss nuances which help explain him. The discovery in Lincoln, Nebraska, of correspondence between Douglass and another former slave, Ruth Cox Adams (aka Harriet Bailey), has significantly lessened the void of information on the famous abolitionist's inner circle, and sheds new light on his relationships with women.

This essay builds upon William McFeely's 1991 biography of Douglass, which at the time of its publication was the most thorough scholarly work on the famous abolitionist. However, even McFeely mistakenly believes that Adams, who lived with the Douglasses after her escape from slavery, and Bailey, a long-term member of the Douglass home, were two different people.[1]

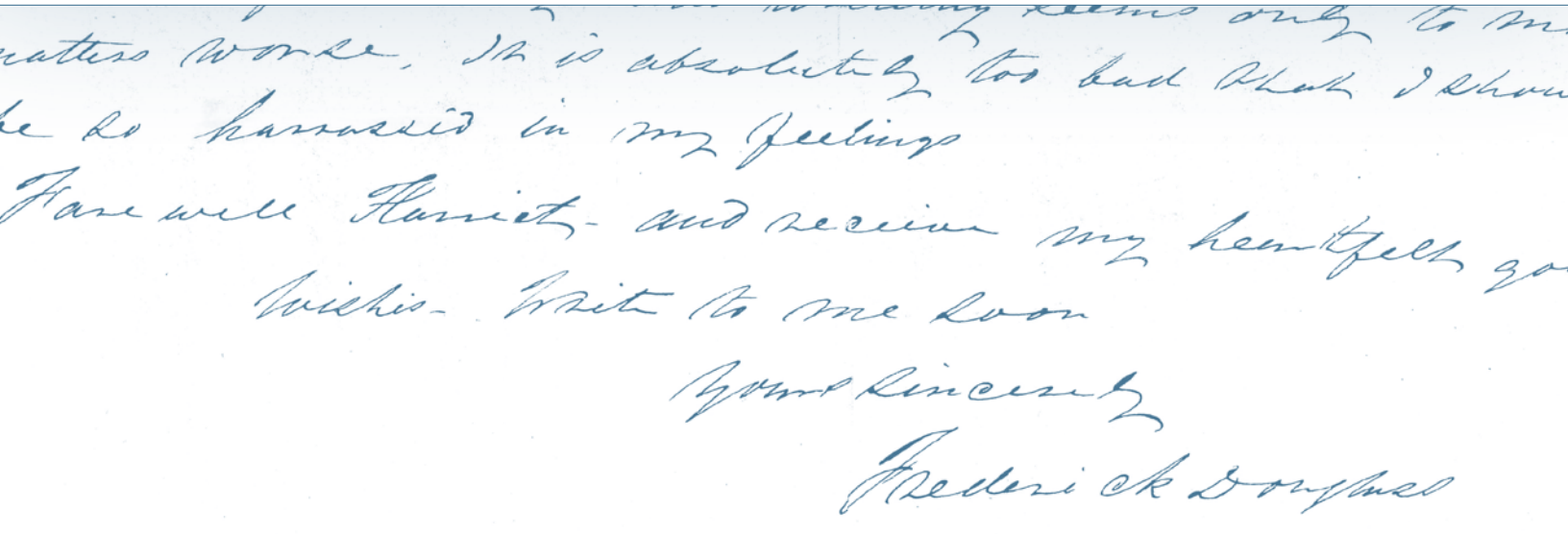


Photo on page 122: Frederick Douglass. Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division

A 2003 discovery in Lincoln, Nebraska, proves otherwise. That year, student interns and staff at the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department's Historic Research Division located documents relating to Douglass's life. The Adams-Douglass letters, a wedding dress purchased by Douglass for "Harriet," and a handcrafted box given by Douglass to Adams, provide conclusive evidence that Ruth Cox Adams and Harriet Bailey were one and the same.[2] Furthermore, the search for Adams's actual relationship to Douglass led to the discovery of a previously unknown 1893 speech and interview that Douglass gave in Omaha, Nebraska.[3]

The story emerging from the ten surviving Adams-Douglass letters, along with several biographical sketches of Adams's life, is an example of the formation of extended families through fictive kinships in the postbellum African American world. These materials also offer insight into private events that may have shaped Douglass's passionate lectures on education and on women's rights.

By the time he published his third and final autobiographical narrative, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881), Douglass had deeply pondered his childhood under bondage and its effect upon him. Born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey in 1817, he was taken from his mother, Harriet Bailey, when she resumed her work as an enslaved woman. Douglass's strong emotional attachment to women and his concern over society's ill-treatment of them, his love of literacy and equality, and the importance which he placed upon family, both immediate and extended, may have had their roots in his separation from his mother. Douglass recalled wishing for his mother even though he didn't see her often. "I never think of this terrible interference of slavery with my infantile affection. . . without a feeling to which I can give no adequate expression." As an abolitionist, he lectured on the separation of African American families in the South as one of slavery's most horrific features.[4]

Douglass was reared on the Lloyd Plantation in Talbot County, Maryland, and lost all contact with his siblings in 1838 when he escaped from slavery and adopted the surname "Douglass" to better evade slavecatchers. Once free, he did not remain alone for long; his immediate household soon grew to envelop two African American women, one through marriage, and the other through fictive kinship.[5]

Douglass became engaged to Anna Murray while he was still enslaved. The daughter of freed slaves, Murray was different from many free Africans in Baltimore, some of whom sought to distance themselves from enslaved blacks out of a perpetual deference to whites. Anna Murray refused to participate in discriminatory behavior, and Douglass developed a deep appreciation for Murray's core values. She gave Douglass the money that he needed to catch a train and boat from Maryland. She joined him in New York City shortly after his escape, and the couple wed on September 15, 1838. They settled in Lynn, Massachusetts, where Murray Douglass worked as a shoe binder and as a hostess to fugitive slaves and abolitionists who stayed at the Douglass home.[6] Her independent thinking led to a mutual respect with the highly intellectual Douglass and she remained his closest confidant until her death.[7]

The Douglasses were not married long when they opened their doors to Ruth Cox Adams after her flight from slavery. Adams lived with the Douglasses from about 1842 until her marriage in 1847.

Born on a Maryland plantation, Adams had cared for her master's children and acted as a nurse. In a brief family history entitled "Lest We Forget," Adams's granddaughter describes how a cousin helped Adams, then in her early twenties, escape from slavery.[8] Adams later told her grandchildren about her flight along the Underground Railroad. Conducted by Quakers, she stayed in attics during the day and traveled by night through Maryland into Pennsylvania and finally to New York—the same route that Douglass had earlier taken to freedom.[9]

Adams later recalled that she first met Douglass at an abolitionist meeting that he held on the eastern shore of Maryland about 1840. However, it is not likely that Douglass appeared at anti-slavery meetings in a slave state at that time, since he had run away from slavery in 1838 and was a fugitive. Douglass lectured primarily in the North. Adams's memory of having seen Douglass lecture against slavery opens the possibility that while they were still both enslaved, she may have attended some of the Sabbath School meetings that Douglass held in the 1830s. At such gatherings, Douglass taught young men and women to write and encouraged them to find a way to freedom.[10]

Adams's recollection demands further study of Frederick Douglass's involvement in stations of the Underground Railroad below the Mason Dixon line. His role was probably much greater than scholars have assumed. Adams reports that Douglass met her en route and took her to live with his wife and children. "I never knew all the details of

her running away except the cousins who were to help her North," Ruth Adams's granddaughter Alice Coffee later wrote.[11] Apparently, Adams was spirited northward in a group of young women and their children. "It seems as though F. D. [Frederick Douglass] was there the same night. He was so sure that grandma was his sister," Coffee writes.[12]

According to Coffee, Adams had a brother named Leon Bailey. After learning Adams's brother's last name, Douglass took her for his sister. Since he and Adams came from the same area of Maryland's eastern shore, where a single family bore the surname Bailey, the conclusion was logical. Douglass gave Ruth the pseudonym Harriet Bailey, in memory of his mother who died while she was yet enslaved. The alias would help hide the young lady from slave catchers.[13]

In reality, Adams was not Douglass's biological sister, though it is easy to see why Douglass thought at first that she was. In the antebellum, border states like Maryland specialized in breeding enslaved people, often with masters impregnating the enslaved women themselves. Douglass thought he saw a family resemblance in Adams. Ebby Cox, Harriet's mother, did not live on the Aaron Anthony estate, but rather on an entirely separate plantation, and she may not even have been acquainted with the Anthonys. Douglass admired his mother's and grandmother's stature and features and probably saw in Harriet a resemblance to these women.

Margaret Washington Creel argues that family connections were sustained under slavery because of African Americans' willingness to make adaptations. In addition to having a culture which permitted the "adoption" of new family members, Creel describes the West African belief in an "integrated community" in which each person had a place. The family's centrality (ancestral, living, and the unborn) to the overall structure of African communities and cosmology meant that even servants in West African countries would eventually be absorbed through marriage into the household and society. That Adams signed some of her final letters to Douglass "your adopted sister" indicates that she did find a permanent place in the Douglass family after losing contact with her own relatives perhaps due to their being sold into the deep South, and after her own flight from slavery.[14]

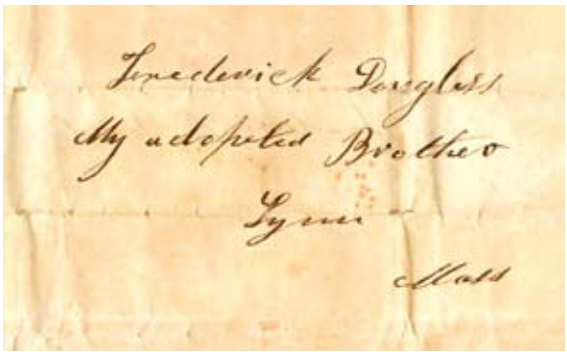
In 1845, *Narrative of the Life* *of Frederick Douglass* included the specifics of Douglass's enslavement and listed the places where he had lived and named the persons who had held him in bondage. The publication of the identity of

Above: A sewing box that Frederick Douglass gave to Ruth Cox Adams. NSHS 11940-1-(1)

Left: Inside the sewing box.

his master, and the place from which he escaped, enhanced Douglass's credibility as an anti-slavery spokesman (many critics had charged that the eloquent speaker had never been enslaved) but simultaneously increased the danger that he would be recaptured. Douglass then embarked upon an extended European lecture tour.[15]

On June 29, 1846, Douglass gave a speech at Birmingham, England, entitled "Slavery Attacks Humanity." The speech underscored the importance of education and African Americans' overwhelming desire to become a literate people. Douglass said that laws forbidding slaves to read disgraced Americans and highlighted the hypocrisy of the Republic.[16] In between his Birmingham lecture and his next engagement on August 3, Douglass sent a rosewood sewing box inlaid on top with mother-of-pearl as a gift for Adams. He thanked her for



Ruth Cox Adams attached this note to the lock of Douglass's hair. NSHS 11940-1-(15)

tutoring his sons and wife, and observed her diligence at studying. "Harriet, you were always dear to me, but never so dear as now. Your devotion to my little boys, your loving attention to my Dearest Anna, your smartness in learning to read and write and your loving letters to me has made you doubly dear."[17]

In spite of his pleasure at his success as an abolitionist abroad, Douglass's letters express significant grief at being away from his wife and family. He said he suffered periods of melancholy while in England, and he openly wished that Adams was with him in London to speak "so kindly as to make me forget my sadness."[18]

In one letter to Adams, Douglass informed her that the American Anti-Slavery Society, happy with his work in the British Isles, had asked him to remain abroad for another year. Douglass had agreed, and he was thinking of relocating his family to England.[19]

Douglass asked Adams what she thought of moving to London. He encouraged her to speak freely, even if she disagreed with him about relocating. "I will love you all the more for speaking out," he wrote, and signed the letter, "your brother."[20]

Douglass received a reply a month later. Adams wrote that she would not be joining the family abroad because she was engaged and busily making plans for her wedding, but would appreciate it if Douglass could purchase a wedding dress for her. Douglass did not hide his anguish. He was distraught because he had planned for her to become well educated and independent, and he expected Adams to seek his advice as her brother before consenting to be married. He regretted not only that Adams was leaving his household, but also was concerned with her choice of husband. Her fiancé, Perry Adams, was a common laborer with little education. Adams did not reveal her fiancé's name, perhaps in anticipation of Douglass's attitude. Douglass wrote, "You ought not to marry any ignorant and unlearned person—you might as well tie yourself to a log of wood." [21]

Some may suggest that Douglass opposed the engagement because he had romantic feelings for the young woman and was merely jealous.[22] However, the cultural context of the Adams-Douglass relationship removes romantic love as a possibility. Douglass's initial interest in Adams stemmed from his belief that she might be his sister, an idea that he may have never completely relinquished. Furthermore, under slavery in the Americas, African men fervently avoided marrying women from their own local communities, instead selecting wives and lovers from distant plantations. The practice was so widespread that planters eventually came to recognize such unions and would sometimes grant leaves to men for visits to their "broad wives." Furthermore, Cheikh Anta Diop argues that the very core of "clanic organization," the most common form of social and political organization in

A lock of Frederick Douglass's hair, given to Ruth Cox Adams. NSHS 11940-1-(14)

Douglass on Adams's Marriage

"Marriage is one act of our lives once performed it cannot be undone—It is not a thing which may be entered into to day and given up tomorrow—but must last so long as life continues. I therefore counsel that you seriously consider before you take the step—it may lead to a life of misery and wretchedness—for which you a lone must be responsible. Think of it. But my dear Harriet—and you are Dear to me and never dearer that at this moment. Do not understand me to be opposed to your getting married. Not at all. Although I love you have you in my family and it will be a [word illegible] trial for me to part with you—yet I should rejoice to see you married tomorrow if I felt you were marrying some one worthy of you. It would indeed spread a dark cloud over my love to see you marry some ignorant, idle, worthless person unable to take care of you or himself either. I would rather follow you to your grave than to do that. You ought not to marry any ignorant and unlearned person—you might as well tie yourself to a log of wood as to do so. You are altogether too refined and intelligent for any such marriage. But I have no time to continue this subject further. What I have said I have said as a brother—as one having no object in view but your own good—and this I will always seek whether you be married or single. The man who marries you should remember he takes you from a brothers house and a brothers home—and he should at least see that you have as good a home after marriage as before marriage—God bless you Dear Harriet and remember that Whether married or single—you are still my sister."

—Frederick Douglass to Harriet Bailey (Ruth Cox Adams), August 18, 1846

traditional Africa, was the rejection of incestual relations (even those involving distant relatives).[23]

Douglass eventually abandoned his idea of relocating the family to Europe. He warned Harriet that marrying an uneducated man might negatively impact her opportunities in life:

> My dear Harriet, your dear letter has just reached me and as you may well suppose its contents shocked and surprised me. Is it possible you are engaged to be married. . . But you don't honor me so much as to ask my advice. No, no. . . All you wish from me is a light silk dress—a wedding dress.[24]

As much as he admired independent spirits, Douglass was sometimes disappointed when the wills of those he loved did not correspond to his own. He honored Adams's request, however, and bought the dress.[25]

As special as she was to Frederick Douglass, becoming a part of his immediate family meant that Adams developed relationships with the other individuals in the Douglass household. Anna Murray Douglass, in particular, helped to smooth the young woman's transition from slavery to freedom. If Murray Douglass did not actually help to plan the escape route, she would have awaited news of the success of Adams's flight from slavery. The center of the protective shield of the Douglass home, Murray Douglass would have aided Adams in the latter's successful adoption of a new identity. Five years later, Harriet Bailey's relocation away from the Douglass home, as a free married woman, stood as a microcosmic expression of the success of Anna Douglass's life's work.

Frederick and Anna Douglass wanted their children to succeed as well, and hoped they would acquire a suitable education, which proved to be nearly impossible in Rochester. To the delight of both parents, their eldest child, Rosetta, passed the entrance exam to Lucilia Tracy's Seward Seminary on her first attempt. However, her career there ended when the Douglasses learned that she was kept apart from the other students and lectured to in a segregated classroom. They immediately removed Rosetta from the school, and an outraged Douglass criticized northern whites for their attitudes on equal educational opportunities for blacks. Ultimately the Douglasses sent Rosetta away from home at age seven so she could study under Abigail and Lydia Mott (cousins of the abolitionist Lucretia Mott) in Albany, New York.[26]

With the support of her parents, Rosetta Douglass eventually went to Philadelphia to become a school teacher, then in the early 1860s moved to Salem, New Jersey, to continue her studies and better prepare herself for the job market. Rosetta enrolled in the Salem Normal School where she finally obtained a license to teach. During this period, she lived with her Uncle Perry and Aunt Lizzie (aka "Harriet"), whom she writes letters home about, and whom McFeely mistakenly believes are relatives of Anna Douglass. Lizzie and Perry were in fact Ruth Cox Adams and Perry Adams. According to Rosetta's letters to her father, the couple was impoverished and she sometimes went hungry.

There were also accusations of impropriety. A group of Quakers asked Rosetta whether her "father [had been] married to Perry's sister before he left slavery."[27] Perry did have a sister named Parthena, but there is no known connection between her and Douglass. Frederick also had a brother named Perry, but the two did not see each other from their days on the plantation until after the Civil War. Ignorant of adoptive-family formation, the Quakers inferred that some sexual impropriety had taken place. Here confusion about family relationships resurfaces for researchers, leading them to believe that if Perry was an uncle of Rosetta's, then he must have been Anna's brother.[28]

As impatient with racism as her father was, Rosetta replied curtly to the Quakers that any sexual impropriety which occurred under slavery did so at the direction and compulsion of white people. Though she had spoken truthfully, her aunt and uncle felt that she had been rude to their company. In the argument that followed, Rosetta ran from the room "only to be barred by Aunt Lizzie, who 'jumped up and dodged me first one way and then another.'"[29] Adams (who was also called "Aunt Lizzie, "Aunt Harriet," "Hattie," and Ruth by the Douglass family) and Rosetta usually had a warm relationship, but the stress of caring for Rosetta while the couple was struggling financially may have created as much tension as Rosetta herself, who, as the apple of her father's eye, was somewhat spoiled. As sour as she could be to those she did not like, Rosetta typically closed her correspondence to her father with adoration and sweetness. "I flatter myself if I were at home I might in a measure contribute to your happiness as well as to mothers."[30]

Feeling that Rosetta was safe with their "relatives," Douglass sent Rosetta encouraging letters and money with which to buy candles to study by at night. At length Rosetta finished school and began to teach school in Salem. Her career ended in 1863, however, when she married Nathan Sprague. By then, Douglass had grown accustomed to the independent thinking of the women in his family. If he wanted to protest the engagement, he did not pursue the thought.[31]

Douglass opposed African American migration to the Great Plains. He believed that the dispersal of black people would weaken their political power once they secured the right to vote.

By the early 1860s the Adamses fled to Port Au Prince, Haiti, to avoid the possibility of re-capture under the Fugitive Slave Act. They remained on the island for three or four years.

African American interest in migration out of the United States increased after passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Douglass condemned both the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), which reversed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 by rescinding the legal geographical limits on slavery.[32]

In 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* drained any remaining hope that anti-slavery activists had in the federal government. Speaking for the court, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney declared that blacks could be held in slavery in the territories and that freeborn blacks and former slaves were not, nor were they eligible to become, citizens of the United States. For the first time in his long career as an abolitionist, Douglass publicly expressed interest in immigration out of the United States. Some fled to Canada or Great Britain.[33]

Under the leadership of James Theodore Holly, many pro-emigration blacks organized their cause around Haiti. A nation of enslaved Africans who successfully threw off European enslavers, Haiti symbolized freedom and spiritually beckoned Africans in North America. Opponents of emigration, however, published descriptions of color-caste hatred in Haiti in the *Weekly Anglo-African.* They emphasized a lack of solidarity between mulattos and blacks which could be traced back to the nation's war for independence.

Douglass wondered whether new Haitian leader Fabre Geffrard would endorse the abuse of mixed race Africans. "It would be a sad thing to some of us, who have been hated and persecuted for being too black, to go there and be hated and persecuted for being too white."[34] African American leaders in the United States were divided over the issue of immigration. In 1853, a Colored National Convention was held on the topic in Rochester, New York. Afterward Douglass published the proceedings on both sides of the debate in *Frederick Douglass' Paper.*[35]

Douglass's views mirrored that of most free Africans on the mainland. "We are Americans: That America is our native land; that this is our home; that we are American citizens."[36] He still opposed emigration to the extent that its proponents seemed to believe that African Americans and whites could not live as equals. Clearly an integrationist, Douglass's universal sentiments had been encouraged during his stay in Europe when whites had treated him with respect and friendship. However, in 1858, when Holly successfully lobbied the Haitian government to accept African American migrants, Douglass and others reconsidered the possibility of a black exodus to Haiti. The Haitian government published an invitation in several newspapers in-

viting African Americans to "make the land their future home."[37] Thousands of African Americans responded positively to the invitation.

In 1861, Douglass's disappointment with Abraham Lincoln's position on slavery, affirming the right of the institution to exist in the American South (but not to expand west), further lessened his resolve that African Americans should remain in the United States at all costs. He may also have been influenced by the knowledge that his "sister" Harriet and her husband had fled to Haiti.

A full-page advertisement from the Haitian government to potential emigrants ran in the *Douglass* paper that spring. Douglass accepted an invitation to visit Haiti for the purpose of surveying it as a place for possible African American immigration. However, the eruption of the American Civil War revived Douglass's hope that the nation could become a fair and equitable homeland for African Americans. At news of the firing on Fort Sumter he canceled his trip to the island.[38]

While the actual number of immigrants to Haiti is unknown, in June and September of 1861, the *Pine and the Palm* newspaper published reports that there was an "English Speaking" settlement of 2,000 immigrants near St. Marks.[39] Later it was estimated that of the 2,000 emigrants who arrived in Haiti, only a third remained

The Haitian government had anticipated that black Americans who entered the country would be farmers and that the newcomers' food production would increase the nation's agricultural exports. Instead, the immigrants wanted to open wealth-generating businesses for themselves, such as hair salons and other service trades with which they had netted some success on the mainland. Another problem, one that would have alarmed the Adamses as parents of a young daughter, was the high death toll among immigrants. Many of the deaths were due to an outbreak of smallpox, but in an attempt to hide their inability to control the epidemic, the Haitian government publically attributed the widespread sickness and fatality to an alleged lack of cleanliness among American born Africans. Malaria and other tropical diseases actually claimed a good share of the victims. In any event, by 1862, news that immigrants were not faring well echoed across the United States. As a result of these calamities an anti-emigration league formed at the Zion Church of New York City that year.[40]

Ruth and Perry Adams were back in the United States by the mid-1860s. The return of immigrants made it clear that preparations for the relocation of hundreds and thousands of individuals had not been sufficient. Nineteenth century African Americans had few options but to remain in the United States.

Perry Adams died not long after he and Ruth returned from Haiti. She then moved in with her daughter Matilda Ann and her son-in-law William Vanderzee at Springfield, Massachusetts. Adams relocated with the family to Rhode Island about 1880, and then migrated west with them around 1884. Now in her sixties, Adams resided with her children on a farm near Omaha, Nebraska. The Adams-Vanderzee family stayed in Nebraska, moving to Norfolk, where they resided in a wood cabin not far from the Elkhorn River, and eventually to Lincoln.

Although he had not supported the massive redistribution of land suggested by Charles Sumner and other "radicals" in Congress, in the end, Douglass admitted that Reconstruction programs had not secured African American freedom. Through mass migration out of the South, black people took flight from the Southern peonage system which had replaced slavery. Some African American leaders began printing circulars inviting African Americans to escape the whippings and outrages of their former masters, and to move to all-black towns in Kansas. Southern whites, however, were not content to let African American laborers walk away from their farms. Nell Irvin Painter's classic work on the subject, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction*, describes how whites organized to close the Mississippi River to keep blacks from catching rides on riverboats for the trip west.[41]

Even so, Douglass opposed African American migration to the Great Plains. He believed that the dispersal of black people would weaken their political power once they secured the right to vote. He also argued that whites out west might not favor slavery, but still suffered from race prejudice.

Nevertheless, beginning in 1879 thousands of blacks left Tennessee, Kentucky, Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana for a life free from Southern terror, and in hopes of gaining title to some land.[75] Supporters of the Exoduster movement charged that Douglass, now in his sixties, was out of touch with black people.[42]

To his credit, Douglass countered white critics who argued that Southern whites had no choice but to "redeem" the South because of African Americans' lack of ability and corruption. Douglass saw the accusations as a mirage meant to cover their real objective of returning Southern black

Douglass was portrayed on the sheet music of an 1845 song written in his honor. Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division

labor to the profit of whites. "Their ignorance of letters has put them at the mercy of men bent upon making their freedom a greater evil to them than was their slavery."[43] Douglass believed, however, that once African Americans became fully literate, Southern whites would no longer be able to cheat them out of their earnings; and black people would organize a successful resistance.

In August 1882, when Douglass was sixty-nine years old, his wife Anna died of a stroke. Douglass wrote that his emotions were "humility and resignation."[44] Rosetta and her daughter Annie did all that they could to comfort Douglass. Ruth Adams mailed her condolences from Providence, Rhode Island, to the Douglasses' home in Anacostia, Washington, D.C. She wrote, "Dear Brother and Friend, I am very much pained to see by the papers the Death of my Sister and Friend Mrs. Douglass. . . I cannot help feeling my sorrow for your great loss." A year later the anti-slavery leader was still "depressed almost to the point of a breakdown."[45]

Adams and Douglass fell out of touch with each other for several years. It is unclear just when Douglass became aware that his beloved "Harriet" had joined the westward movement. Adams continued writing but received no reply. Douglass had severely criticized the Exoduster movement several years earlier, and he may have been angry with her. However, given Douglass's personality, it is more likely that he had a hard time keeping up with the family because of their frequent moves once they had migrated to Nebraska.

Nebraska may have seemed an unlikely destination for freed persons in 1860, when there were only eighty-two African Americans in the territory, but ten years later the number had grown to nearly a thousand. Nebraska had become fifth among Western states and territories in the number of African American residents, surpassed only by Texas, Kansas, California, and Oklahoma Territory.[46]

The initial wave of African American migration to the Midwest began with the flight of enslaved men and women as they escaped from slavery along the routes of the Underground Railroad. Some African Americans settled in Nebraska Territory before the Civil War, partly because the prevailing anti-slavery posture of the territory's inhabitants was well known. "Even among the slaves in the South the word spread that here was a place where the attitude toward Negroes was tempered with tolerance."[47] One point of entry was Nebraska City, where an alleged Underground Railroad station was built by Allen Mayhew in 1855. Men and women in flight from slavery would enter "Nebraska from Albany, Kansas, continuing through Falls City, Little Nemaha, Camp Creek, and Nebraska City, where the fugitives crossed the Missouri River to Percival, Iowa. From there they were taken to Tabor, Iowa, and outfitted for the balance of their journey into Canada."[48]

Just as Douglass had warned, black emigrants encountered difficulties as members of a fledgling minority. Some were met by hostile whites. In 1879, 150 African Americans who had traveled from Mississippi were prevented from building homes by whites in Lincoln. Other African American families and small groups were able to settle peacefully in rural communities; some, like Adams's children, started their own farms.[49]

In one of her last letters to Douglass, Ruth asked whether anything had ever come of the ex-slave pension petitions that had been sent to Congress in the early 1880s.[50] During its heyday, the Ex-Slave Pension Movement, and the demand for pensions that it generated for former slaves, raised the ire of Federal officials, one of whom reported that the idea of compensation for slavery "is setting the negroes wild." Working class blacks, overwhelmingly former slaves, supported the movement. As

Ruth Adams knew firsthand, the formerly enslaved population was suffering everywhere. Many were afflicted with malnutrition and because they were aging, most needed medical attention that they could not afford.[51]

After his unpopular condemnation of the Exoduster movement, Douglass regained his status in the eyes of his black contemporaries with his anti-lynching lectures of the 1890s. In just sixteen years between 1884 and 1900, 2,500 lynchings had taken place in the United States. At bottom, Douglass argued, lynching was designed to control blacks economically, politically, and socially, and was part of a larger national movement to suppress African Americans' rights as citizens of the republic, as exemplified by the 1883 reversal of the Civil Rights Act of 1875. Douglass was by this time becoming disenchanted with the Republican Party, which he said had ceased to be the "party of humanity and had become the party of money."[52]

In the 1890s, Douglass began a friendship and collaboration with Ida B. Wells, an African American journalist known for her condemnation of lynching. Douglass wrote to her in 1892, calling her brave. Soon he began working closely with Wells in her fight against lynching, and at her invitation they collaborated on a pamphlet protesting the exclusion of African Americans from the planning and exhibitions of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago. *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World Colombian Exposition* argued that America's scientific inventions were possible largely because of the uncompensated labor of the enslaved Africans whose work had built the economic and commercial infrastructure of the nation. Douglass wrote that blacks were excluded from the fair because white America's morality had not kept pace with their scientific progress.[53]

For two years Douglass spoke and wrote frequently on the subject of lynching. One address, "The Lessons of the Hour," described the spectacle of mob lynching in the American South. Douglass argued that before the Civil War, whites indulged in violent outrages upon blacks with the excuse that African Americans were planning insurrections. After the war, he said, Southern whites claimed that the right to vote had inspired in blacks a will to dominance and that they must be thwarted from their goal of hegemony if the Southern white man was to regain his honor.[54]

Douglass traveled to Chicago at least five times in 1893, giving more than a dozen lectures. Columbian Exposition officials agreed to host a "Colored Americans Day" on August 25. Douglass celebrated the occasion by lecturing at the fairgrounds that day. The importance which Douglass placed upon black participation in the World's Columbian Expo-

Looking for Ruth

"I have this day, through a Norfolk paper learned of your whereabouts and am glad to find that you are still in the land of the living. I went to Omaha in November last largely in the hope of finding but my search was in vain & I feared you had slipped away to another world without my knowledge. I made diligent inquiry for you but nobody whom I asked could tell me anything. I am now very glad to know that you still live and have not forgotten what we were to each other in our younger days. I am now 77 years old—and am beginning to feel the touch. It would do my heart good to see you [words illegible] old times [words illegible] and Charley are living. Frederick died more than a year ago—Rosetta's head is now nearly as white as my own. She will be fifty five years old in a few months. Rose and Lewis would be delighted to see you and I should be happy once more to see you under my roof and have you stay as long as we both live. I enclosed this to your son-in-law the better that you may get it."

—Frederick Douglass to Ruth Cox Adams, March 9, 1894

"I thank you very much in deed on the kind offer you maid [*sic*] me to make my home under your roof So long as we both shall live this is like the one you offer me fifty years ago. It would give me so much pleasure to be with you all yes we could think & talk of many things but my dear Friend that is too much happiness for me to expect now in this life for I too am growing old I have had a great deal of sickness. my [word illegible] are feeble my eyes not so good. But my hair is almost as black as it was the last time I Sawe [*sic*] you & that was 16 years ago I think. we saw by the papers that you was in Omaha. that was very kind in you to try to find me. It tells me I am not forgotten…."

—Ruth Adams to Frederick Douglass, March 15, 1894

sition was, among other things, a sign of Douglass's change of mind on the black role in the American West.[55]

In the fall of 1893, the *Omaha World-Herald* staff learned of Douglass's upcoming visit to the city, and printed an announcement referring to Douglass as "Our Hero." The paper said that news of Douglass's visit was creating a stir in the city. Douglass's name, said the editorialist, "has been a synonym for impassioned eloquence for the last fifty years."[56]

Douglass spoke in Omaha on November 21, 1893. Before his two-hour address to Omahans on the "Race Problem," he was introduced by Omaha's Mayor George Pickering Bemis, who said that Douglass was "a gentleman and a self-made man. A man who has labored not only for his own race but for all classes of citizens."[57] Douglass's reception and presentation was arranged by Dr. M. O. Ricketts, a prominent African American doctor and later a Nebraska state legislator, who joined the state's leading African Americans at the crowded Boyd's Theatre. The Rev. John Albert Williams, pastor of St. Phillips Chapel, reported that Douglass was invited to Omaha by the Bishop Whipple Literary Society, and the newspapers noted that Nebraska Governor James Boyd was also present. In his speech, Douglass condemned the rash of lynching in the American South and argued that police officers, sheriffs, and local authorities were all accomplices to what he saw as a movement toward anarchy.[58]

Douglass told his audience that murder was becoming an epidemic in the South, where mob law "laughs at the courts and juries: there it batters down the doors of jails, taking out the victims charged with alleged crimes burning them at the stake, stabbing and shooting them like dogs."[59] Unfortunately, Nebraskans did not follow Douglass's warning that hysteria surrounding the claim of interracial rape was often used to justify a lynching. African American men had already been lynched by whites in Nebraska City in 1878, in Valentine, Nebraska, in 1887, and in Omaha in 1891 (and another black man would be lynched in Omaha in 1919). That night at Boyd's Theater, however, Nebraskans' response to his lecture assured Douglass that local resistance to bigotry and anarchy would prevail. The orator diligently worked to help Wells to keep the scourge of lynching in the public view during the first five years of the new decade. His respect for the mind of the young African American woman writer would help shape Douglass's oratory during the last years of his life.

Douglass's stopover in Omaha may not have been a part of his original itinerary when he left Washington, D.C., for an extended stay in Chicago to attend the Columbian Exposition. Yet he was able to arrange to make the Omaha trip pay for itself with a speaking engagement. Douglass later wrote that his real objective in going to Nebraska was to find Ruth Adams. Unfortunately, he could not find anyone there who knew her.[60]

Adams finally received a letter from Douglass in the late spring of 1894. By then she was living on a farm with her daughter and son-in-law near Norfolk, Nebraska. Douglass asked Adams to come and live in his household again. When Adams replied that she was not well enough to travel to Washington, D.C., Douglass sent her money to buy a comfortable rocking chair. In their last piece of correspondence, Douglass told Ruth that he "[s]earched in vain" for her in Nebraska. He said that it would do him a lot of good to see Ruth again. "I will continue to hope that some day [I] will yet see your face."[61]

The wish went unfulfilled. Frederick Douglass died in 1895 at age seventy-seven in Washington, D.C. Ruth Cox Adams passed away five years later, in 1900, at age eighty-two in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Much more information is now available about Adams's life as a result of the marriage of her youngest granddaughter, Ruth Elizabeth, to Ralph W. McWilliams of the McWilliams family of Lincoln. The McWilliamses had been homesteaders, and kept excellent family records. From them it is known that Adams died in 1900 and was buried at Wyuka Cemetery in Lincoln.[62] Many of the Douglass-Adams letters which survive discuss births, deaths, and the accomplishments of grandchildren. Adams had grieved with the Douglass family in March 1860, when the Douglass's youngest child, Annie, died at age ten after a prolonged illness. Adams would never forget the little girl or the impact of her death on the Douglass family. Douglass's name and those of his immediate family members appear a number of times among Adams's children and grandchildren. Adams gave her eldest daughter the middle name Ann, probably after Anna Murray Douglass, and maybe in remembrance of Annie. Adams's first born granddaughter's given name was Anna, and the name reappeared with the birth of a great granddaughter. Similarly the name Douglass became the middle name of Ruth's great grandson.[63]

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Ruth Cox Adams is buried in Wyuka Cemetery in Lincoln, Nebraska.

It is symbolic of Douglass's lifelong commitment to women's equality that his last public appearance was on February 20, 1895, at a women's rights conference where he joined Susan B. Anthony and those remaining from the old guard of the Women's Movement on the platform. He died that evening. In grief, Helen, Rosetta, Lewis, and Charles carried their husband and father to Mt. Hope Cemetery where they laid the statesman to rest, as he would have wanted, beside Anna Murray Douglass.[64]

Douglass left little unsaid at the end of his long life, but he was silent about the things nearest to him: his family—the driving force behind all that he did, and his perception of the purpose of his own life. Only in Douglass's single piece of published literary work (about a patriot who courageously fought injustice), and in his relationships did the author leave behind a hint of what the abolitionist expected of himself.

Douglass's relationship with Ruth Cox Adams impacted him in many ways. First, his intimate view of her life gave him a lens from which to view that of other freed people—those who shared his background but not his singular rise to fame; and the security that it brought him. In this way, Adams reminded Douglass of the necessity for the practical application of his political ideas. This was especially true in the areas of emancipation (the full enjoyment of which required education), full citizenship for all (enfranchisement), and women's rights. Although many of the causes for which Douglass labored as an adult were extensions of convictions that he embraced while still in slavery, his close observance of the obstacles which Adams and Douglass's own wife and daughter faced sensitized him to the need for a dual approach to ending the mistreatment of human beings in America. Douglass believed that the economic and political liberation of African Americans required the political empowerment of women. He also believed before most men of his day, argues historian Waldo Martin, Jr., that black men and black women deserved all opportunities and political privileges enjoyed by other citizens of the republic.[65]

But Ruth Adams's place in Douglass's life was that of a trusted "sister," born in the same county under the same conditions as himself. She had fled slavery, as he had done, and like him, became educated through her own hard work. He watched Adams teaching his children and his wife, as he had taught others, and he respected her, even when she ignored his wishes. Eventually, she led Douglass to explore the Great American West, metaphorically speaking, when he came to Nebraska searching for "Harriet" who was his equal in spirit and his friend.[66]

Notes

[1] William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1991), 67. For a treatment of Douglass's personality which is opposite the interpretation of the authors, see: Maria Diedrich, *Love Across Color Lines: Ottilie Assing & Frederick Douglass* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999), xxvii.

[2] "Mrs. Ruth Adams' Escape: Short Sketch of a Norfolk Woman's Life," *The Norfolk Weekly News*, March 7, 1894; Carrie Schneider, "Cox-Adams-Vanderzee Genealogy" (2003), 1, 4; Adams Douglass Papers, Nebraska State Historical Society. Ruth Cox Adams "Biography of Ruth Cox Adams," September, 1898, located in the Adams-Douglass-Vanderzee-McWilliams Collection, (hereafter the Adams-Douglass Papers) Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska. Carrie Schneider, then a student of museum studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, helped the City of Lincoln's Historic Planning Division contextualize their discovery of the Adams-Douglass Papers through her research. In the 1990s Abigail B. Anderson (Davis) located a great granddaughter of Adams, Alyce McWilliams Hall. McWilliams Hall shared written and oral family histories. See also: Alice Coffee, "Lest We Forget" (self-published, 1978), 1-2, 5-6, 8, Adams-Douglass Papers. See also: Rosetta Douglass Sprague, *Anna Murray Douglass: My Mother As I Recall Her* (Washington D.C.: National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, 1923), 12-13, 16, and 20.

[3] Peter C. Ripley, *The Black Abolitionist Papers* Vol. I, 1830-1865 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 173; Frederick Douglass, "Fred Douglas [sic] Talks," *Omaha Bee,* November 21, 1893; "The Negro in the South," *Omaha World-Herald*, November 22, 1893.

[4] McFeely, 67; Ripley, 173; Frederick Douglass, *Autobiographies: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, My Bondage and My Freedom, Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (New York: Penguin, 1994), 152.

[5] John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan, eds., *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series Two: Autobiographical Writings* Vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 128-29; Frederick Douglass, *Autobiographies,* 417, 1066.

[6] Ibid., Blassingame and McKivigan, Series 2, 1: 127.

[7] McFeely, 67-68.

[8] Alice Coffee, *Lest We Forget* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Self-Published, 1978), 1-2, 5-6, 8. This booklet is a written version of Ruth [Cox] Adams's life. It was authored by her grandchildren.

[9] "Mrs. Ruth Adams' Escape: Short Sketch of a Norfolk Woman's Life," *The Norfolk Weekly News*, March 7, 1894; Carrie Schneider, "Cox-Adams-Vanderzee Genealogy," 1; Adams-Douglass Papers.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Coffee, 1.

[12] Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *The Mind of Frederick Douglass* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 56.

[13] Ibid.; Coffee, 1; "Mrs. Ruth Adams' Escape"; *The Norfolk Weekly News*, March 7, 1894.

[14] Herbert Gutman, *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), 1-5; Margaret Washington Creel, *A Peculiar People: Slave Religion and Community-Culture Among the Gullahs* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 8, 59; Blassingame and McKivigan, Series 2, 1: 13. Douglass would never know all of his relatives, or even how many brothers and sisters and first cousins he had. As for his siblings, he was only certain that he had two older sisters, Sarah Bailey (b. 1814) and Eliza Bailey (b. 1816), and a brother, Perry Bailey (b. 1813), and two younger sisters, Kitty (b.1820) and Arianna (b. 1822). None of Douglass's autobiographies mention Leon Bailey, Ruth Cox Adams's brother, but it is possible that Leon was the offspring of one of his aunts: Jenny, Hester (or Esther), Milly (or Priscilla) Bailey. It is also possible that an unnamed uncle of Douglass's sired Leon Bailey in an early union or marriage with Ebby Cox, Ruth's mother. A more likely scenario than the sister-brother relationship which Frederick Douglass first thought existed between him and Ruth is that they had a sibling or a cousin in common. In either case, it would seem that Leon Bailey was related to Frederick Douglass, probably as a first or second cousin, but that Ruth and Frederick had no blood ties themselves. See Frederick Douglass, *Autobiographies*, 152.

[15] Ripley, 4, 6-9, 23-24; Frederick Douglass, *Autobiographies,* 140-42, 1049-50; Blassingame and McKivigan, Series 2, 1: 118.

[16] Ripley, ix, 308. Letter, Frederick Douglass (British Isles) to Harriet Bailey [aka Ruth Cox Adams] (Lynn, Massachusetts), May 16, 1846.

[17] Ibid.; Martin, 235.

[18] Ripley, 15-16; Letter, Frederick Douglass (British Isles) to Harriet Bailey (Lynn, Massachusetts), May 16, 1846; Adams-Douglass Papers.

[19] McFeely, 136-37. Brothers Thomas and Hugh Auld agreed to sell Frederick Douglass to the latter's friends in England. The transaction was made through lawyers in New York and Baltimore and the price in sterling was equivalent to about $1,250. After friends bought his freedom members of the Anti-Slavery Society condemned Douglass and his supporters for having participated in the purchase of a human being. In 1846, the London- based abolitionist George Thompson joined Douglass and James N. Buffum of Lynn, Massachusetts, in the Send Back The Money Campaign, an attempt to get the Free Church of Scotland not to accept American slaveholders' donations to help build Presbyterian churches.

[20] Letter, Frederick Douglass (British Isles) to Harriet Bailey (Lynn, Massachusetts), July [n.d.], 1846; Adams-Douglass Papers.

[21] Letter, Frederick Douglass (British Isles) to Harriet Bailey (Lynn, Massachusetts), August 18, 1846; McFeely, 138.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 130; Cheikh Anta Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology* (New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1991), 111. Women, too, often related to one another on the basis of fictive kinships. See Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985), 65, 133. John Mbiti further describes African kinship as "a vast network stretching laterally (horizontally) in every direction, to embrace everybody in any given local group." See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Anchor Books, 1970), 136.

[24] Letters, Frederick Douglass (British Isles) to Harriet Bailey (Lynn, Massachusetts), July 17, August 18, 1846.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Booker T. Washington, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: Haskell House, 1968), 13, 141; McFeely, 160, 218; Rosetta Douglass Sprague, *Anna Murray Douglass: My Mother As I Recall Her* (Washington D.C.: National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, 1923), 12.

[27] Martin, 101; McFeely, 219-20.

[28] McFeely, 221.

[29] Ibid., 221-22. See also: Adams-Douglass correspondence for various names by which Ruth Adams is referred in the Adams-Douglass Papers.

[30] Ibid., 222.

[31] Ibid., 203.

[32] Martin, 59.

[33] McFeely, 188; Coffee, "Lest We Forget," 1, 3, 9; "Mrs. Ruth Adams' Escape: Short Sketch of a Norfolk Woman's Life," *Norfolk Weekly News,* March 7, 1894.

[34] Chris Dixon, *African American and Haiti: Emigration and Black Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000), 8, 199-200.

[35] Ibid., 80, 200. See: James Theodore Holly and J. Dennis Harris, *Black Separatism and the Caribbean 1860* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970), Howard H. Bell, ed.

[36] Dixon, 119, 197.

[37] Ibid.; Holloway, 2.

[38] Holloway, 3, 36.

[39] Ibid., 3, 6, 8. The *Pine and the Palm* newspaper published reports on African American emigrants on June 8 and September 21, 1861.

[40] McFeely, 188; Coffee, "Lest We Forget," 1, 3, 9; "Mrs. Ruth Adams' Escape: Short Sketch of a Norfolk Woman's Life," *Norfolk Weekly News,* March 7, 1894; Holloway, 2, 8-10, 14; Frederick Douglass, "Agriculture and Black Progress," Speech Delivered September 18, 1873, in Nashville, Tennessee, in John Blassingame, ed., *The Frederick Douglass Papers Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews*, 1864-80, 5 Vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 4: 375; Diedrich., 294-96. Coffee, "Lest We Forget," 1, 3, 9. After the war, Douglass supported President U. S. Grant even as the latter fought with Charles Sumner, head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In 1872, Grant had announced his plan to annex the Dominican Republic (the other half of the island belonging to Haiti) which he would use

for the resettlement of the freed people. Sumner argued that African Americans' rights should be secured in America, but Douglass, who had been asked to serve as secretary to a commission that would investigate the island as a potential spot for the immigration of American blacks, continued to support the president. McFeely argues that "the attraction of a presidential appointment" as secretary of an investigative commission to Haiti appealed to Douglass's ego.

[41] Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas After Reconstruction* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1976), vii-x; Martin, 72; William Loren Katz, *The Black West* (Garden City, New York: Double Day, 1971), 167-70, 174.

[42] Martin, 73; Blassingame and McKivigan, Series 1, 4: 510, 513-14; Katz, 48.

[43] Martin, 73-74, 132; Washington, 14; Katz, 175.

[44] McFeely, 312.

[45] Ibid., 312-13; Letter, Ruth Adams, (Providence, Rhode Island), to Frederick Douglass, (Anacostia, Washington, D.C.), August 10, 1882. Anna Murray Douglass died on August 4, 1882, after suffering from a stroke in July. Blassingame and McKivigan, Series 2, 4: 127.

[46] Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1998) , 76, 104, 123-26.

[47] Nebraska Writers Project and Omaha Urban League, *The Negroes of Nebraska* (Lincoln, NE: Works Projects Administration and Woodruff Printing Co. 1940), 1. Republished, *The Negroes of Nebraska, http://www.memoriallibrary.com/NE/Ethnic/Negro/immigration.htm*, 2007, 1.

[48] Nebraska Writers Project and Omaha Urban League, 3.

[49] Ibid., 1-2. Zelma Stevenson, *My Family Stories,* (Lincoln, NE: self-published, 2006), 1-5.

[50] Letters, Ruth [Cox] Adams to Frederick Douglass, March 15, May 24, 1894.

[51] Mary Frances Berry, *My Face Is Black Is True: Callie House and the Struggle for Ex-Slave Reparations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 4, 7, 13.

[52] Martin, 77-79.

[53] Trudier Harris, ed., *Selected Works of Ida B. Wells-Barnett* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 5. To gain support for her campaign, Wells made two tours of England, one in 1893 and one in 1894. During these years Wells worked out of Chicago where she wrote and organized the Colored Women's Clubs. An outgrowth of her efforts was the protest over the exclusion of African Americans from the 1893 World's Fair. McFeely, 361-62. William L. Andrews, *The Oxford Frederick Douglass Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), xiii; Harris, 16, 51.

[54] Andrews, xiii, 341, 346, 348, 350.

[55] John Blassingame, ed., *The Frederick Douglass Papers Series One*, 5: 177, xxvii-xxviii. 140. Ultimately, Douglass agreed to serve as the commissioner of the Pavilion to Haiti at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago.

[56] "Frederick Douglass Talks," *Omaha Bee,* November 21, 1893; "The Negro in the South," *Omaha World-Herald,* November 22, 1893; "Fred Douglass," *Omaha World-Herald,* November 12, 1893.

[57] "Race Problem of the South," *Omaha Bee,* November 22, 1893.

[58] "The Negro in the South," *Omaha World-Herald,* November 22, 1893. Much of Douglass's Omaha speech came from an article on lynching which he had published in the *North American Review* the previous year. See Douglass, "Lynch Law in the South," *North American Review,* 155: (July 1882), 17-24: in John Blassingame, ed., *The Frederick Douglass Papers Series One*, 5: 580-87.

[59] "Race Problem of the South," *Omaha Bee*, November 22, 1893; Harris, 17; Leon F. Litwack, *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* (Santa Fe: Twin Palms Publishers, 2000), 96, 127, 161.

[60] Coffee, 5, 8; McFeely, 221-22.

[61] Letter, Ruth Adams (Norfolk, Nebraska) to Frederick Douglass (Anacostia, Washington, D.C.) March 15, 1894, NSHS; Letter, Frederick Douglass (Anacostia, Washington, D.C.) to Ruth Adams (Norfolk, Nebraska), March 20, 1894, NSHS.

[62] Coffee, 8-10; Schneider, 1.

[63] Coffee, 6-10; Schneider, 1, 93; Douglass, *Autobiographies*, 1072; Letter, Ruth Adams (Providence, Rhode Island) to Frederick Douglass (Anacostia, Washington, D.C.), August 10, 1882. Anna Douglass died on August 4, 1882, after suffering from a stroke in July. Blassingame and McKivigan, eds., Series 2, 4: 127. Douglass and Rosetta, along with Rosetta's daughter Annie, attended the funeral in Washington, D.C., and then buried Anna in Rochester beside Frederick and Anna's daughter Annie. Ruth Cox Adams wrote a letter of condolence to Frederick Douglass and asked that Rosetta write to her when she was able.

[64] McFeely, 377, 381-83.

[65] Ibid., 67; Ripley, 173; Frederick Douglass, *Autobiographies*, 152.

[66] Washington, 13, 15, 141; Coffee, 9.