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The North Star

Fredrick Douglass was one of the most prominent and influential African Americans who lived in the 19th century during the slavery period. Douglass was abolitionist, orator, social reformer, a writer, and statesman. He was one of the prominent human rights leaders who played significant role in the anti-slavery movement. At the same time, Douglass was the first African American to ascent to high US government rank. It is not clear the exact year and date when he was born. However, the information available shows that Douglass was born in Talbot County in Maryland in the year 1818 (Douglass 11). Douglass also chose to celebrate his birthday on 14th February.

Douglass lived with his maternal grandmother by the name Betty Bailey when he was young. His mother died when he was barely ten, and there is no clear information about Douglass’ father. Some people argue that he was a son of one of slave owners. He was one of the young people who were selected to live in the home of plantation owners. Douglass, therefore, was one of the lucky slaves. Even though slaves were not required to read and write, he was taught the alphabets by Sophia who was the wife to Baltimore slave owner known as Hugh Auld (Douglass 48). Although Auld stopped his wife from teaching Douglass the alphabet, the little boy was determined and started learning from white children in the neighborhood. Eventually, he knew how to read and write. It was through reading that his anti-slavery ideology was developed. His reading and writing knowledge made him become a writer and orator. He got married to Anna Murray, a free black woman, on 15th September 1838, and they had five children. He later married Helen Pitts who was a white feminist and a daughter to his abolitionist friend Gideon Pitts Jr.

Douglass dedicated his life to the abolition of slavery. His aggressive fight against slavery started in 1838 when he was asked to narrate his story at abolitionist meeting (Douglass 152). He effectively used his oratory and writing skills to champion for the freedom of African Americans and the end of slavery in USA (Levine 52). He delivered his first anti-slavery speech in Massachusetts. At the same time, he organized and actively participated in the lecture tour in 1843 that was aimed at ending slavery. Besides, he used his writing skills to produce abolitionist publication and newspapers like *The North Star*, *Douglass’ Monthly*, and *New National Era*. He significantly contributed to the Emancipation Proclamation that ended slavery. His work did not end with the abolishment of slavery as he continued to fight for civil rights, as well as the empowerment of African Americans. Douglass also became one of the outspoken supporters of rights of women. He held several political positions and even became the candidate for Vice President post on the Equal Rights Party in 1872. Douglass died of stroke on 20th February 1895.

Douglass greatly impacted journalism. He significantly transformed how journalism was perceived and used in the US and other parts of the world. Importantly, he transformed journalism to a tool that was used to champion for the rights of the minorities and the marginalized (Douglass 23). He proved to the world that journalism can be used to advocate against ills in the society and change the world to a better place. At the same time, his decision to establish newspapers and magazines led to massive development of journalism, as people started coming up with their own media houses for various purposes.

*The North Star* was one of the newspapers that Douglass used to transform journalism. Douglass established *The North Star* on 3rd December 1847 as an abolitionist paper. *The North Star* later became the most influential anti-slavery newspaper. Douglass and other writers used the newspaper to champion for the rights and freedom of black people. The paper was not only used to fight slavery but also to champion for the emancipation of women and other marginalized and oppressed people in the US. *The North Star* was later merged with the *Liberty Party Paper* in June 1851 and it became *Fredrick Douglass’ Paper* (Levine 57).

Therefore, I think Douglass was one of the black people who were dedicated to end slavery and to fight for the rights of the minority groups living in America. I believe one of the main roles played by Douglass during his lifetime was the fighter for end of slavery. He defied all odds and obstacles to become an excellent orator and writer. Douglass did not use his special skills to meet his own needs, but those of the people who were discriminated, oppressed and marginalized. He took advantage of his writing skills to make publications that changed how people perceived slavery. I am persuaded that the information that was published on some of his newspapers like *The North Star* enlightened many people and convinced anti-slavery leaders like Abraham Lincoln of the need to end slavery. His work as a writer and orator also helped in enlightening black people, making them to agitate for their rights and freedom.

Finally, I believe that Douglass was not only dedicated to the freedom of black people, but also other oppressed groups in America. He continues to fight and championing for the rights of African Americans and women. He also played a significant role in the Civil War and reconstruction periods. Therefore, Fredrick Douglass significantly contributed to freedom and rights that are enjoyed by all Americans nowadays.

Works Cited

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