

Frederick Douglass

Talbot County's Native Son and International Hero

Community Reading

"What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"

by Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey Douglass

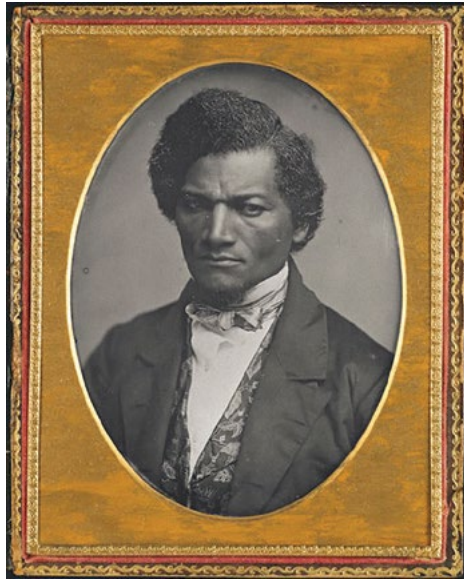
Saturday, July 7, 2018

Presented by the Frederick Douglass Honor Society

Background History of the Occasion

“What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” was the question Frederick Douglass posed to a gathering of 500-600 abolitionists in Rochester, N.Y., on July 5, 1852. At the invitation of the Rochester Ladies Anti-Slavery Society, it was noted by a local newspaper that when Douglass finished and sat down, “there was a universal burst of applause.” This speech, receiving an overwhelming endorsement, sold over 700 copies and would be remembered as one of most poignant addresses by Douglass, a former slave turned statesman.

Refusing to celebrate the Fourth of July until all slaves were emancipated, in his speech, Douglass acknowledged that the Fourth of July, a commemoration to the birth of our nation and anniversary of the Declaration of Independence should be celebrated and the Founding Father be honored. The dilemma he faced; however, was that the ideals of liberty and equal rights for all remained unfulfilled for blacks enslaved in the South. In his article, “Frederick Douglass: A Life and Times,” James Colaiaco writes:

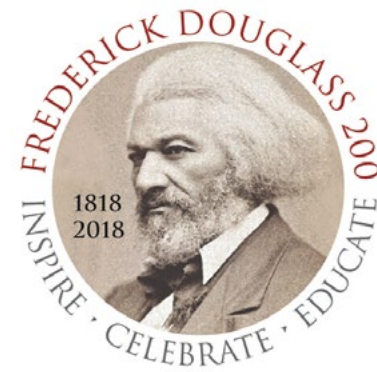


Samuel J. Miller, Frederick Douglass, 1852.
Daguerreotype. Art Institute of Chicago.

“Frederick Douglass inspired, converted, and provoked. He mesmerized his audiences. No speaker was more impassioned, more devoted to the advancement of human rights. No person understood better the meaning of the American creed as embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble to the United States Constitution, and no one was more eloquent in summoning the nation to fulfill this creed for all, regardless of race”.

“What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” awakened the conscience of the nation, and Douglass’s speech is as much a piercing accounting of national hypocrisy on what he referred to as a day of “tumultuous joy” as it is a call to action.

Colaiaco, James A. “Frederick Douglass: A Life and Times.” *The History Reader*, 1 Feb. 2016.
www.thehistoryreader.com/modern-history/life-and-times-of-frederick-douglass



Community Reading

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by Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey Douglass

Saturday, July 7, 2018

Order of Program

Master of Ceremonies: Walter W. Black Jr.,
Emeritus Board Member, Frederick Douglass Honor Society

Musical Selections by Tamika Watson

Welcome

Opening Prayer - Rev. Nina Johnson-Wright

Background History of the Occasion

Musical Selection

Community Reading – *“What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”*
by Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey Douglass

Musical Selection

Closing Remarks

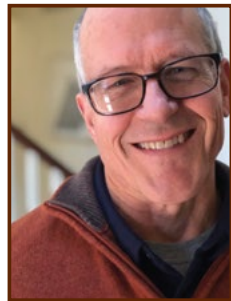
Richard M. Potter, Jr. a resident of Easton, Maryland graduated from Sojourner Douglass College in 2008. Upon completion of his undergraduate studies he then matriculated to Wilmington University and graduated with his master's degree in Organizational Leadership in 2010. Upon graduating Mr. Potter was featured in a commercial that showcased Wilmington University and his accomplishments. He is currently enrolled in a doctorate degree in Higher Education Administration at Morgan State University. Richard serves on numerous boards throughout Talbot County. He also serves as the President of the Talbot County NAACP Branch.



Dr. Clara L. Small recently retired from her professorship in history at Salisbury University, where she taught for thirty-six years. In 2011, she was appointed to the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture by Governor O'Malley. Dr. Small is presently researching the history of African Americans on the Eastern Shore utilizing oral history, official documents, and other sources and is currently serving on the (governor appointed) Governor's Commission to Coordinate the Study, Commemoration, and Impact of the History and Legacy of

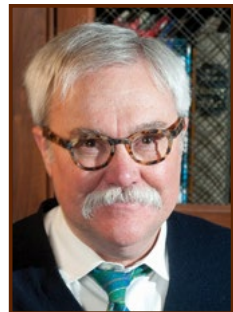
Slavery in Maryland. An accomplished writer, Dr. Small has published and co-authored several books on African Americans who made a lasting impact on this country's history. She co-authored with Rev. David Briddell "*Men of Color, To Arms! Manumitted Slaves and Free Blacks from the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland Who Served in the Civil War*," (2010). Her other publications include: *Compass Points: Profiles and Biographies of African Americans from the Delmarva Peninsula, Vol. 1*, (2014) and *Vol. II* (2017) and *They Wore Blue and Their Hearts Were Loyal: The United States Colored Troops of Dorchester County, Maryland, Slaves and Free Blacks Who Served in the Civil War* (2016), which she co-authored with Teresa M. Neild.

John Ford has been a resident of Easton since 1966, and has been involved in Easton's town government since 1987. He was a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission for 10 years, and was elected to the Town Council in 1997, for the last 15 years, he has served as the Council President. John Ford's interest and admiration for Frederick Douglass stems from the extensive readings he has done on Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War era of American history. Ford strongly believes that the writings of Frederick Douglass should be required reading in any American history course taught today; as Douglass's words are as relevant now, if not more so, than when he first spoke his truths to America.

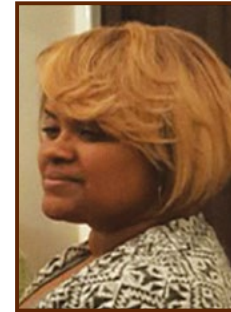


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Bill Peak is the communications director for the Talbot County Free Library. He is also a proud and long-time member of the Frederick Douglass Day committee. Bill's library column is published on the first Sunday of each month in *The Star*



Democrat. A collection of his columns, entitled Adventures in Shelving, was published by the library board in 2016. Other works include the award-winning novel, *The Oblate's Confession*. Bill received his undergraduate degree from Washington and Lee University and his Master's from the creative writing program at Hollins University. He is known around town as ... "the Library Guy."



Tamika Watson With the exception of being born in the Nation's capitol, Tamika Watson has been a Marylander all her life. She was initially reared in the suburbs of Arnold before relocating and spending her formative years on Maryland's Eastern Shore. At a very young age, at her grandfather's side, Tamika started singing gospel tunes in the basement. Her love of music grew, and has since led her to the Apollo Theater stage, singing lead with a local band (Evolution), and at numerous events in and around the DMV area.

The Hill Project

In ca. 1787, James Freeman bought a half-acre lot on what were then the outskirts of the young and growing town of Easton. Here, he and his wife Henny built a small urban farm and raised livestock. They were the first free black landowners in Easton and some of their descendants still live on The Hill, the historic free African-American neighborhood that James and Henny made their home. In June and July 2018, archaeologists from the University of Maryland, College Park, Department of Anthropology have brought their archaeological field school back for a second summer at the Freeman site to better understand what may have been a portion of the Freemans' garden, uncovered in 2017, as well as the lives of other residents who have lived here over time. The field school is a training ground for the next generation of archaeologists and involves students directly in the research on this important historic site and neighborhood.

The excavation is a part of The Hill Community Project, led by Dale Green of Morgan State University, and continues a longstanding partnership with Historic Easton, Inc., and the East End Neighborhood Association. Researching the history of The Hill from the Freemans' early years to the present through artifacts is an exciting way to learn about the everyday lives of those who have come before and every excavation sheds new light on this important community!



“What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”

Discussion Questions

Topic Questions

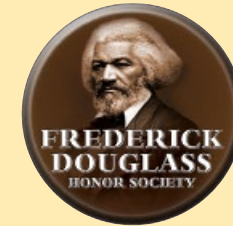
- Why was it essential for Douglass to argue that he was a man? What is a “man” in Douglass’ speech? How does Douglass argue that he is a man? Does he need to?
- What are the implications of his words in 1852? What are implications today?
- How did the 1850s advance the war?
- Have we moved forward as a country? How?
- Why read this speech and why read it now?
- What parts of the speech do you find particularly powerful, and why?
- If Douglass were alive today, what might he be working on?
- Are speeches important in society? What do they do? How do they work?
- What, according to Douglass, is wrong with 1850s America?
- What does this speech tell us about today’s United States?
- What other speech or writing would you compare to this?

In-Depth Questions

- Look at the opening of the speech. How does Douglass characterize himself and his relationship with the audience? Why do you think he describes himself in those terms?
- Does Douglass stick to that (apologetic) tone, or does he change at some point? How would you explain how and why he changes?
- When does Douglass address the audience as “you,” and when does he talk about “us” and “we”? How would you explain this?
- If you were a member of the group of female abolitionists who had invited Douglass to give the speech, how might you feel about his criticism of the founders and other parts of American history and life? Would you feel personally attacked, or would you agree with his attacks?
- Why does Douglass attack the church, especially given the fact that many abolitionist groups were affiliated with churches? Was this dangerous, and if so, why did he do it?
- In the 19th century, oratory was considered both a form of entertainment and a crucial element of public life. To be effective, oratory was expected to address the mind (presumably with information and logical arguments), as well as the imagination and heart

(presumably with images and ideas), in order to convince the will (to take a particular action). What parts of this speech might have appealed to the mind and what parts to the heart?

- If most of his listeners were already abolitionists, what do you think he was trying to accomplish with respect to persuading them to take action?
- What kinds of things does Douglass quote? What impression does this, and his speaking style, give you of what kind of person he was. Would you have found him impressive? Do you find him impressive? If so, does this contribute to the effectiveness of his argument in any way?
- If you were a member of the audience listening to this speech, at what points in the speech might your mood change? How and why? How would you feel at the conclusion of the speech, and why? Does it matter that he ends with the hymn?



Frederick Douglass Honor Society Board Members

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Brenda Wooden, Finance Director

Annie Mewborn, Education Director

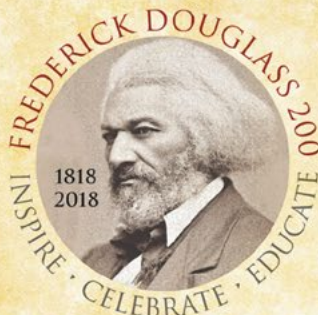
Clairdean Black J.Kirk Howie Walter Johnson

Harriette Lowery Lois McCoy

Walter Black, Emeritus Board Member

Doreen Getsinger, Emeritus Board Member

The Frederick Douglass Honor Society is dedicated to developing programs that continue the Douglass legacy of human rights, education, personal growth, and involvement of citizens. Our goal is to honor Frederick Douglass here in his birthplace, Talbot County, Maryland, where his experiences in his youth - both positive and negative - helped form his character, intellect, and determination. It became Frederick Douglass' life goal to bring black people and America away from the ancient institution of slavery. It is our hope that all people will long remember him as a true leader and world-renown hero.



PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Academy Art Museum • American Legion Post #77
- Asbury United Methodist Church
- Avalon Foundation • Brookletts Place Talbot Senior Center
- Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
- Building African American Minds (BAAM)
- Caroline County Tourism • Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
- Chesapeake College • Dock Street Foundation
- Easton Business Alliance • Easton Economic Development
- Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives
- Frederick Douglass Honor Society
- Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center
- National Park Service • Historic Easton
- John Wesley Preservation Society
- Maryland Commission on African American History & Culture
- Maryland Office of Tourism • Morgan State University
- Patrick Rogan, Graphic Designer
- Queen Anne's County Arts Council
- Scotts United Methodist Church
- St. Matthew United Methodist Church
- St. Michaels Museum • St. Stephens A.M.E. Church
- Talbot County Economic Development & Tourism
- Talbot County Free Library • Talbot County Historical Society
- Talbot County N.A.A.C.P. • Talbot County Public Schools
- Talbot Rising • Talbot Spy
- Ted Mueller Photography • Temple B'nai Israel
- Town of Oxford • Town of St. Michaels
- Town of Trappe • Union United Methodist Church
- University of Maryland, College Park
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore
- Washington College