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**Frederick Douglass and the Battle for
Freedom- Part II**

Lead: Born a slave, Frederick Douglass became one of the most articulate spokesmen for abolition in the pre-Civil War era.

Tag: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: After escaping from slavery as a teenager, Douglass began to speak to church audiences throughout the North about the horrors of slavery. "I've come to tell you about slavery. Other abolitionists can tell you something about slavery;

they cannot refer you to a back covered with scars." William Lloyd Garrison, the crusading newspaper editor, hired Douglass as a lecturer and audiences of whites flocked to hear his eloquent and compelling denunciation of America's peculiar institution. So effective was Douglass on the speaking circuit that his handlers began to fear attempts to recapture him and take him back South. Therefore, they sent him on a two-year European tour. He returned after twenty-one months, an international celebrity.

Convinced that Garrison and his colleagues were patronizing him, he moved to Rochester, New York and began his own newspaper, *North Star*.

All during the 1850s he continued to pound away at the conscience of America. He advocated emancipation within the political system and, while sympathizing with the frustration of slaves, refused to go along with slave rebellions such as that of John Brown at Harper's Ferry in 1859.

During the Civil War he kept up the pressure on official Washington, pressing for equal treatment of black soldiers and for President Lincoln to emancipate those still held as slaves. After the war he continued the fight for equality even when it seemed that enthusiasm for black rights in the North was in ebb tide. He died in 1895 in an era when Jim Crow laws were being used all over the South to

restrict African American rights and political power. Just before his death the ex-slave delivered an impassioned plea to a nation weary of three decades of war and social struggle and more willing than prudent to give in to the face of the growing power of legal racism North and South. He said, "Time and strength are not equal to the task before me, but if could I be heard by this great nation, I would call to mind the sublime and glorious truths with which, at its birth, it saluted a listening world....Put away your race prejudice. Banish the idea that one class must rule over another. Recognize...that the rights of the humblest citizen are as worthy of protection as are those of the highest, and...your Republic will stand and

flourish forever. Frederick Douglass died in 1895.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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