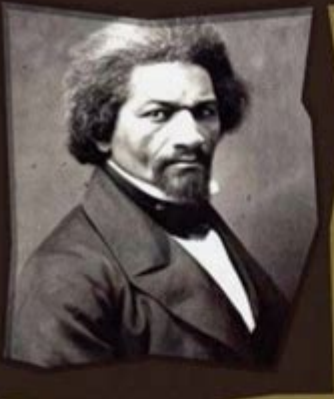


Frederick Douglass Speeches Full Text



Frederick Douglass Speech

What to the slave is the Fourth of July?

Frederick Douglass was the most famous African-American leader of the 1800s. In 1852, the prominent citizens of Rochester, USA, asked him to speak at their Fourth of July festivities. Here's what he said.

"Fellow citizens, pardon me, and allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here today? What have I or those I represent to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? And am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble offering to the national altar, and to confess the benefits, and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us?

Would to God, both for your sakes and ours, that an affirmative answer could be truthfully returned to these questions. Then would my task be light, and my burden easy and delightful. For who is there so cold that a nation's sympathy could not warm him? Who so obdurate and dead to the claims of gratitude, that would not thankfully acknowledge such priceless benefits? Who so stolid and selfish that would not give his voice to swell the hallelujahs of a nation's jubilee, when the chains of servitude had been torn from his limbs? I am not that man. In a case like that, the dumb might eloquently speak, and the "lame man leap as an hart."

But such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us.

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FREDERICK DOUGLASS SPEECHES FULL TEXT ARE A TREASURE TROVE OF ELOQUENT RHETORIC AND PROFOUND INSIGHTS INTO THE STRUGGLES FOR FREEDOM AND EQUALITY IN AMERICA. AS ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT ABOLITIONISTS OF THE 19TH CENTURY, DOUGLASS'S SPEECHES WERE NOT JUST MERE ORATIONS; THEY WERE CALLS TO ACTION, POIGNANT REFLECTIONS ON THE HUMAN CONDITION, AND A TESTAMENT TO THE RESILIENCE OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT. HIS ABILITY TO ARTICULATE THE PLIGHT OF ENSLAVED PEOPLE AND THE MORAL IMPERATIVES OF FREEDOM HAS MADE HIS SPEECHES A CRUCIAL PART OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND LITERATURE.

THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS

FREDERICK DOUGLASS WAS BORN INTO SLAVERY IN FEBRUARY 1818 IN MARYLAND. DESPITE THE SEVERE LIMITATIONS IMPOSED

ON HIM BY THE SYSTEM OF SLAVERY, HE EDUCATED HIMSELF AND ESCAPED TO FREEDOM IN 1838. HIS LIFE STORY IS A POWERFUL NARRATIVE OF TRANSFORMATION FROM A SLAVE TO A RENOWNED ORATOR, WRITER, AND STATESMAN. DOUGLASS BECAME A LEADING VOICE IN THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT, ADVOCATING FOR THE END OF SLAVERY AND THE EQUAL RIGHTS OF ALL INDIVIDUALS.