

“Lincoln and Douglas”

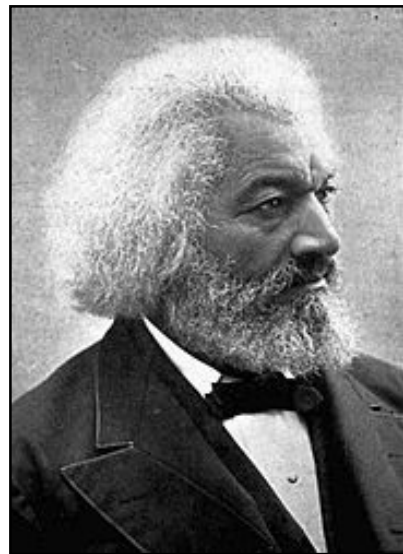
From the article, “Douglas and Lincoln” by Paul and Stephen Kendrick

As already described, the sentiment of Lincoln toward slavery was understood; it was not his personal preference.

One of my recollections of Frederick Douglas is from the movie, *Glory*, where his character appeared near the beginning (of the movie) to underscore that the ex-slave would “fight with honor and dignity – **for a people who have known degradation.**” Though having a few lines or script, the character embodied the energy and passion of the actual person – who himself had been born into slavery as the child of both a slave and white father.

From the movie *Glory* (and accounts of Robert Gould Shaw), the initial pay differences for the white and black soldiers became an issue that Douglass. His basic reasoning was that the black man – with his fury in the wake of slavery – would fight at least equal to his white counterpart; hence, he should be paid equally. On August 10, 1863, Douglas met Lincoln in the White House on this issue...and perhaps others.

This meeting was not without a personal base however, as Douglas and Lincoln had formed a prior relationship of mutual respect and understanding. As Douglas put it, they had been “**characters of blood and fire**” – with some similar views on slavery and emancipation.



Regarding Douglas and emancipation, the authors of this article write:

Douglas is a national hero, an indomitable fighter who faced down nearly impossible odds. Writing three autobiographies set him up well to step into an ennobling his heroic part, for he understood that his life had always been the story of his people advancing to redemption.

What was particularly novel about their meeting at the White House was that this was the first (perhaps) when an ex-slave entered this place and, moreover, discussed policy with the President. The authors summarize each mission or “cause” for the two men:

Lincoln’s mission was to save the Union, while Douglas’s mission was different and two-pronged: emancipation through the conflict, and then established equality...

The prolonged Civil War, the outcome of Gettysburg, and other events and factors play into the “opportunity” through the conflict...to gain equality; and though equality would not be the direct product or outcome of participation, it has gradually come... As the author’s point out however, the mission of Douglas is “not yet over.”

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