



## Frederick Douglass

*"That which is inhuman cannot be divine."*

Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) became one of the most famous and important persons in 19<sup>th</sup> century America thanks to his tireless advocacy in the cause of freedom. Douglass was born a slave on a Maryland plantation, the child of his mother and a white man, most likely his enslaver. Despite growing up facing all of the cruelties and abuses of slavery, he developed several ingenious methods for teaching himself to read and write. Imbued with a strong sense of the injustice of the institution, he ran away at the age of 20 with the help of his wife Anna Murray, who would become an essential partner in his life's work. They settled in Boston, Massachusetts, where Douglass became involved in the abolitionist movement. Speaking about his life, he quickly became the most effective and popular speaker for the cause. In 1845, Douglass published his first autobiography, the writing of which not only shook the ideological foundations of slavery itself, but also placed his life and liberty in greater danger. He was forced to spend much of his time abroad until the outbreak of the Civil War. He then began a campaign to allow Black soldiers to fight for the Union, and personally recruited individuals for the heroic Massachusetts 54<sup>th</sup> infantry. Douglass also spent time in the White House advising President Abraham Lincoln. After the war, Douglass remained politically active, serving in several governmental positions and continuing to advocate for a number of humanitarian causes. Due to his prominence, he holds the distinction of being the most photographed American man in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He passed away in his home on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1895.

Frederick Douglass earned a place in history as one the most distinguished writers and speakers of his era, and his powerful words still impact those who read them. Rising from the horrors of slavery, he dedicated his life to helping those still in chains. A man of deep faith, his unceasing work in the cause of social justice was motivated by his Christian beliefs. In the end, he challenged America to live up to the ideals of its founding by ensuring equality for all people. His work not only transformed this country, but also continues to shape our world today.