Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass was born in Maryland in 1818. His mother was a slave named Harriet Bailey. Douglass’s mother worked many long hours in the fields. She was not allowed to take care of her young son. Douglass was sent to live with his grandmother. She cared for him until he was old enough to work.

Douglass went to work for the Auld family when he was eight. Mrs. Auld began to teach Douglass how to read. Teaching slaves to read was illegal. When her husband learned what she had done, he made Mrs. Auld stop. Douglass continued to learn in secret. He bought his first book when he was thirteen. It was a book that convinced him that all people were created equal and that slavery was wrong.

Douglass dreamed of being free. He constantly thought of ways to escape. At age twenty he took a risk and disguised himself as a free black sailor. He eventually escaped to the north and was free. He was afraid he would be captured, so in 1845 he left the United States. Douglass made friends in England who bought him from his old master. At the age of twenty-eight Douglass was finally free!

Douglass came back to the United States in 1847. He devoted his life to ending slavery. He worked to change the Constitution. He wanted all men and women to have the same rights. Douglass continued his work until his death in 1895.

1. What was Frederick Douglass’s dream? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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2. Why was it difficult for Douglass to learn to read? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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3. How did Frederick Douglass become a free man? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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