

# In the Library

**Frederick Douglass Family Materials  
from the Walter O. Evans Collection**

April 22 – June 14, 2019

National Gallery of Art





Dr. Walter O. Evans and Linda Evans at their home in Savannah, Georgia, 2009. Courtesy Walter O. Evans.

# Frederick Douglass Family Materials from the Walter O. Evans Collection

“I hope that in some small way my collecting will encourage others to do the same, and to recognize the importance of preserving our cultural heritage, providing a legacy for those who come after us.” – Dr. Walter O. Evans

Walter O. Evans has spent decades collecting, curating, and conserving a wide variety of African American art, music, and literature in an effort to preserve the cultural history of African Americans. His home in Savannah, Georgia, is a repository of the artworks and papers of many important figures, and increasingly has become a destination for scholars. Part of his collection focuses on the nineteenth-century slave, abolitionist, and statesman Frederick Douglass (c. 1818 – 1895). In addition to inscribed books from Douglass’s and his descendants’ libraries and printed editions of his speeches, the collection contains letters, manuscripts, photographs, and scrapbooks. While some of this material relates directly to Douglass’s speeches and work promoting the cause of black freedom and equality, much of the material is of a more personal nature: correspondence between family members, family histories, and scrapbooks compiled by Douglass and his sons Lewis Henry, Charles Remond, and Frederick Douglass Jr. This family history provides a new lens through which to view the near-mythical orator. In addition to containing news clippings from many nineteenth-century African American newspapers that do not survive in other archives today, the scrapbooks, with their personal documents and familial relationships, illuminate Frederick Douglass in ways never before seen.

The National Gallery of Art Library mounts this special-focus exhibition in conjunction with a lecture by Professor Celeste-Marie Bernier on Friday, April 26, 2019. In 2018 Professor Bernier and Andrew Taylor of the University of Edinburgh published *If I Survive: Frederick Douglass and Family in the Walter O. Evans Collection*, a guide to the collection born of a longstanding collaboration between the authors and Dr. Evans. Within its pages they have reproduced and transcribed letters, manuscripts, and photographs from the collection and provided new essays and commentary that together constitute an invaluable resource to Douglass scholarship. The exhibition presents selections from this material as well as a majority of the family scrapbooks that are not included in *If I Survive*, and pamphlet editions alongside some of the speeches found in manuscript in the Evans Collection.

All items are from the Walter O. Evans Collection unless otherwise noted.

Syracuse Oct 3<sup>d</sup> 1861

My Dear Lewis:

I was very glad to receive yours of Sept 29. I had expected a letter but had given up all hopes of ever hearing from you again, but when I learned of your sickness all was explained and I found myself mentally saying "poor Lew I am so sorry that he has been sick." How lonely you must have been during those long seven nights that you could not sleep, and had I known it I should have been tempted to come and dispel in a slight measure their gloomy monotony; that is if it were in my power to do. Now you are so much better

# Checklist



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- 1 John Chester Buttre, *Frederick Douglass*, c. 1853, photograph

The original engraving for this print was first reproduced in the antislavery publication *Autographs for Freedom*, published in Rochester and Auburn, NY, in 1854. The portrait accompanies an extract from a speech contributed to the volume by Douglass and was most likely copied from a full-plate daguerreotype now in the Onondaga Historical Association in Syracuse, NY, but very little is known about the daguerreotype and who made it. Buttre was also commissioned in 1855 to create the frontispiece portrait for Douglass's second autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom*.

- 2 Frederick Douglass, *Oration, Delivered in Corinthian Hall, Rochester, by Frederick Douglass, July 5, 1852*, Rochester, NY: printed by Lee, Mann & Co., American Building, 1852

- 3 Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July," 1852, typescript manuscript

On July 5, 1852, Frederick Douglass gave one of his most famous speeches in Rochester, NY. In it he reflects on the irony of celebrating a holiday devoted to freedom and independence in a nation where blacks were held as property and denied their full humanity, let alone freedom. The Evans Collection includes both the official published pamphlet with the text of the speech as well as a typescript copy of an extract with edits and corrections by Douglass himself.

- 4 Unknown Photographer, *Lewis Henry Douglass*, c. 1870, cabinet card photograph

Born October 9, 1840, Frederick Douglass's eldest son Lewis Henry Douglass would be apprenticed as a printer at the *North Star*, Frederick Douglass's first newspaper in Rochester, NY. While Lewis Henry's career would take him throughout the country in various roles, he always considered printing to be his given trade.

Syracuse Oct 3<sup>d</sup> 1861

My Dear Love

I was very glad to receive yours of Sept 29<sup>th</sup> I had expected it a little but had given up all hopes of ever hearing from you again, but when I learned of your sickness all was explained and I found myself mentally saying how glad I am to hear that he has been sick. How truly you must have been during those long seven nights that you could not sleep, and had I known it, I should have been tempted to come and sleep in a slight measure thus glorify myself; that is if it was in my power to do. How you are so much better

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5 Letter of Helen Amelia Loguen to Lewis Henry Douglass, Syracuse, NY, October 3, 1861, manuscript (page 4 detail)

Camp Meigs Readville  
May 20 1863

My Own Dear Amelia I have not had a word from you for more than a week, but cannot complain when I remember my own short comings and when I can remember them I reproach myself and can only wish it had not been so. Mother and Porter are now stopping in Boston at this. We started they see every day, we are soon to be and a week longer we may stay then says to the sweet where know not exactly when will return I do hope now I have always had to work, but I hope may return, and with the

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6 Letter of Lewis Henry Douglass to Helen Amelia Loguen, Camp Meigs, Readville, MA, May 20, 1863, manuscript

7 Letter of Lewis Henry Douglass to Helen Amelia Loguen, Camp Meigs, Readville, MA, May 27, 1863, manuscript

During the Civil War the Douglass family was instrumental in establishing black regiments for the Union army. Frederick Douglass's sons Lewis Henry and Charles Remond both served in the 54th Massachusetts regiment stationed at Camp Meigs, Readville, MA, and Frederick Jr. was a recruiter for both the 54th and 55th regiments. Lewis Henry participated in the assault on Fort Wagner, July 18, 1863, after which he suffered from ill health and was eventually discharged in March 1865 on medical grounds. A significant number of letters between Lewis Henry Douglass and his eventual bride Helen Amelia Loguen survive in the Walter O. Evans Collection, including these three. The Douglass family commitment to the cause of emancipation is perhaps nowhere better illuminated than when Lewis Henry writes, "Remember that if I fall that it is in the cause of humanity, that I am striking a blow for the welfare of the most abused and despised race on the face of the earth, that in the solution of this strife rests the question of our elevation or our degradation, our happiness or our misery."

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**FREDERICK DOUGLASS**  
 FREDERICK DOUGLASS, THE GREAT ORATOR OF  
 AMERICA.



FREDERICK DOUGLASS, THE GREAT ORATOR OF AMERICA.



FREDERICK DOUGLASS, THE GREAT ORATOR OF AMERICA.

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The Republic, Washington, D.C.,  
 Dec. 23, 1889

**THE REPUBLIC.**



**COLLEGE AT HOME.**

LXXXI.

Illustration by G. H. H. H.

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**8** Lewis H. Douglass, *Douglass Family Scrapbook*, c. 1860s–1870s

While living in Washington, DC, in early 1866 Lewis Henry headed a protest that led to electoral reform granting universal male suffrage “in the nation’s capital more than three years prior to the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment.” He also attended the National Convention of Colored Men with his father and was appointed to the delegation sent to petition President Andrew Johnson. In 1869 Frederick Douglass and all three of his sons would be elected to the National Convention of Colored Men of America.

**9** Lewis H. Douglass, *Douglass Family Scrapbook*, c. 1860s–1870s

In 1867, while working for the African American mining venture the Red, White, and Blue Mining Company, Lewis Henry and Fredrick Douglass Jr. became involved with the effort to integrate public schools in Colorado and also set up a printing business in Denver. Due to racially discriminatory barriers, the printing business was short-lived, and this scrapbook focuses on Lewis Henry’s experience with the government printing office and discrimination by local and national printing unions that were intent on sabotaging any attempt by the Douglass brothers to work in the profession after the Civil War.

**10** Frederick Douglass, *Douglass Family Scrapbook no. 1*, c. 1870s

Frederick Douglass was appointed Marshal of the District of Columbia in April 1877. He was the first African American appointed to the post, but his role in public office put his family in the public eye as well. African American newspapers carried stories about the Douglass family almost every day, and the family scrapbooks chronicle both positive and negative coverage.

**11** Frederick Douglass, *Douglass Family Scrapbook no. 2*, c. 1870s–1880s

**12** Unknown Photographer, *Frederick Douglass and Unidentified Family Members*, Cedar Hill, c. 1891, photograph

Douglass moved to Washington, DC, in 1872, and in 1878 he purchased a fifteen-acre estate in Anacostia named Cedar Hill. This would be his home for the rest of his life as well as the home for his growing extended family, most of whom relied on his financial support in one way or another. The purchase was big news, particularly in the African American newspapers where articles about the Douglass family were a staple. This was something of a blessing and a curse, as the attention certainly kept Douglass relevant in the issues of the day, but there was no family business that was not aired in the press for the world to see.



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**13** Frederick Douglass, *Oration by Frederick Douglass on the Occasion of the Unveiling of The Freedmen's Monument in Memory of Abraham Lincoln, in Lincoln Park, Washington, DC, April 14th, 1876, with an Appendix*, Washington, DC: Gibson Brothers, 1876

A bronze statue designed and sculpted by Thomas Ball was erected in Lincoln Park on Capitol Hill in 1876. Frederick Douglass was the keynote speaker of the dedication which was attended by President Ulysses S. Grant and several other high-ranking federal officials. Although his published speech did not explicitly critique the sculpture, Howard University historian John Cromwell, who was also in attendance, reported that Douglass said the statue “showed the Negro on his knees when a more manly attitude would have been indicative of freedom.”

**14** *Letter of Charles Hill, William Hoyt, et al. to Frederick Douglass*, May 1, 1888, manuscript

This invitation to speak in Stamford, CT, was but one of hundreds of invitations Frederick Douglass received, evidence of his renown as a speaker and the high demand for his skills during the golden age of oratory in America. Although likely impossible to prove, Douglass was perhaps the most well-traveled African American in the nineteenth century, as invitations like this were received constantly.

**15** Martha Ellicott Tyson, *Banneker, The Afric-American Astronomer. From the Posthumous Papers of Martha E. Tyson. Edited by her Daughter*, Philadelphia: Friends' Book Association, 1884

Benjamin Banneker was a free black man born in Baltimore County, MD, in 1731. One of the first African American men of science, he became well known as an astronomer and was part of the team that surveyed the original boundaries of the District of Columbia. He published an annual almanac in the 1790s and included anti-slavery essays and speeches. This copy of Martha Ellicott Tyson's second and more complete biography of Banneker was inscribed by Frederick Douglass to his son Frederick Douglass Jr. shortly after its publication in 1884.

**16** *Letter of Frederick Douglass to Judge Edmonds*, August 29, 1876, manuscript

Frederick Douglass did not hesitate to assist his sons in their endeavors, particularly when it came to discrimination in the printing industry. In one such instance he wrote to George Franklin Edmonds, the U.S. senator from Vermont and chairman of the Judiciary Committee, who had been an ally in the fight for equality, and accuses him of discriminating against Frederick Jr.

**17** Frederick Douglass, *Douglass Family Scrapbook no. 6*, c. 1880s–1890s

Frederick Douglass Jr.'s handwritten biography appears in this family scrapbook. It is an important source for establishing the dates of birth and death of his children as well as information about his wife, Virginia L. Molyneaux Hewlett, and her family.

**18** Frederick Douglass, *Douglass Family Scrapbook no. 4*, c. 1880s

**19** Frederick Douglass, *Address by Hon. Frederick Douglass, Delivered in the Congregational Church, Washington, DC, April 16, 1883, on the Twenty-First Anniversary of Emancipation in the District of Columbia*, Washington, DC, 1883

**20** Frederick Douglass, *National Convention of Colored Men*, at Louisville, KY, September 24th, 1883, Louisville: Courier-Journal Job Printing Company, 1883

Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on April 16, 1862, and this date quickly became an important anniversary celebrated in African American communities. Douglass used the twenty-first anniversary in 1883 to speak about the state of the African American community. Despite the rise of lynchings, poll taxes, and other methods of disenfranchisement in the post-Reconstruction south, Douglass urged assimilation into American society and denounced efforts to create a colony in Africa. He included many of the same themes in his address to the National Convention of Colored Men in September of the same year.

**21** John Howe Kent, *Charles Remond Douglass*, Rochester, NY, c. 1890s, cabinet card photograph

John Howe Kent ran a successful photographic studio in Rochester, NY, during the same period that the Douglas family lived there. Kent not only created the photograph of Charles Remond used for the cabinet card shown here, but also made individual and group portraits commissioned by Frederick Douglass.

**22** *Letter of Frederick Douglass to Charles Remond Douglass*, Exposition Universelle de Chicago, Haitian Pavilion, October 7, 1893, manuscript

In just a page and a half, this extraordinary letter from Frederick Douglass to his son Charles Remond covers a range of topics, from politics to his health, family updates, and the status of fruit trees at his home in Washington, DC. Documents like this reveal how Douglass was more than the mythological figure we usually read about in history books, but rather a fully human actor as much concerned with the weather and his grandchild's violin playing as with national politics and the family's activism.



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**23** Charles Remond Douglass, *Some Incidents of the Home Life of Frederick Douglass*, February 13, 1917, manuscript

The Douglass family continued to work for the causes of black liberation and equality and women's suffrage long after the death of the family patriarch in 1895. In February 1917 Frederick Douglass's youngest son Charles Remond spoke at the Lincoln Memorial Church in Washington, DC, and used the occasion to reflect on his father's career at what was then thought to be the centennial of his birth (subsequent study established Douglass's birth date as 1818). This manuscript shows the full text, including passages describing the entire Douglass family's activism, which were removed in the text of the speech published in the *New York Age* at the time. It is this newly discovered collaborative nature of endeavors such as Douglass's own newspapers, rather than the venerable efforts of a single individual, that afford one of the richest new veins in scholarly mining of the Douglass legacy.

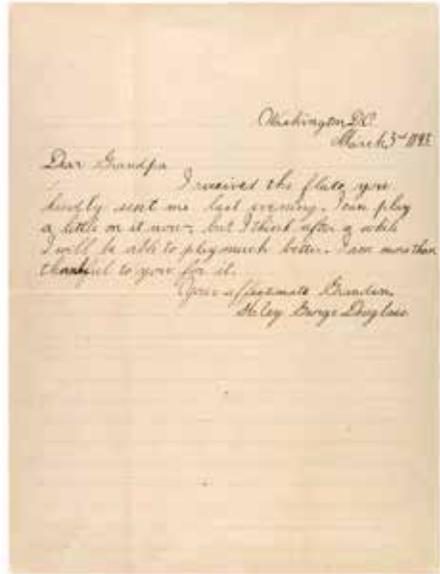
**24** Unknown Photographer (likely Dennis Bourdon, Notman Photographic Company), *Joseph Henry Douglass and Frederick Douglass*, May 10, 1894, cabinet card photograph

Frederick Douglas's grandson, Joseph Henry, son of Charles Remond and his first wife Mary Elizabeth Murphy, was a virtuoso violinist in his own right. Late in Frederick Douglass's career, Joseph Henry sometimes acted as secretary for his grandfather and accompanied him on many trips for his speaking engagements.



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25 Photographer unknown, *Haley George Douglass and His Wife, Evelyn Virginia Dulaney Douglass*, c. 1919–1925, photograph



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26 Letter of Haley George Douglass to Frederick Douglass, March 3, 1893, manuscript

27 Letter of Frederick Douglass to Haley George Douglass, March 7, 1893, manuscript

Son of Charles Remond Douglass and his second wife Laura Antoinette Haley, Haley George Douglass was just a teen when his famous grandfather died, yet the two had established an affectionate relationship. In this exchange, a twelve-year-old Haley George thanks his grandfather for the gift of a flute, and his septuagenarian grandfather responds by encouraging him to become “a good and wise man,” just as he hoped for all his heirs. This tender, personal exchange sheds a different light on a man whose soaring oratory we find so familiar.

28 Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave. Written by Himself*, Boston: Published at the Anti-Slavery Office, 1845

Frederick Douglass published the first of his three autobiographies in 1845, just a few years after escaping from slavery in Maryland and settling in New England. This copy was passed down through the Douglass family. It is signed by Frederick’s son Lewis Henry with a note leaving it to Frederick’s grandson (Lewis Henry’s nephew), Haley George Douglass.

29 Frederick Douglass, *Douglass Family Scrapbook*, c. 1895

At the time of his death, Frederick Douglass was probably the most famous African American in the world. Acknowledged as both an orator and a statesman, obituaries and tributes were carried in newspapers nationwide. The family hired a clipping service to locate notices in newspapers across the country and assembled this, the largest of the family scrapbooks, devoted solely to this event.

**30** Unknown Photographer (P.S. Ryder Studio, Syracuse), *Charles, Joseph, and Lewis Douglass*, February 1895, cabinet card photograph

Frederick Douglass died at Cedar Hill in Washington, DC, on February 20, 1895, and his body was taken to Rochester, NY, for burial. On the way, his sons Lewis Henry and Charles Remond and grandson Joseph Henry stopped in Syracuse, NY to visit Lewis Henry's brother-in-law, Gerrit S. Loguen. They decided to have a photograph made while touring the city, and this photograph was reproduced in newspapers covering the funeral.

**31** John Howe Kent, *Frederick Douglass Monument, Rochester, NY*, c. 1899, photograph

On June 9, 1899, the first public monument to Frederick Douglass was unveiled in Rochester, NY. The event was marked by a series of speeches, the unveiling, and a parade and was recorded in a series of photographic negatives by local photographer John Howe Kent. Douglass's son Charles Remond posed for the statue created by the Smith Granite Company, Westerly, RI, depicting his father with arm outstretched in a gesture of authority. Charles Remond was in attendance at the unveiling, along with his brother Lewis Henry, his sister Rosetta Douglass Sprague and her daughter Rosa, and his father's second wife, Helen Pitts.

## Further Reading

Bernier, Celeste-Marie and Andrew Taylor, *If I Survive: Frederick Douglass and Family in the Walter O. Evans Collection*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018.

Bernier, Celeste-Marie and Bill E. Lawson, eds., *Pictures and Power: Imaging and Imagining Frederick Douglass (1818–2018)*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017.

Bernier, Celeste-Marie, John Stauffer and Zoe Trodd, *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth-Century's Most Photographed American*, New York, London: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2015

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McFeely, William S., *Frederick Douglass*, New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991.

Roberts, Neil, ed., *A Political Companion to Frederick Douglass*, Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2018.

Voss, Frederick S., *Majestic in His Wrath: A Pictorial Life of Frederick Douglass*, Washington, DC: published for the National Portrait Gallery and the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, by Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995.



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Brochure of the exhibition *In the Library: Frederick Douglass Family Materials from the Walter O. Evans Collection*, April 22 – June 14, 2019 © 2019 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington. Brochure text written by Yuri Long.

For more information, please visit [nga.gov/exhibitions/2019/frederick-douglass-walter-evans.html](http://nga.gov/exhibitions/2019/frederick-douglass-walter-evans.html)

**front cover** *Joseph Henry Douglass and Frederick Douglass* (detail), Walter O. Evans Collection. **back cover** *Douglass Family Scrapbook no. 1* (detail), Walter O. Evans Collection

