
A Study of the Association between Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln

Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln shared an unusual friendship based on the hardships Frederick had in life and the influence Abraham had on the country and slavery as a whole. Both Douglass and Lincoln wanted to slavery to end. Both had strong influences and ties to slavery.

Frederick Douglass had a very hard life growing up as a slave. Witnessed beating of other slaves but was never beating as a child. As a child he realized that they was no getting out of the situation he was end. He had a lot of time to himself which made him a witness to a lot of things like deaths of fellow adult slaves. "To be accused was to be convicted and to be convicted was to be punished." (Douglass 18) Mr. Gore (one of Col Lloyd's overseer) used to beat slaves no matter how guilty or innocent they were. Mr. "Gore was a grave man, and, though a young man, he never told jokes, said no funny words, seldom smiled." (Douglass 19) This made Douglass understand that people were really cruel and had no care for anybody that was a slave.

After leaving Col Lloyds plantation Frederick Douglass was sent to live with Master Hugh's family. "Mistress, in teaching me the alphabet, had given me the inch, and no precaution could prevent me from taking the ell." (Douglass 33) While living on the plantation Hugh's wife taught Douglass his A B Cs. As soon as Master Hugh's found out what his wife was doing he and forbid her from teaching him anything else. From then on he slowly start teaching himself to read. It got so bad every time the Hugh's family felt like the Douglass was alone they felt like he was away trying to learn. Growing up around a lot of white friends made him kind of jealous and mad that he had to be a slave for the rest of his life. "You will be free as soon as you are twenty-one, but I am a slave for life" (Douglass 34) He also used a lot of his white friends as teachers where he learned more and more. "I often found myself regretting my own existence, and wishing myself dead; and but for the hope of being free, I have no doubt but that I should have killed myself, or done something for which I should have been killed." (Douglass 36) The thought of being a slave forever was killing him he was very depressed. "Frederick Douglass never lost faith in the possibility of humankind's improvement. He confronted, he argued, he pleaded, he bluffed, he threatened and conned — using whatever tactics might work in a particular situation. No aspect of human oppression escaped his concern or compassion."(Abraham Lincoln and Frederick) Through it all Douglass stood strong and fought for his freedom. He eventually got free and wrote many different writing about his times as a slave that influenced a lot of white and blacks to realize how evil slavery really was.

Abraham Lincoln was very influential to the end of slavery. "As a young man, Abraham Lincoln had witnessed the slave system when he twice traveled down the Mississippi River on a raft to New Orleans." (Abraham Lincoln and slavery) Lincoln always hated the injustice of slavery ever since he was a child. As a young man he had a lot of African American friends even his barber was African American.

Lincoln knew how involuntary servitude felt. It just was unfair for someone to work for someone and it was wrong to not give someone there fair earnings. Especially when you're gaining from their hard work and labor. In his Alton debate with Senator Stephen A. Douglass in 1858, Mr. Lincoln said: "That is the real issue. That is the issue that will continue in this country when

these poor tongues of Judge Douglass and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles – right and wrong –throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time; and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says, ‘You work and toil and earn bread, and I’ll eat it.’ [Loud applause.] No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle.” (Abraham Lincoln's Values) He knew how it felt to have to work in the field in a lesser way. While he was young he worked at a farm for his father.

In the 1830 Lincoln was a young and poor lawyer but he, alongside with Lyman Trumbull and Gustave Koerner, together destroyed the legal basis of the Negro indenture system which amounted to de facto slavery in Illinois. (Burlingame) He worked hard to help against slavery even as a poor lawyer. He felt very strongly about slavery and worked on many cases including Cromwell vs Baily a case where he won a case for an African American slave girl named Nancy. It was a decision made by the Illinois Supreme Court which was a very historic decision and the first of its kind. (Abraham Lincoln and slavery) The decision was that an African American was free and not for sale. It took a lot of morals and strength for a young lawyer to fight for slave freedom. Lincoln served a single term in Congress. During that term he voted for the Wilmot Proviso multiple times. (Abraham Lincoln and slavery) Wilmot Proviso was law that would prohibit slavery in new U.S. Territory.

During The Civil War the main point of war Abraham stuck with was to preserve the Union. . Throughout the whole 1862 he offered many southern states a Compensated emancipation to make things easier for the south which would slowly transition the slave states to Free states. “President Lincoln took a measured approach to emancipation and set a period of 100 days until he would issue the final Emancipation Proclamation – giving the South a grace period until January 1, 1863 in which to return to the Union.” (Abraham Lincoln and slavery) Lincolns plan during the war was to fight mainly to preserve the Union but to slowly push the publics influence on abolishment. Lincoln said it himself “When I issued that proclamation, I was in great doubt about it myself. I did not think that the people had been quite educated up to it, and I feared its effects upon Border States.”(Burlingame) The south never took advantage of their grace period and a lot of people thought that Lincoln wouldn’t even issue you the final emancipation. Many slaves never knew they were free until years later after the war was over.

Both Fredrick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln were very crucial people in ending slavery. They both influenced many people to fight. Fredrick Douglass writing was very intense and it made people really understand the hardships of the life he lived as a slave. By the end of the war in over 617,000 Americans died by the time the Confederate army surrendered. The landscape was destroyed.