

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave (1845)
&
Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1861) by Linda Brent [Harriet Jacobs]

Important Passages:

- (p. 1763)- Douglass didn't know his age, thus indicating master's goal to keep slaves as ignorant as possible.
- (1765)- Young Douglass traumatized because he saw his Aunt Hester whipped brutally.
- (1763)- Issue of mixed children who were born of a white master and a black slave woman—such children often sold because master was criticized by his wife and others for having this child and for being kinder to them than other slave children.
- (1845)- When *northern* women marry slaveholders, new wife will learn that her slaveholders have reputation of cheating on wives with slave women and fathering illegitimate children. When *southern* women marry such men, they are accustomed to this reputation and are not jealous of these children, but view them as property.
- (1787)- Douglass would rather be well fed by an abusive master than starved by a gentler master.
- (1776)- Mrs. Auld teaches Douglass alphabet and how to spell, but her husband forbids further instruction and says that it is “unlawful” and “unsafe” to teach a slave to read because “there would be no keeping him in.”
- (1793)- Douglass stands up to Mr. Covey and doesn't allow him to whip him. From then on he resolved to never be beaten again because this incident gave him courage needed to defy his master. It also increased his desire to be free.
- (1778)- White boys who taught Douglass to read were “troubled” by Douglass's claim that he would be a “slave for life.”
- (1799)- Douglass preferred “death to hopeless bondage,” and so he decided to risk everything to be free.
- (1798)- Slaves confided in one another and were so close because they all suffered through the hardships of slavery together.
- (1796)- Slaveholders used religion as “a covering for the most horrid crimes” against slaves.
- (1795)- “Ignorant” slaves deceived about freedom—slaveholders got slaves drunk and used this to associate negative or contemptible ideas with freedom in order to disgust them with it.

Why did Mrs. Auld get meaner in her actions toward Douglass and other slaves?

- Because her husband got upset with her and because society looked down upon educating slaves and treating slaves well, she tried harder (by treating slaves terribly) so that she wouldn't be criticized again.
- The power that she had over slaves, which she didn't have before her marriage to a slaveholder, began to get to her head, and so she abused this power.

When/Why did white children start to view blacks as inferiors?

- Parents played a large part in influencing their children's opinions and viewpoints.

- Children changed as parents began to tell them their views and how society views the slaves.
- Depended on the type of environment in which the child was raised—city children may have had parents without slaves, where rural children probably had fathers who owned slaves.

Similarities/Differences between men and women slaves:

- Both were required to work extremely hard and were beaten (often times very cruelly) if they failed to meet their master's expectations.
- Both had to bear with their children being taken and sold.
- Women constantly under the threat of being raped by her master (mentally anguishing)