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Memory as torchlight: Frederick Douglass and public memories of the Haitian Revolution

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**Memory as Torchlight:
Frederick Douglass and Public Memories of the Haitian Revolution**

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JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The following explores how Frederick Douglass used memories of the Haitian Revolution in various public forums throughout the nineteenth century. Specifically, it analyzes both how Douglass articulated specific public memories of the Haitian Revolution and why his articulations changed over time. Additional context is added to the present analysis as Douglass' various articulations are also compared to those of other individuals who were expressing their memories at the same time.

Methodologically, the following is based on the notion that memory is fundamentally a social construct that is shaped by individual agency as well as broader structural patterns. Moreover, in the case of public memories presented in a civic forum the goal is not to understand how memory relates to identity but rather to uncover the various ways that memories were used as rhetorical tools.

The analysis found herein reveals that over the course of his life Douglass intentionally altered the way that he presented public memories of the Haitian Revolution in response to his own personal experiences as well as those of African-Americans as a group. During the antebellum era Douglass relied on memories of the Haitian Revolution that focused on presenting those of African descent as capable of being productive citizens who, if emancipated, would contribute economically to their respective communities. Once the Civil War began, Douglass altered his articulations so that memories of the Haitian Revolution were obscured in favor of nationalistic memories that argued for a conception of African-Americans as being perpetually loyal to the United States. In the decades after the Civil War, Douglass presented various strains of Haitian

memory depending on whether or not he perceived his fellow Americans to be actively preserving the revolutionary legislation bequeathed by the Civil War.

On the whole, this paper seeks to contribute to on-going discussions regarding the culturally and politically constructed legacies of specific historical phenomenon. More to the point, it argues in favor of viewing memory as a constantly evolving entity that is forever being shaped and re-shaped by those who present it to the public or utilize it in their political battles.

Introduction: "They have a right to their liberty."¹

Though it may be hard to imagine now, Frederick Douglass trembled with fear when he first spoke to a Northern audience. Douglass, of course, had spoken to audiences before but in the past he was speaking to his fellow slaves and he was usually reading aloud from a newspaper or some other printed material. When, sometime in October of 1841, he stood for the first time before an audience that was comprised mostly of European-Americans he was no longer a slave and the words he shared with his listeners were his alone. Just three years prior to standing nervously before an audience in Lynn, Massachusetts, Douglass would have had very little to claim as his own as he stood before his fellow slaves and read to them from a local newspaper or perhaps a pilfered book.²

Though the speech Douglass gave that October day in 1841 was unpolished and brief it contained numerous hints of the themes that Douglass would expound upon throughout his career. Perhaps his audience was a bit taken aback when he chose to mention the frustratingly high levels of racial prejudice present in the North. No doubt, some were shocked to learn his opinion that "Prejudice against color is stronger north than south..."³ Less surprisingly to his audience, Douglass argued for the immediate emancipation of slaves by offering evidence of the intelligence and humanity of the

¹ Frederick Douglass, "I Have Come to Tell You Something About Slavery: An Address Delivered in Lynn, Massachusetts, in October 1841," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One. Speeches, Debates and Interviews: Volume I: 1841-46*, ed. John Blassingame (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), 3.

² Douglass, "I Have Come to Tell You Something About Slavery..." *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One... Volume I...* 3. For a brief summary of Douglass' escape from slavery see, William McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991), 67-73.

³ Douglass, "I Have Come to Tell You Something About Slavery..." in *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. I...* 5.

millions of African-Americans enslaved throughout the United States at the time. He attempted to dispel any notions that those of African descent were simply brutish creatures as he informed his audience of the physical and emotional pain and agony that slaves often experienced. Moreover, he painted a picture of the typical slave as someone whose mental faculties had not been extinguished by years of servitude and who was acutely aware of national events, especially those relating to abolition. As he would throughout his career, Douglass referenced slave insurrections and implied that slavery itself, and not the inherent barbarity of those being enslaved, was the fundamental cause of slave revolts. He even warned his audience that the possibility of a political solution to slavery was the only thing that prevented untold violence being the tool of choice for the millions of slaves who "...know that they have a right to their liberty."⁴ Finally, in order to clarify many of his arguments Douglass relied on a tool that he would use for the rest of his life, in countless speeches, articles and essays: historical memory.

Perhaps it was simply a function of his innate personality or maybe it had to do with having learned to read by perusing excerpts of famous speeches by the likes of William Pitt, George Washington, and Cicero but whatever the reason Douglass rarely spoke to an audience without manipulating historical memory in some fashion. That fall day in Massachusetts he paraphrased from the Bible's Book of Luke in order to simultaneously reveal the hypocrisy of Christian slave owners while also revealing the depth of his own understanding of the Gospels. Then, perhaps aware of the geographic location of his speech, he referenced a more recent memory. In order to prove to his

⁴ Frederick Douglass, "I Have Come to Tell You Something About Slavery...", *...The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. I...4*.

audience that slaves were aware of abolitionist agitation on their behalf, Douglass claimed that while still a slave he had obtained a copy of one of John Quincy Adams' anti-slavery speeches and read it to his fellow slaves. Curiously, though each of Douglass' three autobiographies mentioned his early predilection for reading and his efforts to educate his fellow slaves, never once in the pages of those three life histories did he mention John Quincy Adams by name. Perhaps, that day in October, when he stood anxiously before a small audience of abolitionists and their allies he made the strategic decision to include Adams' name in order to create a personal bond between his experiences as a slave and the anti-slavery efforts of one of New England's leading families. As that first speech in Lynn, Massachusetts gave way to thousands of others, not to mention countless published pamphlets and newspaper articles, Douglass would not forget the way that he had marshalled historical memories to make his arguments that day.

When examining the way that Frederick Douglass relied on various public articulations of historical memories in his career, scholars are presented with quite a few options. One could examine Douglass' use of Biblical imagery and millennialism, or one could examine how Douglass relied on violent imagery in order to make his rhetorical points.⁵ Rather than follow these more well-tread paths, the following will explore how

⁵ For studies that examine the theme of religion in Douglass' writing/speaking see, David Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War: Keeping Faith in Jubilee* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1989; William Van Deburg, "Frederick Douglass: Maryland Slave to Religious Liberal," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, LXIX (Spring, 1974), 27-43. For studies that address Douglass and themes of violence see, Leslie F. Goldstein, "Violence as an Instrument for Social Change: The Views of Frederick Douglass," *Journal of Negro History*, LXI (1976), 61-72; Stephen Weisman, "Frederick Douglass, Portrait of a Black Militant: A Study in the Family Romance," *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, XXV (1975), 725-751.

Douglass articulated a variety of public memories of the Haitian Revolution in his decades-long struggle against both slavery and racial oppression.⁶

Few nineteenth century events reverberated with such fervor as the Haitian Revolution. As historian Alfred Hunt has noted, "...one of the most striking aspects of southern history was the frequency with which southerners-and their critics-evoked the history of St. Domingue and Haiti. No issue having to do with slavery and the role of blacks in American society was discussed at so many different times, in so many different ways, for so many different reasons, as the lessons of the Haitian Revolution."⁷ Hunt alludes to one of the most significant aspects of historical memories of the Haitian Revolution: variability. Public articulations of memories of the Haitian Revolution changed, in some cases drastically, not only as the nineteenth century marched closer to the present but also depending on the speaker, the audience and the specific argument(s) being made. As Douglass' own career attests to, public articulations of memories of the Haitian Revolution could change even when the same person was presenting them.

The following, therefore, proposes a modest survey of how Douglass' articulations of memories of the Haitian Revolution changed over time.⁸ The word modest is employed because the following is not attempting, however useful such an

⁶ It would not be hyperbolic to assert that St. Domingue/Haiti experienced several revolutions and counter revolutions between the years 1789-1804. For the sake of simplicity, however, throughout the following essay the phrase, "Haitian Revolution" will be used, when appropriate, as a general descriptor of the totality of events that resulted in the death of slavery and the birth of the independent state of Haiti.

⁷ Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 190.

⁸ The meaning of the term articulation, as it is used in this work, is based in part upon its usage by the Marxist scholar Louis Althusser. In short, the term is being used to refer to the connection(s) between discourses of the past and specific subjectivities of the present in a social setting. Thus, articulation in this study implies that memories are being presented publically in an effort to engage in particular socio-political dialogues.

undertaking may be, to chart the changing articulations of memories of the Haitian Revolution across a vast collection of historical actors. Rather, in an effort to gain a better understanding of how usages of historical memory are contingent on both personal and structural factors, the study below trains a lens specifically on Frederick Douglass and his articulations of memories of the Haitian Revolution over the course of his lifetime. Despite the fact that Douglass will be the focal point of this study his presentations of narratives of the Haitian Revolution will not be analyzed in isolation. In order to better understand the degree to which Douglass was either supporting or challenging the normative views of the Haitian Revolution at any given time, it is necessary to allow other voices to emerge. This comparative process, whereby Douglass' views become the focal point but not the sole objects of analysis, should shed light on Douglass in particular but also, and more importantly, on the socio-political factors that influenced his particular articulations.

Once it is established that Douglass was strategically shaping his memories of the Haitian Revolution in order to fit them within a contemporary political context then the questions that inform this study become nearly self-evident. How did the racially dichotomous antebellum American legal order affect his articulations? Why did Douglass choose to present an antebellum portrait of Toussaint that, in one small yet critical detail, diverged from the normative narrative? Once the Civil War became a reality, how did the possibility of African-American participation on the battlefield influence his articulations? Why did Douglass avoid mentioning Toussaint during the Civil War? How did the hopes and promises of Reconstruction shape his immediate post-war articulations? What specific rhetorical arguments was Douglass making with each of his

various articulations? These probing questions are reflections of the three broad questions that drive the following analysis. Namely: 1) how did Douglass' articulations of a memory of the Haitian Revolution change over time, 2) why did Douglass' narratives of the Haitian Revolution not only change but, more specifically, change in the ways that they did and, 3) how did those articulations compare to others being presented to the public at the same time?

A thorough analysis of the various ways that he deployed a memory of the Haitian Revolution reveals that, broadly speaking, Douglass' articulations changed over time according to the prevailing socio-political issues affecting him and other African-Americans at any given moment in the nineteenth century. More specifically, Douglass' articulations were constantly adjusted in relation to the dual consciousness that emerged from an individual being perceived, by others as well as themselves, as belonging to two distinct groups: in this case, a racial group identified as African and a national group identified as American. Thus, during the antebellum era, Douglass articulated a memory of the Haitian Revolution that allowed him to argue that individuals of African descent should be viewed as being full-fledged members of the human family. The Haitian Revolution and its leaders, particularly Toussaint Louverture, were used as proof of the moral, political and social abilities of those of African descent. The Haitian Revolution was not a model for how emancipation should be achieved but instead, in Douglass' articulations, an oracle that predicted how seamlessly ex-slaves could be integrated into a polyglot society once emancipation was achieved. During the Civil War, Douglass downplayed any connections between African-Americans and the revolutionaries in Haiti as he focused on presenting himself and those of his ilk as stalwart Americans who

deserved to be accorded the same rights and privileges as all other citizens of the nation of his birth. Except for the few months that separated secession from Ft. Sumter, Douglass' Civil War era comments find him steadfastly avoiding presenting memories of the Haitian Revolution in order to convince European-Americans and African-Americans that slaves and ex-slaves were and should be members of the American nation. In the post-War decades, Douglass vacillated between his antebellum and wartime articulations: early in the post-War era, the Haitian Revolution became a counterpoint; a foil that allowed Douglass to argue for the uniqueness of the situation that African-Americans were then facing. He argued that a historical memory based on connections to a diasporic community was of little use to ex-slaves living in post-War America. However, near the end of his life as the revolutionary promises of the Civil War became lost in a cloud of reconciliation and hardening racial attitudes, he returned to an articulation of a memory of the Haitian Revolution that sought to erase the distance he had created in the past twenty years. He attempted to articulate a memory of the Haitian Revolution that sought to both celebrate the abilities of those of African descent, and unite African-Americans with a diasporic cultural community, while simultaneously presenting African-Americans as members of the American national community.

The study that follows finds itself enmeshed in three distinct, yet interrelated, historiographical trends. Namely, studies of African-American abolitionists; trans-national studies of the Atlantic world and its effects on American history; and lastly, studies relating to historical memory and its deployment within a socio-political sphere. Briefly, each of these sub-fields will be acknowledged with the goal of explicating the

precise relationship between the scholarship of others and the arguments presented herein.

In a large way, historian Benjamin Quarles' *Black Abolitionists* is a foundational post-World War II text in terms of its desire to spotlight the role of African-American activists within America's anti-slavery movement.⁹ Numerous works that focus generally on the lives of free African-Americans and more specifically on African-American activism, including but not always limited to anti-slavery agitation, have been published in the last forty years. For example, scholars have recently begun to focus their attention on nineteenth century African-American newspapers.¹⁰ Moreover, scholars continue to grapple with Quarles' conceptualization of African-American abolitionists as acting, collectively, like the "protagonist" in the story of the creation of a revolutionary ideology that challenged the legitimacy of slavery as a socio-economic system.¹¹

In the last two decades, much of the scholarship on free African-Americans has rejected the notion that African-American abolitionists simply assimilated the cultural norms of their European-American counterparts. These studies simultaneously hearken back to antebellum studies of African-American activism and add layers of nuance and complexity that yield new insights into the precise nature of the relationship between African and European-American abolitionists. Yale's David Blight is an example of a

⁹ Quarles himself notes that the first historians of African-American abolitionism were African-American abolitionists themselves. See, Benjamin Quarles, "Black History's Antebellum Origins," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 89 (April 18, 1979): 89-122.

¹⁰ See, for example, Jacqueline Bacon, *Freedom's Journal: The First African-American Newspaper* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007); Frankie Hutton, *The Early Black Press in America, 1827-1860* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993).

¹¹ Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*..., 249.

historian who helped to re-define the abolitionist movement as having been predominately co-fabricationist in nature.¹² Historian Patrick Rael's *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North* is another example of a work that sees the abolitionist movement as essentially cooperative. Building upon the work of Blight, Rael's book argues for a co-fabricationist understanding of African-American abolitionism and like Blight he makes sure to include ample evidence to discredit the notion that African-Americans simply borrowed from or assimilated to a culture that European-Americans had already constructed. To Rael, the term co-fabricator is a literal description of how African-Americans worked with European-Americans, and others, to craft a set of normative values that gave shape to their anti-slavery activities.¹³

To some scholars, the notion of a jointly created set of cultural norms obscures the radical nature of the anti-slavery ideologies that African-Americans brought to the movement. Historian Manisha Sinha argues that scholars like Rael have yet to fully recognize the paradigm-shifting nature of the African-American antislavery movement.¹⁴ Sinha argues that African-American abolitionists developed revolutionary traditions that

¹² The term co-fabricationist is used herein to refer to the process whereby African- and European-Americans cooperate in the formation and/or utilization of cultural norms used to combat slavery. On the other hand, the term, "counterhegemonic," may be understood to represent a different type of relationship whereby African-Americans, in their fight against slavery, were actively challenging prevailing cultural norms and thus forcing their European-American allies to adapt to an ontology that was revolutionary in nature. For a deeper discussion of the differences in these two conceptual categories see, Manish Sinha, "An Alternative Tradition of Radicalism: African-American Abolitionists and the Metaphor of Revolution," in *Contested Democracy: Freedom, Race and Power in American History*, eds. Manisha Sinha and Penny Von Eschen (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 9-30.

¹³ Patrick Rael, *Black Identity & Black Protest in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 4-6.

¹⁴ It is important to note that though he argues for a "cofabricationist" perspective, Rael is not arguing that African-American viewpoints were not radical or subversive but that their ideologies and goals were part and parcel of Northern, bourgeois values of the nineteenth century.

were not, "thoroughly integrated into dominant political and intellectual discourses..."¹⁵ Sinha's work builds upon the arguments of historians like John Stauffer and Timothy McCarthy.¹⁶ These historians argue that free African-Americans were the driving force behind the development of a revolutionary abolitionist ideology that emerged in the antebellum era to challenge slavery. Rather than viewing African-Americans as either assimilationists or co-fabricators, they view them as the primary authors of a revolutionary ideology. This ideology simultaneously challenged prevailing norms and forced sympathetic European-Americans to shape their beliefs to fit within this ontological framework.

Though the study that follows is not seeking to resolve the debate described above, analysis of Douglass' various articulations reveals, perhaps, the futility of the debate itself. At times, Douglass relied on normative values associated with European-Americans and the pre-dominate cultural patterns of the United States, while on other occasions, his articulations of a memory of the Haitian Revolution challenged dominant norms and offered an alternative interpretation of both the past and the present. His usage of the Haitian Revolution revealed him to be, at various times: a pacifist; a supporter in a slave's right to resort to violence to overthrow the government; an ardent American nationalist; a Black nationalist who thought that one's racial identity trumped one's national affiliation; an optimist who saw better days on the horizon; and, a despondent warrior swept up in a tragedy beyond his control. His various articulations stand as

¹⁵ Manisha Sinha, "An Alternative Tradition of Radicalism..." in *Contested Democracy Power...* 10.

¹⁶ Timothy Patrick McCarthy, "To Plead Our Own Cause: Black Print Culture and the Origins of American Abolitionism," and John Stauffer, "Creating an Image in Black: The Power of Abolition Pictures," in *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism*, eds. Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John Stauffer (New York: The New Press, 2006).

evidence in support of the claim, made by historians James and Lois Horton, that "Generally choices between integration and separation, or even emigration, were not irrevocable positions, nor were they always mutually exclusive...lines were quite often fluid as opinions changed with shifting options."¹⁷ In short, the following reveals that Douglass was utterly pragmatic and strategic in his usage of memories of the Haitian Revolution.

The second historiographical strand that informs this work is that of trans-national history, in general, and Atlantic history, more specifically.¹⁸ Though it may be a stretch to refer to the following as being a pure example of either of these sub-fields it is worth noting that some of the assumptions made by scholars working within these sub-fields are pertinent to the present analysis. Both of these sub-fields tend to focus on "movements, flows and circulation," of people, goods, microbes and ideas, to name but a few examples.¹⁹ Moreover, both of these approaches tend to, by design or accident, complicate how scholars and lay people alike understand space, time and the manner that historical actors create meaning that often transcends the boundaries that have been imposed on either of these.²⁰ In other words, though these two approaches do not

¹⁷ James and Lois Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community and Protest Among Northern Free Blacks, 1700-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), xii.

¹⁸ Though both of these terms have been defined in a variety of ways, for the purposes of this study trans-national history is understood as a methodological approach that prizes movement across space (particularly national boundaries) above all else. Atlantic history refers to those studies that treat the post-1492 Atlantic as a network of interconnected communities and individuals as much as a specific space. For a deeper discussion of both of these sub-fields see, "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," *American Historical Review* (December 2006), 1441-1464; Jack P. Greene and Phillip D. Morgan, Eds., *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁹ Isabel Hofmeyr, "AHR Conversation...", 1444.

²⁰ Scholars who study both the abolition of slavery as well as the Haitian Revolution are increasingly relying on a trans-national approach to better delineate the precise relationships that defined not only Atlantic slavery but also its destruction. Recent surveys of slavery and abolition by David Brion Davis, Robin Blackburn and Seymour Drescher all rely on an "Atlantic world" approach. Their choice of an

necessarily replace more traditional histories that take the existence of nations and nationalism for granted they do offer convincing evidence that people may possess multiple identities of self. One can view themselves as both a member of a nation and as a member of a broader diaspora and though trans-national history is not the first sub-field to make this claim, its focus tends to reinforce it. It would be impossible to comprehend the various ways that Frederick Douglass relied on memories of the Haitian Revolution without the assumptions that undergird both of these approaches.

One event that clearly animated and influenced slave owners, slaves and abolitionists alike, regardless of whether they lived in Jamaica, Peru or Baltimore was the Haitian Revolution. Scholars have increasingly studied the myriad ways that this revolution and memories of it influenced a vast spectrum of historical actors. Two edited volumes created under the stewardship of historian David Greggus, *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* and *The World of the Haitian Revolution*, trace the echoes of the Haitian Revolution all around the Atlantic world: from Cartagena to Charleston to Rio de Janeiro. Other works have relied on the same Atlantic framework as Greggus but with a narrower geographic focus. A recently published collection of essays, edited by Maurice Jackson and Jacqueline Bacon, argues convincingly that the Haitian Revolution "has had a profound influence on the development of African American

Atlantic framework is not arbitrary but driven by the existence of vast networks of power, profit and protest that crossed national and local borders. The evidence gathered herein reinforces the notion that slavery and particularly abolition cannot be understood from a strictly national framework. See, Robin Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights* (London: Verso, 2011); David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Seymour Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Anti-Slavery* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

history, culture, and political thought," over the course of the last two centuries.²¹ Jackson and Bacon's collection echoes the scholarship of, among others, Matthew Clavin, Alfred Hunt, and Edward Rugemer who have each demonstrated how images and motifs from the Haitian Revolution were used by both those who wished to see slavery survive and those who fought for its demise.²² In many ways, the following study can be best understood as an effort to replace Clavin, Hunt and Rugemer's broad arena of analysis, the United States, and distill it down to a single individual. Such a narrow focus will allow for a more precise explication of how individuals addressed historical memories and shaped them to fit their political needs in the present. Additionally, by focusing on a single individual it is easier to demonstrate change over time. This is necessary because, though the scholarship of all of the above works is impressive, if there is a weakness in the scholarship focusing on the Haitian Revolution and its effects on people living in the Atlantic world it is a tendency to present Haiti's influence on the United States as having been static. In fact, as the following demonstrates, articulations of memories of the Haitian Revolution consistently changed as socio-political contexts changed. As such, focusing on a single individual allows for both personal agency, structural factors, and an awareness of change over time to more clearly enter the discussion.

Methodologically speaking what follows is undergirded by recent trends in the study of memory and its uses, both for individuals and communities. Historian Alon

²¹ Jacqueline Bacon and Maurice Jackson, introduction to *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution: Selected Essays and Historical Documents* eds. Jacqueline Bacon and Maurice Jackson (New York: Routledge, 2010), 1.

²² Matthew Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War: The Promise and Peril of a Second Haitian Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana University Press, 1988); Edward Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation: The Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana University Press, 2008).

Confino has pointed out that scholars of historical memory have chiefly focused on one of two objectives. They have studied the way that people construct memories in order to gain access to information about how individuals experienced events from the past, the memories of Holocaust survivors for instance, or they have turned to memory as a site of shared cultural knowledge by analyzing “vehicles of memory,” such as books, or other publically presented materials.²³ The following, though more similar to Confino’s second usage than his first, is not an attempt to determine how African-Americans constructed a shared cultural memory of the Haitian Revolution. Rather, it borrows from the work of German historian Dagmar Herzog in its exploration of memory as a political tool that can be wielded by contemporary groups and individuals in an attempt to argue in favor of or in opposition to policies and behaviors occurring in the present. Though Herzog was exploring how post-WWII Germans, on both sides of the political spectrum, relied on different and often competing memories of German life during the Third Reich the underlying questions informing her study are applicable to the topic presented herein.²⁴ Neither Herzog’s work nor the analysis presented in this study make claims about the meaning of memory as a distinct topic of analysis. Rather, the goal is to explicate precisely how historical actors used memory and why they used it in the way that they did. In other words, historical memory is not the focus of this study but rather how

²³ Alon Confino, “AHR Forum: Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method,” *The American Historical Review* Vol. 102, No. 5 (December, 1997), 1386; Confino borrows the term “vehicles of memory,” from Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (New York, 1999).

²⁴ Dagmar Herzog, *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth Century Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

historical memory was articulated or formulated in a contemporary social setting in order to achieve specific political goals.

Most historians would now accept the idea that memories of the past, be they individual or collective; private or public, are not “reflective of or determined by the past...”²⁵ However, recent scholarship by Susannah Radstone presents an even more complex view of memory: one that simultaneously reveals memory’s unreliability as a source for reconstructing the past while at the same time asserting the utility of using memory as a vehicle for understanding the socio-political setting which mediated said memory. Radstone argues that not only do memories mediate the past but that memories themselves are mediated by present experiences and social structures.²⁶ Thus, relying on Douglass’ memories of the Haitian Revolution to uncover insight into the events of Revolution itself would be a fool’s errand but relying on Douglass’ memories of the Haitian Revolution to gain insight into the experiences and socio-political structures that shaped or mediated Douglass’ memories could be a fruitful enterprise. Moreover, when one considers that the following is only focusing on Douglass’ articulations of memories (in a public setting) then the notion of mediation becomes even more useful. Whereas Radstone’s work is more concerned with the way that the present can mediate memories of the past, whether or not the subject articulating the memory is aware of this process, the following analysis is seeking to probe Douglass’ strategic, purposeful mediations of the past.

²⁵ Susannah Radstone, “Reconstructing Binaries: The Limits of Memory,” *History Workshop Journal* No. 59 (Spring, 2005), 135.

²⁶ Radstone, “Reconstructing Binaries...,” ...135-136.

Two scholars in particular have relied upon the recent turn toward memory studies in order to try to uncover the ways that African-Americans, particularly those living in the nineteenth century, have used and been used by memories of both slavery and its destruction. David Blight's *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* treats the Civil War much the same as Herzog does Nazi Germany. Blight discusses how the Civil War became a contested site of memory and meaning for all Americans in the decades after its conclusion.²⁷ What makes Blight's analysis of African-American memories of the Civil War compelling than is the way he presents memory as a multi-layered entity whose usages are not only contested between racial or ethnic groups, but within them as well. Blight identifies five distinct, yet not mutually exclusive "strains of black Civil War memory" that range from memories of enslavement as a "paralytic burden" to millennial memories that see enslavement and the Civil War as part of African-Americans collective destinies.²⁸ Blight's work stands upon theoretical ground that was elegantly mapped by Paul Gilroy in his seminal study, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Gilroy, taking his cues from DuBois' famous "double consciousness" phrase, deconstructs how nineteenth and twentieth century African-Americans responded to the "fragmentation of self (doubling and splitting) which modernity seem[ed] to promote."²⁹ Gilroy foreshadows Blight's work by pointing to the multi-layered attitudes about the past that the African-Americans in his study were either forced to adopt or reject in their efforts to construct for themselves a cohesive, or at

²⁷ David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

²⁸ Blight, *Race and Reunion*...300.

²⁹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 188.

least a coherent, sense of selfhood.³⁰ Both Blight and Gilroy's scholarship provides evidence for Radstone's formulation of memories being mediated by present conditions, both individual and collective. As such their work is crucial to understanding not only how Douglass could shape and re-shape his memories of the Haitian Revolution but also what factors may have led him to engage in this mediating process.

It would be a mistake however to see the following as an analysis of memory as it relates to Douglass's authentic identity or the collective identity of his racial group. Assuming that such a thing even exists as a historical object, identity is a tricky concept. Dissecting the published words of Douglass may or may not provide clues about how he or other African-Americans truly identified themselves but such is not the goal of this work. Undoubtedly, Douglass' articulations argue that African-Americans possess a certain identity at a given time but these arguments should not be mistaken as authentic or actual representations of identity. It is critical to remember that Douglass' published writings are rhetorical in nature. Rather than uncover an authentic site of memory, the aim is to understand the factors that affect why/how a specific articulation of a historical memory was deployed strategically in a public setting. The following will discuss how Douglass deployed memories rhetorically in order to assert to a variety of audiences that African-Americans belonged to either: the human family vis-à-vis their cultural and historic connections to an African diaspora, the American family vis-à-vis their

³⁰ In the specific sub-field that seeks to uncover and comprehend the connections between Haiti, the Haitian Revolution and the lives of African-Americans two works in particular explore the themes that Blight and Gilroy's work brings to the fore. Both of these texts address the nature of memory as a fluid, communal site whereby contemporary identities are forged using historical narratives. See, Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, *Setting Down the Sacred Past: African-American Race Histories* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard university Press, 2010); and Michel-Ralph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (New York: Beacon Press, 1995).

participation in shaping America's democratic social and political landscape, or both. Douglass' use of articulations of memories of the Haitian Revolution, in order to claim African-American membership in the above groups, was designed to secure certain rights at specific times. As such, this study is political in nature; it focuses on how Douglass' decision to present specific memories in a public setting was affected by racialized power dynamics embedded in America's legal and socio-cultural traditions. This particular focus does not imply that other factors, such as gender and class for instance, did not affect Douglass' decisions to articulate certain memories at certain times. The scope of this study is both narrower and broader than would be necessary to explore questions of either gender or class. Narrower in the sense that it trains its lens on a single historical actor. Broader in that it approaches that actor from the vantage point of how changes in the types and amount of political rights afforded to African-Americans affected his strategic use of memory.

Frederick Douglass is the ideal candidate to be the focal point of a case-study because he was a public figure for more than fifty years. Returning, for a moment, to the earlier discussion of memory, it could be said that Douglass produced no shortage of "vehicles of memory." In his various roles as author, public orator, newspaper editor and social activist Douglass was able to present his ideas on a wide range of subjects in a public forum. During the antebellum era, besides his speaking engagements, Douglass edited two abolitionists newspapers/periodicals and each of these became a forum whereby he could, as either an author or editor, construct his own version of what had transpired on the island of Haiti from 1790-1804. Thus, the *North Star* and *Frederick Douglass' Paper* are invaluable resources in terms of understanding how Douglass'

antebellum public memory of the Haitian Revolution was shaped by his interpretation of the challenges facing an African-American man living in the 1840's and 50's. After shots were fired at Fort Sumter, the American people were forced to confront their dual national legacy of slavery and freedom. Not surprisingly, "The brutal and bloody war that ended slavery in the United States sparked an outpouring of public memory of the Haitian Revolution..."³¹ During the war he edited the periodical, *Douglass' Monthly*, while also continuing his public speaking duties. Thus, Douglass' life-long roles as editor and public scholar provides historians the opportunity to track the way that his articulation of the Haitian Revolution changed over time as the fervent antebellum hopes for emancipation became a bloody reality. Fortunately for the scholar, emancipation did not end Douglass' use of Haiti as a narrative vehicle for expressing his hopes and concerns regarding the condition of African-Americans. From 1870-1874, Douglass edited *The New National Era*. Additionally, just as he had during earlier eras, he continued to speak in public on a range of topics and in an impressive amount of different locales.

Douglass' editorial career and the fact that the temporal lifespan of his newspapers mirrored the changing political landscape of the United States in the nineteenth century provides scholars with a convenient template for analysis.³² A study of how his

³¹Matthew Clavin, "American Toussaints: Symbol, Subversion and the Black Atlantic Tradition in the American Civil War," in *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution*...107.

³² Metaphorically speaking, African-American newspapers acted as both a warehouse and a marketplace of ideas for their readers. During much of the nineteenth century keeping a newspaper financially solvent could prove quite the challenge for publishers of any race or ideology. Despite the financial challenges inherent in publishing, the free African-American press is essential to the public discourse examined herein. African-American newspapers/periodicals, like those edited and at times financed by Douglass, provided African-Americans with a forum that they controlled and allowed them to communicate with other African-Americans, both free and enslaved, as well as European-Americans, both those who were sympathetic and those who were not. The fact that newspapers served multiple constituencies in a public forum makes them the ideal site for analyzing the articulation of memory within a contemporary framework of competing normative understandings of the past. Not only did newspapers publish original

articulation of a narrative of the Haitian Revolution changed over time can focus on three distinct eras: the antebellum era, the Civil War era, and the post-war/Reconstruction era. In this way the comparative thrust of this project will be based on comparing Douglass to himself in order to determine how his lived experiences in three distinct eras shaped his construction of the narratives mentioned above.

One of the first articles that Frederick Douglass published in the *North Star* was a lengthy biography of Toussaint and one of his final speeches was a lengthy account of the Haitian Revolution and its meaning for African-Americans. In the years that passed between the 1848 biography and the 1893 speech, Douglass saw African-Americans travel the long road from slavery to emancipation. It would be an understatement to point out that this road was windy, dangerous and cosmopolitan. Whether they liked it or not, European-Americans were also traveling this road as changes in the legal status of African-Americans affected their lives as well. However, neither Frederick Douglass, nor the millions of others who were born into slavery, nor the European-Americans who traveled this road were lacking guideposts along the way. One of the most salient guideposts was a historical memory of the Haitian Revolution. Thus, Douglass' public articulations of a memory of this seminal event were constantly changing as the road itself changed. What follows then is less the story of a singular individual and more the study of how the journey from African-American slavery to African-American freedom

material but they also reprinted excerpts from speeches and other published material as well as advertising for a wide range of books and pamphlets. Thus, African-American newspapers served as ligaments that connected disparate individuals and groups and allowed for dialogue about a host of issues, including those that could be best explained by using narratives of the Haitian Revolution as a framework. For a brief discussion of the financial challenges facing nineteenth century African-American newspapers see, Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*...86-89.

was a complex undertaking that required memories or guideposts that were both plastic and powerful.

***Chapter 1: "Indebted to his own unaided and clandestine efforts."*³³**

The decades between the establishment of the United States as a sovereign entity and the eruption of the Civil War were marked by momentous changes, both within American society at large and within the life of Frederick Douglass as an individual. The country grew in population and in economic power as the first seeds of a modern, industrial economy were planted. Additionally, slavery was brought to the fore as a defining issue as Northern states sought to eradicate legalized slavery from its soil while Southern states, for a variety of reasons, sought to not only preserve but also to expand the reach of slavery. For Douglass, a life that began in slavery had transitioned into one whereby he was no longer a slave but still a disenfranchised member of a society that had yet to come to terms with its own revolutionary ideals. It was a country that was unsure what to do with millions of African-Americans, many of whom were enslaved, some of whom were not and all of whom were less than fully free. As Douglass negotiated what it meant to be a formerly enslaved African-American abolitionist and an American he, like many of his contemporaries, looked to craft a memory of the Haitian Revolution that reflected the changes both he and his country of birth were undergoing. In some ways, Douglass' memory of Haiti and his own understandings of America's socio-political context were symbiotic in nature. At times, Douglass' personal experiences and opinions shaped his construction of a St. Dominguen/Haitian memory while, on other occasions, his understanding of events in St. Domingue/Haiti influenced his ideas about how to best destroy slavery in the United States.

³³ Frederick Douglass, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *North Star* (Rochester, NY: February 18, 1848)

In the 1840's/50's Douglass crafted a vision of Toussaint Louverture³⁴ and the Haitian Revolution that, somewhat counterintuitively, focused less on notions of militant revolution and more on ideas of self-help, and the peaceful economic cooperation between ex-slaves and ex-slave owners.³⁵ For the most part historians have either argued that African-Americans avoided discussing the Revolution or they have described antebellum presentations, by African-Americans, of Toussaint and other heroes of the Haitian Revolution as focused primarily on "their martial spirit and unwillingness to compromise with slaveholders."³⁶ In many ways, an analysis of Douglass' various evocations of the Haitian Revolution reveals how incomplete such assessments actually are. Ironically, the antebellum memories articulated by Douglass seized upon the Haitian Revolution as a vehicle for exploring the post-emancipation themes mentioned above rather than directly addressing the revolutionary processes that would lead to emancipation in the first place. Moreover, in his efforts to craft an antebellum public memory of Toussaint and the Haitian Revolution, Douglass' work reveals the influence of both anti- *and* pro-slavery constructions of events in St. Domingue/Haiti.

Although some scholars have focused on how Douglass viewed Toussaint as an embodiment of masculine violence, an examination of Douglass' earliest accounts of

³⁴ For the sake of simplicity, from this point on, the man originally known as, François Dominique Toussaint and later remembered as Toussaint Louverture or L'Ouverture will be referred to simply as Toussaint.

³⁵ The arguments presented in this chapter stand as a refutation of those studies that claim the Haitian Revolution did *not* provide free African-Americans with, "a powerful, heroic antislavery image." More specifically, some scholars, like Bruce Dain, have argued that, "Haiti had never been a particularly good example of black accomplishment," for African-Americans to use in their effort to destroy slavery in the United States. The following respectfully disagrees with this assessment in myriad ways. See, Bruce Dain, "Haiti and Egypt in Early Black Racial Discourse," *Slavery and Abolition*, Vol. 14, No. 3, December 1993, 139-140.

³⁶ Patrick Rael, *Black Identity*...224.

Toussaint as a revolutionary leader are as much concerned with his efforts to enlighten himself through education as they are with his abilities as a general.³⁷ In one of the earliest editions of the *North Star* Douglass published a brief biography of Toussaint that simultaneously built upon earlier narrations of the famed general while also challenging the normative narrative of his self-improvement through education in subtle yet significant ways. In February of 1848, the *North Star* printed an article entitled simply, "Toussaint L'Ouverture." This article, attributed to no one else and therefore most likely penned by Douglass, was one of Douglass' lengthiest narratives of the life of Toussaint during the antebellum era. The majority of the article focused on Toussaint as either a ruler or on his life prior to joining the Revolution. His martial prowess, when acknowledged, was articulated as being related mostly to his intellect and leadership abilities. Douglass wrote that "In war he [Toussaint] conquered by the foresight of his combinations and the celerity of his movements."³⁸ Praising Toussaint's ability to lead an army was nothing new and it certainly fit within the descriptive framework of Toussaint established early in the nineteenth century.

As early as 1805, Toussaint's life was being celebrated in print. In that year British army captain Marcus Rainsford first published, *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti: Comprehending a View of the Principal Transactions in the Revolution of Saint Domingo: with Its Ancient and Modern State*. Rainsford had met Toussaint and perhaps even been saved from the gallows by him so it is little wonder that

³⁷ For a discussion of the relationship between Douglass' notions of violent masculinity and Toussaint see, Clavin, "American Toussaints: Symbol, Subversion..." 109. Clavin's analysis is sound but it lacks any acknowledgement that the Toussaint constructed by Douglass during the Civil War was not identical to the one he constructed prior to 1861.

³⁸ Fredrick Douglass, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *North Star* (Rochester, NY: February 18, 1848).

his treatment of the Revolution and Toussaint in particular was overwhelmingly positive. Given the hagiographic nature of Rainsford's book it is also unsurprising that abolitionists in the U.S. and Great Britain would come to rely on it as their main source of information when they sought to narrate their own versions of Haiti's revolutionary history.³⁹ Douglass' version of Toussaint's life adhered to Rainsford's generally while also making subtle yet significant alterations to the presentation of some critical aspects of Toussaint's life.

While both Rainsford and Douglass pointed to Toussaint as a gifted young man with a taste for books they differed in their articulation of how that intellect was nurtured while Toussaint was still enslaved. Rainsford claimed that though Toussaint had taught himself to read, it was his master/plantation manager, one M. Bayou de Libertas, who nurtured and guided Toussaint's development as a scholar. It was, according to Rainsford, Toussaint's intellect that "fortunately attracted the attention of the...manager of the estate, M. Bayou de Libertas. This gentleman, with a discrimination honorable to his judgment, withdrew Toussaint from the labor of the fields, to his own house...This instance of patronage impressed itself strongly on the mind of Toussaint."⁴⁰ Douglass, no less than Rainsford, underscored Toussaint's early efforts to better himself through education but

³⁹ For an extended analysis of the way that anti-slavery writers on both sides of the Atlantic relied on Rainsford's text as a source of information regarding the Haitian Revolution see, Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War*...12-27.

⁴⁰ Marcus Rainsford, *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti: Comprehending a View of the Principal Transactions in the Revolution of Saint Domingo: with Its Ancient and Modern State* (London: J. Cundee, 1805), 241. It is quite possible that Rainsford's account of Toussaint's education may have been influenced by a portrait of Toussaint penned by a French historian named, Jean-Louis Dubroca. Dubroca's account of Toussaint's life and career is every bit as scathing as Rainsford's is laudatory but Dubroca does relate that M. Bayou de Libertas did play the role of mentor in the life of Toussaint. See, Jean-Louis Dubroca, *The Life of Toussaint Louverture, Chief of the French Rebels in Santo Domingo. To Which are Added, Interesting Notes Respecting Several Persons Who Have Acted Distinguished Parts in St. Domingo* (London: C. Whittingham, 1802), 3-4.

he narrated this episode in such a way as to give Toussaint even more agency over the process than Rainsford's account suggested. Douglass wrote that "Though his master's name ought to have ensured him full opportunity to cultivate his mind, he seems to have been indebted to his own unaided and clandestine efforts for his education."⁴¹ Given that neither Rainsford nor Douglass would have been in a position to verify their claims it is worth remembering that both versions of this narrative were constructions of public memory.⁴² If analysis is confined solely to the text itself, it does appear that Douglass' pun on the name "Libertas" is an indication that he was purposely questioning the accepted narrative that gave Libertas a significant role in Toussaint's life. In terms of factors that existed outside of the text, there are several reasons to believe that Douglass' slight alteration of Rainsford's story was indeed intentional.

Before addressing the reasons why Douglass would have constructed his description of Toussaint's education in the manner that he did it is worth exploring the possibility that Douglass was simply drawing his source material from narratives other than Rainsford's. Perhaps Douglass' departure from Rainsford's account was simply contingent on Douglass having been exposed to different versions of Toussaint's story? Perhaps there were other versions of Toussaint's early life that Douglass drew from?

⁴¹ Douglass, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *North Star* (February 18, 1848).

⁴² As with the Haitian Revolution itself it is worth remembering that when studying Toussaint, "it is difficult-probably impossible-to separate reality from legend." According to historian Laurent Dubois there is no way to know if Toussaint was as educated as many have claimed or if he ever read the work of Abbé Raynal. Dubois does, however, mention that contemporaries noted he spoke French poorly. The persistence of the myth is evidenced by the fact that historians ranging from C.L.R. James to Matthew Clavin have continued to include Toussaint's reading of Raynal as a matter of fact. For, "it is difficult..." as well as a lengthier discussion of the myths surrounding stories of Toussaint see, Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 172; 171-193. For evidence of the staying power of the myth of Toussaint having read Raynal see, Matthew Clavin, *American Toussaints...* 7 and C.L.R. James, *Black Jacobins: Toussaint Louverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938; reprint New York: Vintage, 1989), 25.

Therefore, in order to more clearly establish Douglass' intentionality in shaping this particular aspect of Toussaint's education it is worth examining how other antebellum authors described the relationship between Toussaint and Libertas. Shortly after Rainsford's account was published, British abolitionist James Stephen penned a biography of Toussaint that attributed Toussaint's education to "the uncommon kindness of his master." Interestingly, Stephen did introduce some uncertainty to his description by mentioning that some authors claimed that Toussaint educated himself, "by his own unassisted pains."⁴³ However, not only did Stephen fail to mention where he heard the claim about Toussaint educating himself without any assistance, but he also went on to describe Libertas as having played the role of a benevolent mentor once Toussaint's ability was apparent.⁴⁴ If Douglass was unfamiliar with Rainsford or Stephen's accounts it is likely that he was familiar with Harriet Martineau's popular historical novel, *The Hour and the Man*, published at the same time that Douglass was becoming actively engaged in the anti-slavery movement.⁴⁵ In Martineau's fictionalized rendering, Libertas was quite aware of and perhaps responsible for Toussaint's education. In one scene from the book, a French slave owner complains that, "His [Toussaint's] master, Bayou, spoiled him by letting him educate himself to an absurd extent."⁴⁶ Given the popularity of Martineau's

⁴³ James Stephen, *The History of Toussaint Louverture: A New Edition* (London: J. Butterworth and Son, 1814), 2.

⁴⁴ It is possible that Stephen was referring to accounts of Toussaint's life written by French authors. One account, the aforementioned pro-French polemic, written by Dubroca does credit Toussaint with having, "taught himself to read and write." However, Dubroca, like all of the other accounts discussed above, made it clear that Libertas soon became aware of Toussaint's abilities and subsequently nurtured them. See, Louis Dubroca, *The Life of Toussaint Louverture...* 3-4.

⁴⁵ Martineau's novel was originally published in 1841, the same year that Douglass began lecturing under the auspices of the American Anti-Slavery Society.

⁴⁶ Harriet Martineau, *The Hour and the Man: An Historical Romance* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1841), 79.

book it seems reasonable to assume that Douglass would have been familiar with her portrayal of Toussaint.⁴⁷ In broad terms, other existent depictions of Toussaint's life adhered to the descriptions offered by Martineau, Rainsford and Stephen. For instance, an 1837 edition of *The Liberator* contained John Greenleaf Whittier's now famous poem about Toussaint. In a parenthetical note preceding the poem Toussaint's life was briefly summarized. In this summary, Libertas was given credit for having "...instructed him [Toussaint] in some of the first branches of education."⁴⁸ It is unclear if the parenthetical note was authored by Whittier or William Lloyd Garrison but clearly the Libertas-as-mentor version of Toussaint's past was becoming normative. Even amongst African-American abolitionists, Libertas was frequently credited with playing an important role in Toussaint's educational development. In one of the earliest editions of the country's first African-American newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, Stephen's account of Toussaint's education was repeated almost verbatim. Some African-American commentators were even less equivocal than Stephen or those who borrowed his description. For example, James McCune Smith, the renowned African-American physician and activist, stated, in his version of the history of the Haitian Revolution, that Libertas had indeed taught an enslaved Toussaint to read and write.⁴⁹ McCune-Smith did not even bother to repeat the

⁴⁷ There are several pieces of evidence that collectively point to the popularity of Martineau's work. For the first eleven months of 1841, William Lloyd Garrison's, *The Liberator* ran advertisements for the work. Additionally, there were probably multiple American printings of the work as the advertisements do not always mention the same location for purchase of the book. See, William Lloyd Garrison, *The Liberator* (Boston: January 1; February 5, 26; March 12, 19; April 2; May 28; June 25; July 2; August 6; September 3; October 1; November 12, 1841). Further testimony to the ubiquity of Martineau's work is evidenced by a resolution passed by a group of New England abolitionists at an August 1st. celebration in 1842. One of the resolutions passed that day referenced Toussaint Louverture in the following manner, "The Hour demanded a Man, and he was the Man for the Hour." See, William Lloyd Garrison, "COMMUNICATIONS. Celebration of the first of August at Hingham." *The Liberator* (Boston: September 9, 1842).

⁴⁸ John G. Whittier, "Literary. Toussaint L'Ouverture," *The Liberator* (Boston, June 30, 1837).

⁴⁹ James McCune Smith, "A Lecture on the Haytien Revolutions; With a Sketch of the Character of Toussaint L'Ouverture. Delivered at the Stuyvesant Institute, (For the Benefit of the Colored Orphan

caveat that Stephen and the editors of *Freedom's Journal* felt compelled to include. Additionally, the common practice of newspapers re-printing articles from other publications allows Douglass' own antebellum publications to serve as evidence of how widespread Rainsford-esque descriptions actually were.⁵⁰ In an 1850 article reprinted, in the *North Star*, from an unidentified British paper, *Libertas* was credited with having "...discovered in him [Toussaint] many noble qualities, and had instructed him in some of the first branches of education."⁵¹ Similarly, an 1855 article re-printed from the *Evening Post*, and published in the *Frederick Douglass Paper*, credited *Libertas* with having provided Toussaint with "a sound elementary education."⁵² It is possible that Douglass was familiar with a French source that implied Toussaint's education was the result of his efforts alone. Douglass' 1848 *North Star* article does mention a French writer who castigated *Libertas* for his "culpable negligence in not being aware that his slave had learned to read, till he was familiar with the writings of the Abbe Raynal."⁵³ However, it is unclear if Douglass was implying that this writer is claiming that *Libertas* simply did not care if Toussaint was literate or if he was fully unaware of Toussaint's abilities. Moreover, there is no evidence that Douglas could read French. This leaves the question of where he may have encountered the criticism by the unnamed French author mentioned in his article unanswerable at the moment. As for French descriptions of Toussaint's life, there was at least one that had been translated into English but this

Asylum,) February 26, 1841," (New York: Daniel Fanshaw, 1841). Reprinted in Jacqueline Bacon and Maurice Jackson, eds., *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution...* 177-183.

⁵⁰ Samuel Cornish and John Brown Russwurm, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *Freedom's Journal* (New York: May 4, 1827).

⁵¹ Frederick Douglass, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *The North Star* (Rochester, NY: June 13, 1850).

⁵² Frederick Douglass, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *Frederick Douglass Paper* (Rochester, NY: September 4, 1851).

⁵³ Frederick Douglass, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *The North Star* (Rochester, NY: February 18, 1848).

source echoed the normative view of Toussaint as having been nurtured, to a certain degree, by Libertas.⁵⁴ In fact, despite the assertions made by Stephen and the enigmatic clues provided by Douglass himself, prior to the 1848 narrative there appear to have been no known English-language descriptions of Toussaint's life that denied Libertas, (Or, some other European-American person), credit for guiding Toussaint's education or that mentioned that Toussaint had to hide his efforts to teach himself to read and write.⁵⁵ Even if there was a somewhat obscure source that Douglass relied on for information about Toussaint the fact remains that Douglass' articulation of Toussaint's education was quite exceptional when compared to the accounts penned by his abolitionist peers in both Britain and the United States.

The shift, from Toussaint as a gifted student studying under the watchful eyes of a philanthropic overseer to Toussaint as a gifted student beholden to no one but himself for his learning is meaningful for a few reasons. First, it grants Toussaint a greater amount of agency in transforming himself from an uneducated piece of human chattel to a general and later de facto president of a quasi-independent state. This agency is crucial to Douglass' construction of Toussaint's education because it directly refutes those pro-slavery apologists who claim that the natural inferiority of those of African descent consigns them to a barbarous existence unless they can be guided by the civilized, Christian hands of Southern slave owners. Douglass, like most African-Americans living

⁵⁴ Dubroca, *The Life of Toussaint Louverture*...3-4.

⁵⁵ Occasionally, authors narrated a version of Toussaint's education whereby he was mentored and taught by a man named Pierre Baptiste. This version of Toussaint's childhood credits Baptiste with instructing Toussaint in religious as well as secular subjects. See, John Reilly Beard, *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture, the Negro Patriot of Hayti: Comprising an Account of the Struggle for Liberty in the Island and A Sketch of its History to the Present Period* (London: Ingram, Cooke, and Co.: 1853), 25.

in the U.S. in the antebellum era, was acutely aware of these sentiments.⁵⁶ Just a few months prior to the publishing of brief Toussaint biography, Douglass printed a lengthy response to comments made by Henry Clay at a gathering in Kentucky. In his response, Douglass prints various quotes from Clay's speech including one that nearly left him at a loss for words. Douglass quoted Clay as stating "It is a philanthropic and consoling reflection that the moral and physical condition of the African in the United States in a state of slavery is far better than it would have been had their ancestors not been brought from their native land."⁵⁷ Moreover, slavery's American apologists pointed directly to Haiti as evidence of the accuracy of Clay's statements. According to James Warley Miles, author of the pro-slavery polemic, *The Relations Between the Races at the South*, the inherent barbarity of those hailing from Africa was only ameliorated when Africans and those of African descent were exposed to "the humanizing protection of the white who is the natural elevator of the negro race."⁵⁸ Thus, Douglass' construction of Toussaint as an individual who educated himself despite, not because of, the efforts of European-Americans served as a direct refutation of the ideas presented by men like Clay, Miles and their ilk.

The second reason that Douglass may have wanted to construct a narrative of Toussaint educating himself without the assistance of M. Bayou de Libertas is related to one of his possible audiences. Not only did Douglass' construction of Toussaint's early education engage in a discourse with European-Americans audiences who may have

⁵⁶ It would be nearly impossible for anyone to be ignorant of the widespread pro-slavery notion that argued that it was a law of nature that African-Americans were subordinate to European-Americans and that any elevation the former might hope for would occur as a result of the guidance and supervision of the latter. For more discussion of this idea see, Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America...*, 141-143.

⁵⁷ Frederick Douglass, "Letter to Henry Clay," *North Star* (December 3, 1847).

⁵⁸ James Warley Miles, *The Relation Between the Races at the South* (December 31, 1861), 16.

believed the ideas put forth by Clay and others but it also engaged African-Americans, both free and enslaved, in a discourse regarding the practical benefits of self-improvement through education. These benefits, as described below, were simultaneously personal and collective. If one focuses on how a narrative of Toussaint would be received by African-American audiences, Douglass' refusal to grant M. Bayou de Libertas any role in educating Toussaint was crucial to articulating the utility of Toussaint's life as an inspiring example of self-improvement. In this instance, Toussaint's agency was important not simply because it challenged racialized notions of African inferiority but because it spoke to the idea that all African-Americans no matter their personal circumstances could elevate themselves even in the absence of a mentor or benefactor.

Douglass' own views on the importance of individual effort, as opposed to being fortunate enough to have access to a mentor or tutor, were clearly articulated in a speech on self-made men, some version of which he gave numerous times over the course of his career.⁵⁹ In a version of the speech that he gave in Great Britain in 1860, Douglass made it abundantly clear that individual initiative was the most important factor in a person being able to elevate themselves. He stated that "Such is my theory of self-made men, and indeed, of all made men. The credit belongs and must be ascribed to brave, honest, earnest, ceaseless heart and soul industry. By this simple means-open and free to all men- whatever may be said of circumstances and natural endowments-the simple man may become wise and the wise man may become wiser."⁶⁰ As a way of underscoring the

⁵⁹ For a brief discussion of Douglass' various speeches on self-made men see, John Blassingame, ed., *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One. Speeches, Debates and Interviews: Volume III: 1855-63* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 289.

⁶⁰ Frederick Douglass, "The Trials and Triumphs of Self-Made Men: An Address Delivered in Halifax, England, On 4 January 1860,"...*The Frederick Douglass Papers. Series One... Volume III...*, ed. John Blassingame...294.

argument made above, Douglass provided his audience with several examples of self-made men. Among a racially inclusive list that included Hugh Miller, Louis Kossuth, Benjamin Banneker and William Dietz, Douglass included the name of Toussaint himself.⁶¹ Although in this particular speech Douglass' comments on Toussaint were brief he did make sure to remind his audience that Toussaint's journey to success in life began with him being a, "poor scholar."⁶² Given the fact that Douglass only said a few words about the life of Toussaint, it is obvious that he assumed his audience knew much of the life of Toussaint. Due to the high volume of books, tracts, articles and speeches that narrated the Haitian Revolution and Toussaint's life Douglass' assumption seems quite reasonable. If one agrees with Douglass' assumption about the ubiquity of the existence of memories of Toussaint than the few words he does choose to describe him become all the more significant as they represent Douglass' effort to add yet another brick to whatever foundational memory of Toussaint his audience may have already possessed. Douglass could have referred to Toussaint as the 'brave general' or the 'wise ruler' but instead he wanted his audience to think of Toussaint as an impoverished scholar. It is notable that at a time when many commentators, both those of African and European descent, were comparing Toussaint to other "great men," from history Douglass chose to place Toussaint in the prosaic company of somewhat lesser-known scholars whose self-

⁶¹ Miller began life as a stonemason before relying on education to become an internationally renowned geologist and journalist; Kossuth was a Hungarian exile who celebrated the importance of his self-guided education while he was imprisoned for leading a rebellion against the Austrian Empire; Banneker was the well-known surveyor of Washington, D.C., who, despite little formal education, taught himself mathematics and astronomy; Dietz was a servant for a wealthy New York family whose architectural and marketing skills helped him to become one of Albany's wealthiest African-Americans. See, Douglass, "The Trials and Triumphs...", ...294-296.

⁶² Douglass, "The Trials and Triumphs...", ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One... Volume III*...297.

education led to success in arenas other than the battlefield.⁶³ To be fair, it must be acknowledged that Douglass was not averse to comparing Toussaint to other "great men." In his 1848 biography he did refer to Toussaint as "the Washington of Hayti."⁶⁴ However, the general focus of his narratives, in both the 1848 *North Star* biography and the self-help speech that he gave repeatedly, including in 1860, indicate his desire to construct Toussaint more as a blueprint that others could follow rather than an icon that could inspire.

Douglass' insistence on articulating a vision of Toussaint as a "poor scholar" whose own efforts propelled him to success in life reflected a common frustration expressed by leaders within the free African-American abolitionist community. Douglass and others frequently express their disappointment with the efforts of free African-Americans to better themselves. On numerous occasions, Douglass allowed his antebellum newspapers to become a platform from which commentators could express their dissatisfaction with the seeming lack of initiative displayed by free African-Americans. For example, in early 1849 Douglass published a letter from Henry Highland Garnet, an African-American abolitionist who did not always agree with Douglass about how best to fight slavery, regarding the most effective way to destroy slavery in America.

⁶³ For a discussion of how trends in nineteenth century historiography affected African-American narratives of Haiti and the Haitian Revolution see, Maffly-Kipp, *Setting Down the Sacred Past...* 142-143; As for abolitionist narratives that compare Toussaint to other military and political leaders throughout time there are numerous examples. Two of the best known were written by William Wells Brown and Wendell Phillips respectively. Brown compared Toussaint to Oliver Cromwell and George Washington, while Phillips compared him to not only Cromwell and Washington but also Mohammed, Napoleon and John Brown. See, William Wells Brown, "St. Domingo: Its Revolutions and its Patriots. A Lecture, Delivered Before the Metropolitan Athenaeum, London, May 16, and at St. Thomas' Church, Philadelphia, December 20, 1854," (Boston: Bela March, 1855) in *Pamphlets of Protest: An Anthology of Early African American Protest Literature, 1790-1860*, eds. Richard Newman, Patrick Rael and Phillip Lapansky, (New York: Routledge, 2001); Wendell Phillips, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," (1861), in *Wendell Phillips on Civil Rights and Freedom* ed. Louis Filler (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965).

⁶⁴ Douglass, "Toussaint Louverture," *North Star* (February 18, 1848).

Garnet lamented the fact that "Too many [free African-Americans] suffer their ambition to lead them no where else than to the ballroom, the tippler's retreat, and the gambler's table." Garnet argued that the path to redemption lay with following the "invincible" principles of self-help because such principles could be to an "oppressed people what Moses was to the Hebrews - what Virginius was to Rome, and what Toussaint L'Ouverture was to his golden Island of the ocean."⁶⁵ In other words, Garnet made explicit the underlying theme expressed by Douglass in his biography of Toussaint: self-help can have a revolutionary effect on the lives of free African-Americans. Toussaint had become more than a symbol for those seeking liberation from slavery, he had become a metaphor for personal and communal liberation from ignorance and sloth. More than two years later, Douglass once more allowed his paper to serve as a mouthpiece for examining the efforts of free African-Americans to improve their lot in life. Writing from Oxford, England, African-American abolitionist William Wells Brown, reflected upon the fact "that so few of our own race can find a place within their walls [i.e. the walls of Oxford and other universities]." Rather than acquiesce to the socio-political structures that prevented those of African descent from attending the world's most prestigious universities, Brown saw the exclusion of his racial group as proof of the importance of self-help. "I see more and more the need of our people being encouraged to turn their attention more seriously to self-education, and thus to take a respectable position before the world, by virtue of their own cultivated minds, and moral standing. Education, though obtained by a little at a time, and that, too, over the midnight lamp, will place its owner in

⁶⁵ For both quotations referenced herein see, Henry High Garnet, "Self-help.-The Wants of Western New York," *North Star* (January 19, 1849).

a position to be respected by all, even though he be black."⁶⁶ Brown, like Garnet and Douglass both, then turned to Toussaint as a specific example of an individual whose success in life was directly related to self-education. Brown wrote of how Toussaint worked in the fields with a spelling book in his back pocket and how his determination to educate himself was equivalent to the efforts of other former slaves, such as himself as well as Douglass, to overcome their humble beginnings. Brown even suggested that not only were his and Douglass' personal accomplishments as former slaves the result of their indefatigable efforts at self-elevation but also that even their personal freedom from a life of slavery might have been as well.⁶⁷ Other articles published by Douglass make it clear that self-help and personal elevation were topics that he reflected upon frequently. In one article, a collection of unrelated vignettes entitled, simply, "Notes," Douglass discussed a recent trip to Massachusetts that he had taken. In the course of praising the hospitality of the African-American family with whom he stayed during his sojourn Douglass mentioned, almost as an aside, that he and the old man who was head of the household were conversing upon "...the lack of interest our people manifest in the cause of their elevation." Then, with a bit of shamelessness that would befit any proper salesman, Douglass noted that purchasing copies of his newspaper would be one way that a free African-American could elevate himself and his race.⁶⁸ In the above examples the symbolic power of Toussaint lies less in *what* he accomplished than it does in *how* he accomplished it.

⁶⁶ For all of the quotations attributed to Brown in this paragraph see, William Wells Brown, "Communications: Letter from William Wells Brown," *Frederick Douglass Paper* (Rochester, NY: October 2, 1851).

⁶⁷ Brown, "Communications...", *Frederick Douglass Paper* (October 2, 1851).

⁶⁸ Frederick Douglass, "Notes," *Frederick Douglass Paper* (Rochester, NY: December 23, 1853).

By constructing narratives of Toussaint that focused on his ability to educate himself despite obstacles to such an achievement, Douglass was placing the history of the Haitian Revolution squarely within the framework of a contemporary context whereby African-American elites championed the benefits of education for all free African-Americans. In the decades leading up to the Civil War numerous African-American activists, including Douglass, saw education as a critical component to the lives of free African-Americans. The creation of African-American led mutual aid societies dates back to the late eighteenth century and by the 1820's free African-Americans were forming mutual aid societies whose primary function was the education of both its members and the broader community that those members were a part of.⁶⁹ Though each self-help/mutual aid society was unique they shared many common features related to the idea that education was critical to the success of both individual African-Americans and the race as a whole. Many of these societies hosted public lectures on topics ranging from those associated with social reform, (e.g. abolition and temperance), to more strictly academic topics, (e.g. geography and chemistry). Lectures and the discussions that generally followed were invariably open to the public and were often free. Many of these societies operated libraries or reading rooms so that by 1844 there were at least sixteen African-American library societies, each with their own collection of books for lending to patrons, in Douglass' state of residence, New York.⁷⁰ The focus on self-help and education served a dual role of both elevating the individual as well as the entire race.

⁶⁹ A mutual aid society known as the Sons of the African Society was formed in Boston in 1798. See, Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*...100-101.

⁷⁰ Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*...100-104.

On the individual level, education prevented free African-Americans from becoming trapped in menial service jobs. In an 1849 edition of the *North Star*, Douglass published a letter that lamented the way that free African-Americans were often trapped at the bottom rungs of the economic hierarchy because their lack of education meant that free African-American men spent their lives "engaged as waiters about hotels," or worked as "barbers and boot blacks," while free African-American women were forced to resort to "washing white people's dirty clothes."⁷¹ An education could lead to the individual accumulation of wealth as there would be "more financiers and not so many ministers," in African-American communities.⁷² Accumulation of wealth could not only assist individuals in supporting themselves, and presumably African-American newspapers like the *North Star* or the *Frederick Douglass Paper*, but it could also be passed on to future generations.⁷³

Individual advancement though education certainly had its benefits for those individuals who were able to rise above the working class but self-elevation via education served a more important goal for many African-Americans activists. Historian Patrick Rael succinctly describes the relationship between individual efforts at education and the socio-political prospects of all African-Americans. Rael writes that "The idea was that individual examples of self-elevation would incrementally cause the forces of prejudice to relent, thus opening the door that much wider for other African-Americans to uplift themselves."⁷⁴ Nodding to self-help and personal elevation via education was more than

⁷¹ E. Smith, "Selections. From the True Wesleyan. Fugitives in Canada," (Rochester, NY: *North Star*, February 23, 1849).

⁷² Prospectus for *The Champion of Equal Rights*, from *The Colored American*, (New York City: November 10, 1838).

⁷³ Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest*... 193.

⁷⁴ Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest*... 186.

just mimicry of the middle-class values of Northern European-Americans; it was practical advice designed to destroy slavery as a legal system of subjugation. Thus, Douglass' earliest portrayal of Toussaint as someone who took it upon himself to become educated eschews the celebration of the possible benefits of revolutionary violence in favor of celebrating the collective benefits of individual initiatives towards self-improvement. Toussaint and the ex-slaves who fought under his command became less of a literal example of how an oppressed group could seize power and more of a metaphorical blueprint for how individual self-improvement results in the collective elevation of the entire group.

The third and perhaps most obvious reason for Douglass' emphasizing that Toussaint was an autodidact is the way that such a narrative mirrors Douglass' own experiences. Although Douglass famously pointed to a violent encounter between himself and a harsh overseer as a turning point in his life it was his ability to educate himself throughout his life that allowed him to become a powerful voice for anti-slavery in America.⁷⁵ Beginning with his early instruction in the alphabet and continuing with his exposure to Caleb Bingham's *The Columbian Orator*, Douglass' semi-self-guided experiences with literacy helped to shape him as a scholar even before he emancipated himself.⁷⁶ As a free African-American resident of the North he continued to pore over the written word, reading everything from the Bible to Shakespeare to Dickens to Emerson

⁷⁵ For Douglass' account of his encounter with the overseer Edward Covey see, Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Originally published: 1846) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1960), 102-104.

⁷⁶ In his first autobiography, Douglass does credit his mistress with introducing him to the alphabet though he quickly reminded his readers that her efforts ended as soon as her husband discovered them. Subsequently, Douglass portrayed his education as having existed in secret. He mentioned that when traveling on errands in Baltimore he would bribe local European-American children with bread if they would assist him in practicing his reading skills. See, Douglass, *Narrative of the Life* ...63-65.

and Longfellow.⁷⁷ It is only natural that Douglass' memory of Toussaint would be shaped by the perceived actions of Toussaint that most closely resembled events from his own life. According to Douglass, his own juvenile education, though initiated by the kind actions of his owner's wife, was mostly a clandestine enterprise as his owner at the time strongly disapproved of teaching slaves to read and/or write. Once Douglass' owner became aware of his literacy skills, he was forced to hide his intellectual development from his master as well as his mistress. In his own words, he was compelled to "resort to various stratagems," in order to continue his education.⁷⁸ It is instructive that in articulating his version of Toussaint's early years Douglass' description of Toussaint's education is most closely mirrored by that of another former slave: William Wells Brown. In 1854, Brown, who had been born a slave in Kentucky prior to his escape Northward in 1834, delivered a lecture that covered the history of the Haitian Revolution and its leaders.⁷⁹ Like Douglass seven years prior Brown placed the responsibility for Toussaint's education squarely with Toussaint and no one else. Brown wrote that "By his energy and perseverance, he had learned to read and write...From ignorance he became educated by his own exertions."⁸⁰ No mention was made of M. Bayou de Libertas. As earlier paragraphs attest to, Douglass and Brown moved in the same social circles and they clearly corresponded on issues relating to slavery and the challenges faced by free African-Americans. It is quite possible that Douglass' view of Toussaint's education

⁷⁷ John W. Blassingame, introduction to, *The Frederick Douglass Papers. Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews: Volume I, 1841-1846* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), xxii-xxiii.

⁷⁸ Douglass, *Narrative of the Life...*, 63-65.

⁷⁹ Actually, Brown delivered a pair of nearly identical lectures: one in London and one in Philadelphia. They were published together in pamphlet form the following year. See, William Wells Brown, "St. Domingo: Its Revolutions and Its Patriots. ...," ... *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution...* 183-189.

⁸⁰ Brown, "St. Domingo...", ... *African Americans...* 185, 188.

influenced Brown but it is equally as likely that Brown arrived at the same conclusion that Douglass did precisely because he too had experienced slavery and understood the way that self-help could be a matter of life and death.⁸¹ At the risk of delving too deeply into a discussion of personal identity, the different versions of Toussaint's life presented by various African-American activists suggests that Douglass and Brown's experiences as slaves shaped their world views for the remainder of their lives. The clandestine nature of becoming educated while enslaved and then escaping from enslavement seems to have bearing on how they articulated the life of Toussaint. On the other hand, Russwurm and Smith had no experience with having to hide their status as either educated individuals or enslaved individuals.⁸² The narrative of Toussaint's education created by Douglass and later echoed by Brown reveals how memory is created at the intersection of personal experience and broader structural patterns. Clearly, the ethos of self-help that was prevalent in the mid-nineteenth century affected the way Douglass/Brown presented Toussaint. It is equally as clear that their presentation of him as an exemplar of success via self-help was distilled through their own personal

⁸¹ Like Douglass, Brown was born into slavery and escaped north as a young man. After spending the first decades of his life as a slave in Kentucky Brown was able to escape north. Later in his life, he worked as a conductor on the Underground Railroad as well as being the primary promoter of the escaped slave couple, William and Ellen Craft. Ellen, who was light enough to pass for European-American posed as a male slave owner who was escorting her "slave" William northward. In 1849, Brown arranged public speaking engagements for the couple all over New England. See, Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*...62.

⁸² Russwurm was born free in Jamaica, the son of an African-American mother and a British father. His formal education began at the age of eight when he began attending school in Quebec. In 1826 he graduated from Bowdoin College becoming the second African-American college graduate in the history of the United States. Smith, like Russwurm, was born to an African-American mother and a European-American father but his mother was a slave in New York at the time. Though enslaved, as a child Smith attended New York's African Free School Number 2. Moreover, Smith was not forced to abscond for his freedom as New York's Emancipation Act of 1827 granted him freedom when he was still a teenager. Though unable to attend medical school in the U.S., Smith did receive formal medical training in Glasgow. See, Robert J. Branham and Phillip Foner, eds., *Lift Every Voice: African American Oratory, 1787-1900* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1998), 101; James McCune Smith, "A Lecture on the Haitian Revolutions...", *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution*...177.

experiences as self-educated, escaped slaves. Their version of self-elevation was not the moralistic self-help whereby a lower class person was shamed into seeking guidance from his/her social better; theirs was a rugged, hyper-individualistic self-help that acknowledged the inherent capabilities possessed by all African-Americans. It is an implicit argument for the self-elevation of all African-Americans as it required no mentor or external guiding factors to unlock an individual's capabilities. Capabilities that, if unleashed, could bring individual as well as community success.⁸³

Although Douglass construction of Toussaint's education is an example of a counter-narrative, his narration of Toussaint's behavior once he has achieved a degree of de facto political power on the island is significant for the way that it echoed normative Southern narratives of Toussaint's life. Given the way that Douglass' articulations of Toussaint's life were consciously crafted for particular audiences, his decision to echo certain pro-slavery tropes begs for further interrogation. First, however, it is worth exploring precisely how Douglass, and other African-American activists, praised specific actions of Toussaint using language that would have suited the tastes of slavery's defenders and apologists.

In his antebellum portrait of Toussaint Douglass voiced his unequivocal support for Toussaint's "draconian" labor policies.⁸⁴ In his 1848 biography, Douglass quoted from a history of the Revolution written by French colonel. After reminding his readers that

⁸³ Historian Patrick Rael has written much about the congruence between Northern, middle-class values and nineteenth century African-American activism. The argument advanced in text is influenced by Rael's conceptualization of how African-Americans utilized notions of self-help as a means of uniting all African-Americans in a political struggle. As Rael argues "Whereas among white reformers concerns with non-elite behavior in one way or another distanced them from their charges, elite blacks' regard for their working class brethren reflected efforts to unite the community in a common purpose under a common identity." See, Rael, *Black Identity*...198.

⁸⁴ DuBois, *Avengers of the New World*...239.

this particular source was in no way biased in favor of Toussaint or his revolutionary comrades, Douglass reiterated Colonel Malenfant's claim that "The colony...flourished under Toussaint. The whites lived happily and in peace upon their estates, and the negroes continued to work for them." Douglass explained that Toussaint had basically established a neo-feudal system of share cropping whereby the former slaves, working upon the plantations of their former masters, were to receive 1/4 of what they produced while their former masters would garnish 3/4 of whatever was produced. Incredibly, Douglass even decided to quote Malenfant's observation that 1/4 was probably more income than Haiti's former slaves deserved.⁸⁵ Fascinatingly, in many ways, Douglass' narration of Toussaint's career as a political leader was simply a restatement of what many pro-slavery Southerners were saying at the time.

For many Southern planters, Toussaint's use of martial law to compel the former slaves of St. Domingue/ Haiti to return to work on the plantations of their former masters was evidence that slavery was the most appropriate system for organizing labor in the South. As historian Alfred Hunt has pointed out "One of the most popular arguments used by slavery apologists was that blacks would not work unless they were forced to do so. Further, slavery was necessary to keep the work force producing...as well as to keep blacks from taking revenge on their former masters."⁸⁶ Therefore, it was only natural that Toussaint's policies were praised by men like George Fitzhugh who admitted that "the free Negroes of Haiti were all well governed under

⁸⁵ Douglass, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *North Star*, February 18, 1848.

⁸⁶ Hunt, *Haiti's Influence of Antebellum America*...89.

Toussaint but this meant strict military surveillance, compulsory labor and severe penalties for deserting their farms."⁸⁷ Fitzhugh wasn't the only pro-slavery Southerner who praised Toussaint's labor policies. One of the era's most well-known defenders of slavery, Edmund Ruffin, also found much to admire in the actions of Toussaint. "The black general Toussaint, (the only truly great man yet known of the negro race)...compelled the former slaves to return to the plantations, and to labor, under military coercion, and severe punishment for disobedience."⁸⁸ For their part, Fitzhugh and Ruffin were simply restating what an earlier generation of Southern planters had noted.⁸⁹ For slavery's defenders, Toussaint's policies confirmed their racialized conceptions of an African-American labor force that they believed had to be strictly controlled lest economic ruin and chaos ensue. Viewed in this light, it is entirely understandable why many of the South's most vociferous supporters of slavery found much to admire in a man who had led the hemisphere's most successful slave rebellion. If, however, abolitionists "...were anxious to prove that without slavery blacks were capable of living meaningful lives and contributing to the advancement of society," then Douglass' comments about Toussaint's labor policies are problematic.⁹⁰ How does one reconcile the abolitionist goals noted above with the fact that Douglass' words regarding

⁸⁷ George Fitzhugh, "What's to be done with the Negroes?" *Richmond Enquirer*, May 2, 1851.

⁸⁸ Edmund Ruffin, *The Political Economy of Slavery* (Richmond, VA, 1857), 17.

⁸⁹ Zaphaniah Kingsley, a Florida planter, praised Toussaint's rigid labor policies as early as 1829. See, *A Treatise on the Patriarchal, or Co-Operative System of Society As It Exists In Some Governments, And Colonies in America, And In The United States, Under The Name of Slavery, With Its Necessity And Advantages* (1829), 8-9. Kingsley's treatise is emblematic of the Southern idea that slavery could and should be a benevolent institution that enriched both the slave owner, (By providing a stable labor force), and the slave, (Who, Kingsley and others argued, in their trusting and simple nature desired nothing so much as the guiding hand of a sagacious master).

⁹⁰ Hunt, *Haiti's Influence of Antebellum America*...91.

Toussaint's labor policies could have leapt from the pen of any one of a number of slavery's most ardent defenders?

Obviously "...as the most conspicuous black man in the world at the turn of the century," Toussaint was a predictable icon for African-Americans looking to celebrate the leadership abilities of individuals of African descent.⁹¹ What is much less obvious, however, is Douglass' decision to celebrate Toussaint in a positive light regarding the specific aspects of Toussaint's labor policies. Douglass could have easily quoted those parts of Malenfant that celebrated Toussaint's wise decisions in areas other than economic policy; he could have just as easily mentioned the relative happiness of the island's European-American population without noting that the island's newly emancipated slaves still worked as plantation laborers under the supervision of their former owners. It is entirely understandable that he had no interest in criticizing Toussaint's leadership abilities but those policies that would appear to provide supporters of slavery with rhetorical ammunition could have been omitted. Throughout the nineteenth century abolitionists, including Douglass, had been omitting plenty of other problematic details from their narrations of Toussaint's past. For instance, none of the abolitionist biographers of Toussaint bothered to mention that at the time of the Haitian Revolution not only was Toussaint a free man but that at various points in the preceding decade he had actually been a slave owner himself.⁹² More generally, if one accepts the premise that narratives of Toussaint's life were inherently constructs then naturally it would follow that there was a degree of intentionality in every version of his life that was

⁹¹ Hunt, *Haiti's Influence of Antebellum America*...91.

⁹² Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*...171; Stewart King, "Toussaint L'Ouverture Before 1791: Free Planter and Slave-holder," *Journal of Haitian Studies*, Vol. 3/4 (1997/1998), 66-71.

authored.⁹³ In short, Douglass could have criticized Toussaint's labor policies or he could have ignored them but he chose neither of these options. Instead, Douglass placed a spotlight on precisely those aspects of Toussaint's policies that seemed to confirm the racialized norms of slavery's most vocal defenders.

Unlike his treatment of Toussaint's education, Douglass' articulation of Toussaint's labor policies was not all that exceptional when compared to the narratives authored by other African-Americans. Certainly, not all narrations of Toussaint's career as a political leader mentioned his labor policies but there is no evidence that they were widely criticized or even ignored. In James McCune Smith's aforementioned discussion of the Haitian Revolution he noted that once victory in the battlefields had been achieved Toussaint converted his army of soldiers "into industrious laborers..." Smith then quoted from a statement supposedly made by the French General Lacroix that mentioned how many of the former planters were able to reclaim their estates and began to "employ their laborers on the footing of hired servants."⁹⁴ James T. Holley, an African-American minister and leading advocate of African-American emigration to Haiti, was even more emphatic than Smith. In an 1857 speech that was also published in pamphlet form Holley referred to Toussaint's "Rural Code," as the "crowning act of Toussaint L'Ouverture's statesmanship."⁹⁵ Though all of these men probably had personal reasons for writing

⁹³ This discussion could be extended outward to include the construction of historical memory, in general. If historical memory is by definition a construct then it makes sense to assume that there is a degree of intent on the part of the individuals who are actively constructing said memory. This is not meant to imply that those engaged in the process of memory construction are free from the influences of cultural, political or economic structures. Rather, the individual agency possessed by the "memory-makers" is influenced yet not necessarily predetermined by these structures.

⁹⁴ James McCune Smith, "A Lecture on the Haytien Revolutions...", ... *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution*...181.

⁹⁵ James T. Holley, "A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race for Self-Government and Civilized Progress as Demonstrated by Historical Events of the Haytien Revolution," (New Haven, CT: 1857) in *Lift Every Voice*...181.

about Toussaint's labor policies in the manner that they did the fact that they were all so willing to heap praise on a policy that pleased many Southern slave owners suggests that there were other factors affecting their decision.

One reason that Douglass and others may have been willing to speak/write about Toussaint's labor policies in a positive tone is that underscoring the productivity and organization of a post-emancipation St. Domingue/Haiti served to counter the emigrationist schemes offered up by members of the American Colonization Society and others. Even before the United States was officially a sovereign state some were arguing that emancipated slaves had no place in the country and would therefore have to migrate elsewhere. In 1776, Virginia planter Landon Carter wrote that "If you free the slaves, you must send them out of the country or they must steal for their support."⁹⁶ By the early nineteenth century the words of Carter were being converted into the blueprint for a philanthropic organization. Founded by a variety of individuals, including Charles Fenton Mercer, Daniel Webster and most notably, Henry Clay, the American Colonization Society (ACS) "hoped to rid the United States of both slavery and black people," by working with free African-Americans, the federal government and Southern slave owners to help African-Americans relocate to West Africa.⁹⁷ Though scholars sometimes point to the 1820s as the peak of the ACS' popularity, it was precisely during the time that Douglass was writing about Toussaint that the Society was the most active.⁹⁸ According

⁹⁶ Landon Carter, *The Diary of Colonel Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, 1752-1778, Vol. II*, ed. Jack P. Greene (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1965), 1055.

⁹⁷ Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2005), 1.

⁹⁸ For an example of scholarship that points to the 1820s as the "boom" years of the ACS see, Maffly-Kipp, *Setting Down the Sacred Past...*, 120.

to historian Eric Burin "More slaveholders sent more bondspersons to Liberia between 1848 and 1860 than in the previous thirty years combined."⁹⁹ Douglass was particularly aware of the ACS' activities in the two decades prior to the Civil War. In an 1847 edition of the *North Star*, Douglass published excerpts from an aforementioned speech given by Henry Clay. In the speech, Clay was unequivocal in his opinions regarding the potential for emancipated slaves to peacefully coexist with European-Americans. Clay argued that "In States where the Slaves outnumber the whites, as is the case in several...the blacks could not be emancipated without becoming the governing power in these states...Collisions and conflicts between the two races would be inevitable, and after shocking scenes of rapine and carnage, the extinction or expulsion of the blacks would certainly take place."¹⁰⁰ Not surprisingly, Douglass' narration of the Haitian Revolution was printed less than three months later. The degree to which Douglass was concerned with the popularity and influence of the ideas of men like Clay is evidenced by the fact that in the late 1840s/1850s he printed several anti-emigrationist screeds in his newspapers.¹⁰¹ It is necessary, however, to avoid oversimplifying African-American opposition to the ACS' goals. Though Douglass and the majority of other free African-American leaders saw the barely concealed racism that lurked beneath the surface of the ACS and therefore rejected their proposals, this does not mean that they were completely opposed to the idea of African-American *voluntarily* emigrating outside of the U.S. As mentioned above, Holley was a vocal proponent of emigration to Haiti and though

⁹⁹ Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution*...29.

¹⁰⁰ Frederick Douglass, "Letter to Henry Clay," *North Star* (December 3, 1847).

¹⁰¹ See, for examples, the *North Star* (August 21, 1848); *Frederick Douglass Paper* (June 30, 1850; September 9, 1851; January 29, 1852; February 2, 1852).

Douglass' views on the subject of *voluntary* Haitian were not always clear it is worth noting that at times supporters of the ACS criticized him for attacking their position while remaining silent about voluntary emigration to Haiti.¹⁰² For Douglass and others, it seems that pointing to Toussaint's labor policies was an attempt to undercut the ideological foundation of the ACS.

More specifically, the construction of Toussaint's time in power as a peaceful era in the island's history whereby former slaves and their former owners worked together was a rebuttal to those who pointed directly to Haiti as evidence of the dangers that would result from emancipation. Beyond simply speaking in hypotheticals, many supporters of either the ACS or of slavery in general portrayed post-emancipation St. Domingue/Haiti as a barbarous land where the former slaves had reverted back to "idleness," and spent their days occupied with "vices, crimes and hopeless brutality.

¹⁰³ If Haiti provided slavery's apologists with ammunition in their efforts to either avoid emancipation altogether or to force African'-Americans out of the country when it did occur then it makes sense that Douglass and others would underscore Toussaint 's labor policies as a way of attacking much of the evidence upon which the pro-slavery platform was erected. It is worth noting that even as he praised Toussaint's regime, Douglass was careful to argue that Toussaint's system was not merely slavery by a different name. Douglass pointed out that "the system of free labor...was more profitable than the old slavery."¹⁰⁴ This comment, when combined with previously discussed statements relating to labor systems on the island, reveals the utter pragmatism

¹⁰² Benjamin Coates, "Philadelphia, June 17th, 1850," *North Star* (June 27, 1850).

¹⁰³ Daniel Lee, "The Den of Villainy. From the Southern Cultivator. Hireling Labor And Slave Labor." *Frederick Douglass Paper* (May 5, 1854).

¹⁰⁴ Frederick Douglass, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *North Star*, February 18, 1848.

of Douglass' articulation of events relating to Toussaint/Haitian Revolution. Douglass' version of events spoke directly to Southern planters, members of the ACS and all those who shared their fears of what a post-emancipation society might look like. Douglass' narrative of Haiti was a salve that soothed many fears about emancipation: Southern planters will not lose their land or their laboring class and they will earn more money; newly freed African-Americans will not be roaming the streets stealing and engaging in other disreputable actions because they will be gainfully employed under the watchful eyes of their former masters; the emancipation of America's slaves will not overthrow the whole of society because Haiti under Toussaint proves that abolition can satisfy a wide range of constituencies. To be clear, the preceding is not an argument that, ideologically, Douglass truly supported Toussaint's labor policies. Rather, the preceding is arguing that in his construction of a public memory of the Revolution, Douglass articulated certain events in the manner that he did in order to engage the opponents of emancipation in a discourse on their own terms.

During the antebellum era, Douglass crafted a public memory of the Haitian Revolution that encouraged others, be they free African-Americans or Southern supporters of slavery, to look to the Revolution less as a template of how to destroy slavery but as evidence of how to individuals and societies might behave once emancipation became a reality. Accordingly, what is absent from Douglass' antebellum accounts of the Revolution is any extended discussion of the violence that accompanied the demise of slavery in St. Domingue/Haiti. More so than some of his fellow African-American abolitionists Douglass' articulation of St. Domingue/Haitian emancipation avoided any mention of how that emancipation was achieved. For example, McCune-

Smith stated clearly that "The SECOND [emphasis from the original] revolution established the emancipation of the slaves," whereas "The THIRD revolution achieved the independence of the colony from the mother country..."¹⁰⁵ In discussing what McCune-Smith referred to as the second phase of a tripartite process that ended with Haiti's independence Brown mentioned that "The slaves awoke as from an ominous dream, and demanded their rights with sword in hand. Gaining immediate success, and finding that their liberty would not be granted by the planters, they rapidly increased in numbers...the storm had swept over the whole plain of the north, from east to west and from the mountains to the sea."¹⁰⁶ As has been discussed at length, Douglass sought to create a slightly different memory of Haiti's Revolution: one that was not only more optimistic about the possibilities for a political solution to the problem of slavery but one also more cognizant of the *need* for a political solution to the problem of slavery. Douglass seemed convinced that emancipation could not be achieved by insurrection alone. Also, keeping in mind the suggested goals that lay behind Douglass' praise of Toussaint's labor policies, it seems likely that he had no desire to frighten European-Americans with narrative constructions of vengeful slaves on the warpath. When he did discuss the battlefield he focused on describing well-organized troops fighting against France's enemies or against their own re-enslavement; any notion that violent insurrection may have led to emancipation was muted.

In subtle ways, Douglass' construction of a memory of the Haitian Revolution even went so far as to suggest that the emancipation of Haiti's slaves had been achieved

¹⁰⁵ James McCune Smith, "A Lecture on the Haytien Revolutions...", *...African Americans and the Haitian Revolution...* 177.

¹⁰⁶ Brown, "'St. Domingo...', *...Pamphlets of Protest...* 244.

without any recourse to violence on the part of the island's enslaved population. In his 1848 biography of Toussaint, Douglass gave the French Republican government more credit than the slaves themselves. In his version of events, emancipation was granted by the French in return for slave promises to take up arms against the British. Though Douglass briefly mentioned the slave uprising that had begun in 1791 he made no explicit causal connection between that uprising and the subsequent decision of the French government to grant emancipation to loyal slaves willing to fight the British. Earlier articulations on the part of Douglass also avoided crediting slave violence against their masters with causing a general emancipation. Once more, returning to Douglass' 1847 response to Henry Clay is instructive. As a direct rebuttal to Clay's implications that emancipation would lead to horrible acts of vengeful violence on the part newly freed ex-slaves, Douglass noted that Clay and others would "probably point me to the Revolution in St. Domingo..." as evidence that supported their argument. Accordingly, Douglass turned his attention to St. Domingo/Haiti and acknowledged that any violence that slaves committed "was not the result of emancipation, but of a cruel attempt to re-enslave an already emancipated people."¹⁰⁷ By ignoring the question of whether or not slave violence had anything to do with causing their emancipation, Douglass was implicitly presenting emancipation as achieved by some means other than insurrection. He seemed eager to remind his readers that slaves, like all other Americans, would bravely defend their liberties while simultaneously suggesting that slaves were not a lot of bloodthirsty brutes that would resort to wanton violence as a means of achieving their emancipation.

¹⁰⁷ Frederick Douglass, "Letter to Henry Clay," *North Star* (December 3, 1847).

Like many other abolitionist treatments of the Haitian Revolution, Douglass' explanation of how the slaves of St. Domingue/Haiti were emancipated is illustrative of the challenges abolitionists faced when they tried to construct a meaningful version of the revolutionary events that had occurred in Haiti. First, anyone perceived as advocating slave insurrection could face violent reprisals from pro-slavery apologists while also risking the alienation of more moderate allies in the anti-slavery camp. Also, abolitionists had to be wary of celebrating insurrectionary violence lest their descriptions were perceived by enslaved Americans as advocating for actions that many within the movement did not think would work. Moreover, anyone discussing Haiti was forced to confront the popular conceptualization of the slave insurrection of 1791 as the source of the "horrors of St. Domingo."¹⁰⁸ According to Bryan Edwards' widely read account of the Haitian Revolution, the "horrors" included: a "general massacre of the whites,"; a white infant impaled on a stake to serve as the standard for a band of rebels; and numerous white women who were raped while lying upon the dead bodies of their husbands and fathers. Additionally, the author laid the responsibility for the gruesome acts of violence he discussed not only at the feet of the slaves and former slaves who allegedly committed them but also at the feet of abolitionists who had exploited formerly contented slaves to achieve their own political goals. Edwards' examination of events in Haiti was widely read throughout the Atlantic world. In the United States alone there were at least five

¹⁰⁸ This phrase was introduced into the popular lexicon by British politician/planter Bryan Edwards. Edwards' history of the Haitian Revolution was originally published as: *An Historical Survey of the French Colony in the Island of St. Domingo: Comprehending an Account of the Revolt of the Negroes in the Year 1791, and a Detail of the Military Transactions of the British Army in the Years 1793 & 1794* (London: John Stockdale, 1797). Shortly thereafter, it was reprinted as the final volume of Edwards' four volume *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies. To which is added, An Historical Survey of the French Colony in the Island of St. Domingo* The quotations used herein are from the first edition printed in the United States, (Philadelphia: James Humphreys, 1806), 74-75; 79-86.

editions printed by the end of 1810.¹⁰⁹ Edwards' interpretation of events may have been the most well-known of the early histories of the Haitian Revolution but the tone and substance of his work was not exceptional. As historian Alfred N. Hunt notes, the last decade of the eighteenth and the first decade of the nineteenth century witnessed hundreds of American newspaper accounts that echoed Edwards' interpretation.¹¹⁰ Regardless of how Americans were exposed to Edwards' version of events, abolitionists who wished to present their own narratives of Haiti had to decide how to articulate the emancipation of Haiti's slaves without conjuring images like those mentioned above.

In general three strategies were available to men like Douglass who wished to craft their own version of events relating to emancipation in Haiti: celebration of the power of slave violence; denial or avoidance of any discussion related to slave violence; or tacit acknowledgement of slave violence but not ascribing any causative power to that violence.¹¹¹ Abolitionists could choose the path of McCune-Smith, or Brown and celebrate the slave insurrections of 1791 as the driving force in the emancipatory struggle.¹¹² Despite the fact that neither man avoided discussing insurrectionary slave violence as the cause of emancipation, their descriptions addressed Edwards' "horrors" in

¹⁰⁹ Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation*...52-53.

¹¹⁰ Hunt, *Haiti's Influence*...2.

¹¹¹ Given the scattered nature of the source materials, determining the exact number of narratives that used each strategy is nearly impossible. However, it is possible to quantify the number of narratives that relied on each strategy from the somewhat limited sample of sources relied on herein. Including the histories authored by Brown, and McCune-Smith there were five (5) narratives that presented slave insurrection as the causative factor in emancipation. Including the *Freedom's Journal* articles discussed in-text there were three (3) narratives that ignored the insurrectionary period altogether. Including the histories presented by Douglass, et. al. there were seven (7) narratives that mentioned slave violence but ultimately ascribed the credit for emancipation to French authorities.

¹¹² James T. Holley, an African-American minister, activist and advocate for emigration to Haiti echoed both McCune-Smith and Brown in giving slave violence primacy in forcing French authorities to acquiesce to a general decree of emancipation. See, James T. Holley, "A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race..."...*Pamphlets of Protest*...271.

different ways. McCune-Smith admitted that "Servile wars have generally proved the most fierce and sanguinary of all wars," and then argued that Haiti's slave insurrection was, in comparison to other servile wars throughout history, comparatively mild since "only 2,000 whites were slain by the insurgents."¹¹³ Rather than follow McCune-Smith's lead and downplay the "horrors," Brown accepted that atrocities were committed but blamed the island's slave owners for setting a horrific tone. Brown asserted that "the French planters were murdering them [slaves] on every hand by thousands...This example set by the whites taught [the island's slaves]...that the struggle was for liberty or death...The educated, refined and civilized whites degraded themselves even more than the barbarous and ignorant slaves."¹¹⁴ The second strategy available to abolitionists was simply to ignore the insurrection altogether and focus on events in Haiti that occurred after 1793.¹¹⁵ This is precisely what the editors of *Freedom's Journal* did: despite running a three-part biography of Toussaint and the Haitian Revolution they simply never addressed the topic of how Haiti's slaves were emancipated.¹¹⁶ The third strategy was the one employed by Douglass and many others: for the most part they downplayed the insurrectionary violence and gave French commissioners/politicians the majority of the credit for ending slavery on the island. Ironically, this is how Edwards understood emancipation as well. Though he chronicled the violence committed by slaves and ex-slaves in macabre and histrionic detail he did not view this violence as directly causing

¹¹³ James McCune Smith, "A Lecture on the Haytien Revolutions..."...*African Americans and the Haitian Revolution*...179.

¹¹⁴ Brown, "St. Domingo..."...*Pamphlets of Protest*...245.

¹¹⁵ Due to their focus on the life/career of Toussaint, Dubroca, Martineau and Stephen all, intentionally or not, followed this strategy.

¹¹⁶ Samuel Cornish and John Brown Russwurm, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *Freedom's Journal* (New York: May 4, 11, 18, 1827).

emancipation. According to Edwards “The republican commissioners had brought out six thousand chosen troops...But as their force was greatly scattered over the provinces, the commissioners, in order to strengthen their party, declared all slavery at an end, on condition of the blacks resorting to their standard.”¹¹⁷ Just as Douglass would describe Haiti nearly a half century later, Atlantic rivalries and the fissures caused by political upheaval provided the necessary context for emancipation.

In the decades after Edwards’ book was published, abolitionists on both sides of the Atlantic echoed his analysis of the causes of Haitian emancipation. More than a decade before Douglass’ portrayal of events in Haiti, British abolitionist George Thompson wrote that “...it was suggested [by French officials] that the slaves should be armed in defence of the Island. Accordingly in 1793 a proclamation was made promising ‘to give freedom to all the slaves who would range themselves under the banners of the Republic.’ This scheme produced the desired effect.”¹¹⁸ Thompson’s phrasing, much like Douglass’ in 1848, implied that emancipation was completely a ‘top-down’ affair, driven purely by France’s military interests and not by the actions of the revolting slaves themselves. Around the same time that Thompson was presenting his version of events the editors of *The Colored American* were even more direct in their assessment of what caused emancipation in St. Domingue/Haiti. They wrote that “The opposing party [republican forces opposed to conservative planters] proclaimed freedom to all slaves, and armed them against the British. It is generally supposed that the abolition of slavery in St. Domingo was in consequence of insurrections among the slaves, but this is not

¹¹⁷ Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies*...362.

¹¹⁸ William Lloyd Garrison, “Communications. Anti-Slavery Meetings at Andover,” *The Liberator* (Boston: August 8, 1835).

true."¹¹⁹ One of the most widely presented abolitionist narrations of Haiti's history went even further than the editors at *The Colored American*. In Wendell Phillips' version of Haiti's revolutionary history, he granted the French republican government almost sole responsibility for causing emancipation by accepting Edwards' claim that external forces fomented rebellion amongst the enslaved population.¹²⁰ The difference was that, according to Phillips, it was the French government and not the ideas of French anti-slavery societies who instigated the original slave insurrection of 1791.

At various times after Phillips first began presenting his speech in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Civil War, Douglass endorsed his version of Haiti's history by directing curious audiences to seek out Phillips' narrative if they wished to know more about the events in Haiti.¹²¹ In Phillips' version of Haitian history the slave insurrection of 1791 was initiated, directed, sanctioned, and armed by French officials. Fundamentally, Phillips, Douglass, and Edwards are all in agreement about the necessary role of French political and military instability in causing the 1791 slave insurrection to be emancipatory in nature. Thus, the articulation of the cause(s) of emancipation on the island that Douglass favored existed at the opposite end of the spectrum from the narratives presented by Brown, McCune-Smith, and others: rather than slave violence driving the politicians to act it was politicians who convinced the slaves to rebel. By reflecting on Douglass' endorsement of this version of events it is possible to more easily

¹¹⁹ Phillip A. Bell and Samuel Cornish, "Historical Evidence Concerning the Effects of Immediate Emancipation," *The Colored American* (New York: June 3, 1837).

¹²⁰ Wendell Phillips, "Lectures: Toussaint L'Ouverture," in *Lectures and Speeches*, ed. Arthur D. Hall (New York: Street and Smith, 1902), 129.

¹²¹ Frederick Douglass, "The Trials and Triumphs of Self-Made Men: An Address Delivered in Halifax, England, On 4 January 1860,"...*The Frederick Douglass Papers...Volume III*...294. Most historians discuss and cite Phillips' narrative of Toussaint's life as emerging from the context of the Civil War. However, given the date that Douglass spoke to the British audience, it is clear that the speech was well-known prior to 1861.

comprehend his complicated ideas about the most effective means to bring about the destruction of slavery in the United States.

Douglass, perhaps more so than other African-American abolitionists like Brown, appeared to have been keenly aware of how portrayals of St. Domingue/Haiti's slaves as vengeful fed into the racialized, pro-slavery stereotypes of slaves as degraded brutes who would paint the South red with blood if given any opportunity. Moreover, Douglass' awareness of these pro-slavery stereotypes informed his perception of the possibility of a political solution to the problem of slavery. In a speech given in 1846, in Great Britain, Douglass demonstrated how attuned he was to Southern fears of the possibility of a recurrence of the "horrors of St. Domingue" on U.S. soil. Douglass mentioned that in the course of a Congressional debate "A very intelligent representative from the state of Kentucky...declared that they [Southerners] were surrounded by a dangerous population, a degraded set of savages, who, if they could but entertain the idea that immediate and unconditional death would not be their portion, would enact some St. Domingo tragedy."¹²² Later in the speech, Douglass acknowledged that millions of slaves were indeed "panting for emancipation," though not necessarily blood. Additionally, he implied that, so long as there was a union between Northern and Southern states, a repetition of St. Domingue/Haiti was unlikely. Not only do Douglass' comments foreshadow the eruption of the Civil War but they also provide some insight into his articulation of a narrative of the Haitian Revolution. From his perspective, total emancipation, whether it was the actual destruction of slavery in St. Domingue/Haiti or

¹²² Frederick Douglass, "Slavery, The Free Church, and British Agitation Against Bondage: An Address Delivered in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, England, On 3 August 1846," ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers...Volume I, 1841-1846*...320-321.

the hypothetical destruction of slavery in the U.S., could not occur without political instability. It seems reasonable to assume that Douglass' understanding of how emancipation was achieved in St. Domingue/Haiti influenced his views of how emancipation might succeed in the United States. As a former slave and ardent abolitionist, as well as a keen observer of America's political landscape, Douglass seemed torn. On the one hand he wanted to remind Europeans and European-Americans that slaves were capable of "securing to themselves victory and freedom," while on the other hand he seemed wary of either giving Southern legislators any rhetorical ammunition in their fight to oppose a political solution to emancipation or in allowing complacent Northerners to do nothing while they waited for slaves to emancipate themselves.

The remainder of Douglass' 1846 speech, much like his other antebellum portrayals of Haiti, reveals that ultimately Douglass decided to avoid celebrating the emancipatory possibilities of collective slave violence. He seemed wary of encouraging an insurrection when the political conditions were not ripe. Perhaps, Douglass was also worried that any specific discussion of violence committed by slaves would distract from the violent brutality inherent in slavery itself. It is instructive that in his 1846 speech rather than use the "horrors of St. Domingue" as a direct threat to Southerners, like Brown did, Douglass, immediately after alluding to Southern fears of a Haitian style rebellion, transitioned into a detailed description of the de jure and de facto violence that upheld slavery. "Cruelty marks every part of the [slave] system," and it is the cruelty of slave owners and their abettors that he wanted his antebellum audiences to remember, not the image of bloodthirsty slaves bent on revenge.¹²³ By combining Southern fears of

¹²³ For the Frederick Douglass, "Slavery, The Free Church...", ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers...Volume I, 1841-1846...*321.

revolt with a detailed description of the violence that upheld slavery as a legitimate system of labor Douglass was able to indirectly remind his audience that slavery itself, not the inherent depravity of the slaves, was the ultimate cause of slave rebellions/violence. Douglass knew that there is no need for him to encourage slave insurrections as they were inevitable. Thus, he did not need to be more explicit in advocating violent resistance on the part of America's slaves; he allowed slave owner cruelty to advocate for him.

Reflecting once more his pragmatic approach to ending slavery, Douglass' perspective on the Haitian Revolution informed his ambivalence about slave insurrection as the most effective or appropriate means of destroying slavery. Early in the 1840s his comments regarding slave insurrections demonstrate the influence of Garrison's pacifism combined with pragmatic concerns. For example, in 1843 when, at a convention of African-American abolitionists, Henry Highland Garnet advocated that slaves take an active role, via either passive resistance or violent rebellion, in their emancipation Douglass was taken aback. He argued for "trying the moral means a little longer," because he feared that Garnet's words may reach America's slaves and they might follow his advice, something that Douglass "wished in no way to have any agency in bringing about."¹²⁴ Three years later, in a speech in London, Douglass seemed to have eschewed any pragmatic consideration as he claimed to have wholeheartedly embraced pacifism. He stated that "...were I to be asked the question as to whether I would have my emancipation by the shedding of one single drop of blood, my answer would be in the

¹²⁴ Frederick Douglass, "Debate over Garnet's 'Address to the Slaves of the United States of America,'"...*Pamphlets of Protest*...158.

negative."¹²⁵ However, as later antebellum era comments made by Douglass reveal, pragmatic concerns over the likelihood of emancipation being achieved via a Haitian style slave rebellion seemed to have overtaken any Garrisonian commitment to non-violence. In the midst of a speech he delivered in Boston in 1849, Douglass commented that "I should welcome the intelligence to-morrow, should it come, that the slaves had risen in the South, and that the sable arms which had been engaged in beautifying and adorning the South, were engaged in spreading death and devastation there." Though Douglass' spoke of his wish to hear of such news he revealed, in the course of the same speech, why he doubted that his wish would ever be granted. He returned to a theme that he broached in 1846 when he mentioned that "...eighteen millions of freemen [in the North]," were preventing any successful slave rebellion because "The weight of your [Northern] influence, numbers, political combinations and religious organizations, and the power of your arms...serve to keep them [America's slaves] in chains."¹²⁶ It is no wonder that Douglass' construction of a public memory of Haiti occurred in 1848, precisely when he was formulating his own understanding of the power or lack thereof of slave violence within the United States. Douglass saw a successful American slave revolt as contingent on a political fissure between the North and the South, in part, because of his conceptualization of how it was achieved in St. Domingue/ Haiti.

Whenever Douglass did make mention of slave rebellions in America, he avoided any direct references to St. Domingue/Haiti and his writing assumes a tone of negotiation. In an 1850 issue of the *North Star*, Douglass authored an article entitled "A

¹²⁵ Frederick Douglass, "My Opposition to War: An Address Delivered in London, England, On 19 May 1846," ... *The Frederick Douglass Papers...Volume I, 1841-1846*...262.

¹²⁶ Frederick Douglass, "The Colonizationist Revival: An Address Delivered In Boston, Massachusetts, On 31 May 1849," ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers...Volume II, 1847-1854*...216-217.

letter to the American Slaves from Those Who Have Fled from American Slavery." In the course of this article, Douglass argued that "...the insurrections of the Southern slaves shall take place...unless speedily prevented by voluntary emancipation."¹²⁷ Some historians have taken this article as evidence that Douglass believed that American slavery would be and/or should be destroyed by violence.¹²⁸ However, given the fact that he offered slave owners a means to avoid insurrections, (i.e. voluntary emancipation), and the fact that during the antebellum era he never presented St. Domingue/Haiti as evidence in support of a violent slave insurrection in the United States, Douglass' mentioning of violence in this case was more complex than simple advocacy. Once more, ambivalence is perhaps the most apt adjective. Douglass wanted to remind Southerners that slave insurrections were an inevitable result of slavery and he wanted to remind slaves that many free African-Americans supported their efforts, violent or otherwise, at personal manumission. However, he was careful to avoid presenting violent insurrection as a means of ending slavery as a system even if he believed that individual slaves were justified if they resorted to violence in the course of trying to emancipate themselves. During the 1850's Douglass used the *Frederick Douglass Paper* to continue to argue for the unfeasibility of a successful, Haitian style, slave rebellion. Given that the North and South were still united in upholding slavery this position seems quite logical. He thought that a revolutionary slave rebellion was doomed to fail because not only would the federal government step in to assist the South but also because slaves in the United States

¹²⁷ Frederick Douglass, "A letter to the American Slaves from Those Who Have Fled from American Slavery," *North Star*...September 5, 1850.

¹²⁸ Manisha Sinha, "An Alternative Tradition of Radicalism: African-American Abolitionists and the Metaphor of Revolution," ...*Contested Democracy*...21.

lacked the numerical advantage that those in St. Domingue/Haiti possessed some fifty years prior.¹²⁹ Thus, in terms of political realities and demography, his understanding of the course of the Haitian Revolution was shaping his opinions about abolition within the United States.

In light of all of his comments discussed heretofore it seems perfectly reasonable to assume that Douglass' antebellum opinions on the Haitian Revolution shaped his views on abolition in the United States. At the same time that his views were shaped by events in Haiti, so too was his awareness of American society in the 1840's/50's shaping his articulation of a Haitian memory. In essence, his creation of a memory of Haiti's revolution and his views on the effectiveness of slave rebellion in destroying slavery in the United States were mutually constitutive. As Douglass' 1846 speech reveals, prior to articulating a narrative of the Haitian Revolution he was thinking of the how American slave rebellions would fail unless there was some form of disunion between the North and the South. No doubt, the influence of Garrison affected his formulation of this opinion. It is likely that his presentation of Haiti's history, in the 1848 biography of Toussaint for instance, was influenced by the views he had presented in 1846. Yet, as the years passed, Douglass could have altered his version of Haitian history or encouraged audiences to read the versions presented by Brown or McCune-Smith. However, by 1860 he seemed even more resolute in his view that emancipation had been the result of French military and political instability and he encouraged his audiences to seek out the Phillips version of Haiti's recent history. Given that the 1850's saw the Westward expansion of slavery, the concordant destruction of the Missouri Compromise, and a federal

¹²⁹ Frederick Douglass, "Cuba-Sugar Making-Jamaica-Emancipation," *Frederick Douglass' Paper* (July 28, 1853); and "The Value of the Union," *Fredrick Douglass' Paper* (May 19, 1854).

recommitment to enforcing fugitive slave statutes it is no surprise that Douglass grew even stronger in his beliefs regarding slave insurrections and the necessary context for their success.¹³⁰

Regardless of what his personal sentiments may have been, Douglass recognized that a memory of the Haitian Revolution that argued for the viability of a peaceful, multi-racial post-emancipation society populated by individuals seeking personal elevation was more useful, rhetorically, than one that encouraged slaves to travel down the path of what seemed at the time to be an unsuccessful and perhaps counterproductive undertaking in rebellion. On the whole, Douglass' portrayal of slave violence in St. Domingue/Haiti reveals the difficulties African-American activists faced in their attempts to navigate the waters of America's antebellum cultural norms regarding independence, violence and slavery. For obvious reasons men like Douglass had no interest in providing evidence that supported the claims made by men like Clay. Simply ignoring the violence of the Haitian Revolution was not, however, an option. It would have positioned those of African descent as inherently accepting of slavery as the natural condition of their existence.¹³¹ Thus, Douglass chose to gloss over the St. Domingue slave insurrections that McCune-Smith referred to as the "SECOND revolution," that led to emancipation, while not ignoring the violence perpetrated by the army Toussaint led to face Napoleon's troops. In fact, when discussing the violence of St. Dominguez's slaves/ex-slaves Douglass *only* did

¹³⁰ Recall that when describing Toussaint's education Douglass had displayed a willingness to present a version of Haiti's history that was at odds with the prevailing norms of the era. Therefore, there's no reason to believe that he simply unconsciously accepted the widespread, if not quite normative, view that Haitian emancipation was mostly the result of the actions of French authorities and not rebellious slaves.

¹³¹ Douglass was keenly aware of the dilemma described above. In an 1854 edition of *Frederick Douglass' Paper* he wrote, "We blush to our very Solomon when we are told that a Negro is so mean and cowardly that he prefers 'to live under the slave-drivers' whip - to the loss of life for Liberty." See, Frederick Douglass, "The True Remedy For The Fugitive Slave Bill," *Frederick Douglass' Paper*...June 9, 1854.

so within the context of newly emancipated slaves facing off against a declared enemy whose stated goal was to rob them of their natural rights. This version of Haiti's history allowed Douglass to place the Haitian Revolution squarely within an American tradition of revolutionary violence that began with the American Revolution. Just as America's founding generation had fought to preserve their liberty and proven themselves to be anything other than slavish by nature, so too did Haiti's ex-slaves take to the battlefield to fight for the preservation of their freedom. Douglass described the violence in Haiti in the manner that he did in order to prove that those of African descent were not so brutish as to slaughter their masters and his family while they slept nor were they so slavish as to allow tyranny to rob them of their natural rights.¹³²

The outbreak of the Civil War would force Douglass to reframe his articulation of a narrative of the Haitian Revolution. So long as emancipation was a hypothetical concern he could choose to focus on those aspects of the Haitian Revolution that could be used to celebrate the possibilities of a post-emancipation America. He could choose to obscure the specter of slaves and former slaves carrying weapons and seeking revenge while simultaneously focusing on a message of self-elevation and racial harmony. However, as the Civil War forced all Americans to confront the notion of slavery and its relation to America's social and political culture it would also force Douglass to reconsider how he crafted his memory of the Haitian Revolution and how presented that memory to the public.

¹³² For further discussion on the relationship between classical notions of liberty and slavery and how they influenced the earliest generations of Americans see, Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 100-109. For a discussion of how many antebellum African-American activists referenced African-American contributions to various military campaigns in U.S. history see, Rael, *Black Identity & Black Protest...* 262-265.

Chapter 2: "Liberty and country first."¹³³

The announcement rang with a tone of palpable excitement. Frederick Douglass, his wife Anna and their daughter Rosetta were about to set sail for the Republic of Haiti. Though he was only planning on being in Haiti for a short time, his visit represented an increased willingness on Douglass' part to consider emigration as a legitimate option for the thousands of free African-Americans then residing in the North. Douglass' antebellum era views about African-American emigration can be described as complicated, at best. He was consistently vociferous in his denunciations of the efforts of the American Colonization Society while also displaying a reluctant willingness to support the idea of African-Americans voluntarily leaving the United States for Haiti.¹³⁴ By the time that Southern threats of secession had become a reality, Douglass was willing to state publicly that "If we [free African-Americans] go anywhere, let us go to Hayti...where we are still within hearing distance of the wails of our brothers and sisters in bonds." According to Douglass, his feelings had softened a bit because "The present condition of both countries, Hayti and the United States, is favorable to the revival of the feeling for emigration."¹³⁵ In the May 1861 *Douglass' Monthly* article he wrote of his pending trip as if it were a homecoming of sorts. In his words Haiti was "the theatre of many stirring events and heroic achievements, the work of a people, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh." Describing it as a "dream" that was about to become reality Douglass' lengthy announcement about his family's upcoming trip contained a menagerie of references and

¹³³ Frederick Douglass, "The Slave Democracy Again in the Field," *Douglass' Monthly* (Rochester, NY: November, 1862).

¹³⁴ Though one must be careful not to present Douglass' ideology regarding colonization/emigration as fixed he did consistently denounce the ACS and its supporters. See, Frederick Douglass, "Colonization-Free Colored People and the New York Tribune," *North Star* (Rochester, NY: June 13, 1850) and Douglass, "Colonization," *Frederick Douglass' Paper* (Rochester, NY: February 5, 1852).

¹³⁵ Frederick Douglass, "Emigration to Hayti," *Douglass' Monthly* (Rochester, NY: January, 1861).

allusions that portrayed Haiti as an appropriate destination for African-Americans, be they tourists or those looking to relocate permanently. He mentioned the benefits of Haiti's warm climate, its political stability, and referred to the island nation as a modern "Canaan" not far from the shores of the U.S. playing the role of, "Egypt."¹³⁶ Alas, as many readers may know, the Douglass never made it to Haiti in the spring of 1861.

The outbreak of the Civil War compelled Douglass to cancel his family's trip and reconsider the benefits of emigration to the island that was for many African-Americans their own "city on a hill."¹³⁷ Moreover, the Civil War forced Douglass to alter more than his travel plans; it forced him to alter his articulation of a public memory of the Haitian Revolution and its immediate effects. If, for Douglass, the Haitian Revolution was a palate full of a wide range of arguments and rhetorical strategies useful for articulating specific views relating to the socio-political situation African-Americans faced in the U.S., then the Civil War required him to re-think which hues he wanted to foreground as he argued for a revolutionary conception of what would become a war of liberation.

Prior to the outbreak of the Civil War Douglass articulated a view of the Haitian Revolution that focused on how African-Americans should/would behave once they were no longer enslaved. Rather than using the Haitian revolution and its leaders, like Toussaint Louverture, to argue for the emancipatory benefits of slave insurrection Douglass relied on the Haitian Revolution as a language useful for communicating why emancipation would not destroy America's economy or social fabric. During the

¹³⁶ For all of the quotes referring to the Douglass family trip see, Douglass, "A Trip to Hayti," *Douglass' Monthly*...May, 1861.

¹³⁷ Ibid; in fact, at the end of the very article where Douglass informed his readers of his pending trip he was forced to attach an addendum communicating that his trip had been canceled due to the outbreak of open hostilities between the Union and the Confederacy.

antebellum era, Douglass downplayed the militant manner in which the slaves of St. Domingue/Haiti achieved their freedom in order to focus his attention on the themes of self-help/individual elevation and the prospects of peaceful cooperation between ex-slaves and ex-slave owners in a post-emancipation society. In this way, Douglass revealed the utter pragmatism that informed much of his anti-slavery activism. Despite his belief that individual slaves were entirely justified in resorting to violence in response to their enslavement he did not believe that a widespread slave revolt would be effective in destroying slavery, as a system, within the U.S.¹³⁸ Thus, during the antebellum era he fashioned a public memory of the Haitian Revolution that eschewed militant motifs in order to shine a light on how ex-slaves could be productive members of a polyglot society.

Once secession became a reality and then morphed into military conflict, Douglass' public articulation of a memory of the Haitian Revolution changed significantly when compared to his evocations of the Haitian Revolution during the antebellum era. First, secession provided Douglass the opportunity to articulate a memory of the "horrors of St. Domingo," that differed from his antebellum constructions of a public memory of Haiti's Revolution. In the brief time period between Southern secession

¹³⁸ Though one could devote copious space to discussing the nuances of Douglass' views on the effectiveness of violence to destroy slavery the following speech is an apt example of his ambivalence towards widespread rebellion. In the course of this speech he championed the actions of revolting slaves as the logical consequence of an inhumane labor system while simultaneously reminding his audience of the futility of such behavior in relation to the goal of destroying said system. See, Frederick Douglass, "The Colonizationist Revival: An Address Delivered In Boston, Massachusetts, On 31 May 1849," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers. Series One. Speeches, Debates, and Interviews: Volume II, 1847-1855*, ed. John Blassingame (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), 216-217; additionally, scholars have repeatedly pointed to Douglass' own violent reaction, and his subsequent description of that violence as significant in his developing a sense of manhood, to the behavior of the cruel overseer Edward Covey as evidence of his fealty to notions of slave militancy. See, Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life...* 103-104.

and the outbreak of the War, Douglass articulated a celebratory memory of the slaves of St. Domingue rising in bloody rebellion against those who would claim ownership over them. Douglass' secession-era articulation of the manner in which the slaves of St. Domingue rose against slave owners in 1791 represents a departure from his antebellum rhetoric. Just weeks before the Civil War began Douglass, more clearly than at any other time in his public life, articulated a vision of the "horrors of St. Domingo" being reenacted on American soil. Secondly, during the entirety of the Civil War Douglass avoided almost any discussion of a memory of Toussaint or the troops who fought under his command. Even as other anti-slavery activists pointed to the example of Haiti in their arguments in favor of arming free African-Americans and ex-slaves, Douglass consistently avoided relying on a memory of Toussaint and his troops as indicative of the martial capabilities of African-Americans. It is not a coincidence that these two changes in Douglass' articulation of a public memory of the Haitian Revolution occurred during the secession crisis/the Civil War. The following will argue that Douglass' secession era/wartime alterations in how he used memories of the Haitian Revolution were intentional strategies designed to ensure that the Civil War truly was a revolutionary war of liberation and citizenship.

Prior to the war, Douglass virtually ignored the insurrectionary aspects of Haiti's Revolution. Instead, when he discussed revolutionary violence in Haiti, he focused almost exclusively on post-emancipation efforts of Toussaint and his army. In one of the earlier editions of the *North Star* Douglass authored a biography of Toussaint in which he praised the famous general and the troops under his command as they fought for France in post-emancipation St. Domingue "And it was to the energy and superior military skill

of Toussaint that his countrymen owed the preservation of their newly acquired liberty."¹³⁹ The rebellious slaves of 1791-1793, many of whom were in Toussaint's army, were not afforded the same praise.¹⁴⁰ He did mention the fact that the slaves of St. Domingue/Haiti rose in rebellion in 1791 and that in 1793 they were granted full emancipation in return for supporting France in her conflicts with the English and Spanish, both of whom had designs on controlling what was soon to be France's former colony.¹⁴¹ However, glowing adjectives and laudatory tone were absent from this description. The events were stated flatly, without any sense of celebration. Douglass stated simply that "Toussaint did not join the negroes when they rose in 1791...Complete emancipation was offered by the French commissioners to all who would take up arms against the British invaders in 1793."¹⁴² Recall, as well, Douglass' antebellum endorsement of Wendell Phillips' characterization of the insurrection itself being the result of French republican machinations. In a sense, Douglass' own narration of Toussaint's role in the Revolution as well as his endorsement of Phillips' perspective on the slave insurrection that rocked the island left little room for the island's rebellious slaves.

Though, during the antebellum era, he focused primarily on Toussaint and post-emancipatory Haitian society, Douglass did, on occasion, mention the terrifying slave violence that many in the Atlantic world associated with St. Domingue/Haiti. Though the

¹³⁹ Frederick Douglass, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *North Star* (Rochester, NY: February 18, 1848).

¹⁴⁰ Douglass' decision to avoid any lengthy discussion of slaves rising against their masters was not exceptional in the antebellum era. However, especially within the African-American community, there were anti-slavery authors who were more willing than Douglass to celebrate the emancipatory violence of the slaves of St. Domingue. For an extended discussion of both Douglass' treatment and how it compares to other versions penned at the time see the previous chapter.

¹⁴¹ Douglass, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *North Star*...1848.

¹⁴² Douglass, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *North Star*... 1848.

1848 article was Douglass' most extended description of the Haitian Revolution it was far from the only time he evoked the Revolution in print or orally.¹⁴³ In speech that he gave in Britain in 1846, Douglass allowed slavery's supporters to speak for themselves regarding the behavior of St. Domingue's revolting slaves. He told his audience that one of Kentucky's representatives to Congress, Joseph Underwood, recently alluded to Haiti's revolutionary past on the floor of Congress. According to Douglass, Underwood was deathly afraid that Southerners "...were surrounded by a dangerous population, a degraded set of savages, who, if they could but entertain the idea that immediate and unconditional death would not be their portion, would enact some St. Domingo tragedy; they would rise, and at the first tap from the drum of the foreign invader, would rally round the standard of emancipation..."¹⁴⁴ Douglass did not try to challenge Underwood's opinion, one that had held sway throughout the Atlantic world ever since Bryan Edwards published his study of the Caribbean in 1797.¹⁴⁵ Douglass was, however, careful, to rely on a Southern Congressman to evoke the "tragedy of St. Domingo," before he then proceeded to describe for his audience, in detail, the myriad ways that slave owners acted barbarously. Implicitly Douglass seemed to be in agreement with Underwood's underlying premise thus, he devoted the remainder of his speech to reminding his

¹⁴³ For an extended discussion of how Douglass evoked the Haitian Revolution during the antebellum era see the previous chapter.

¹⁴⁴ Frederick Douglass, "Slavery, The Free Church, and British Agitation Against Bondage: An Address Delivered in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, England, On 3 August 1846," ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One*...320-321.

¹⁴⁵ Edwards' history of the Haitian Revolution was originally published as: *An Historical Survey of the French Colony in the Island of St. Domingo: Comprehending an Account of the Revolt of the Negroes in the Year 1791, and a Detail of the Military Transactions of the British Army in the Years 1793 & 1794* (London: John Stockdale, 1797). Shortly thereafter, it was reprinted as the final volume of Edwards' four volume *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies. To which is added, An Historical Survey of the French Colony in the Island of St. Domingo*. The first edition printed in the United States appeared in 1806. (Philadelphia: James Humphreys, 1806).

audience that if America's slaves, or slaves anywhere for that matter, acted like savages it was only the result of how they had been treated by those that saw them as chattel. Therefore, Douglass was able to explain how horrific acts of violence on the part of revolting slaves may be a natural outgrowth of slavery itself without ever explicitly acknowledging that such acts actually occurred in St. Domingue/Haiti. In a nod to how much events in St. Domingue/Haiti may have shaped his view of insurrection, Douglass was also careful to point out that so long as there was a political union between Northern and Southern states then an American version of the Haitian Revolution would not succeed.¹⁴⁶ Without the context of political instability, Douglass was not sanguine about a slave insurrection's chances of succeeding in the United States.

As soon as secession turned from angry rhetoric to frightening reality, Douglass resurrected an entire collection of violent imagery associated with the rise of the slaves living in what was then still known as St. Domingue. The political instability that left him, during the antebellum era, pessimistic regarding the likelihood of a successful repetition of the Haitian Revolution occurring in the United States had manifested itself in secession. In January of 1861, Douglass conjured the sundry images associated with the "horrors of St. Domingo" in a lengthy newspaper article on South Carolina's secession. The whole of the article served to simultaneously warn the country about what lay ahead while also reminding his audience that, whether they want it to be so or not, the Civil War will be a war of liberation against a concrete enemy. He reminded his readers that "...she [South Carolina] has yet an immensely difficult and dangerous work before

¹⁴⁶ Douglass, "Slavery, The Free Church, and British Agitation Against Bondage," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One. Speeches, Debates and Interviews: Volume III: 1855-1863*, ed. John Blasingame (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 321.

her. The moorings that bind these States together can only be broken by opinion, backed up by force." Predicting the bloodletting that would soon come, Douglass continued his warning. "The...wisest statesmen...deny the right of peaceful secession. They admit the right of revolution; but revolution in this country is rebellion, and rebellion is treason, and treason is levying war against the United States...There must be swords, guns, powder, balls, and men behind them to use them."¹⁴⁷ Douglass made sure to remind his audience that slaveholders were now traitors and thus legitimate targets for Northern anger. Most importantly, for Douglass, was the way that the coming conflict would provide an opportunity for him to publically engage in fantasies of a successful slave insurrection.

Once the violence of the Civil War was seemingly on the immediate horizon, Douglass embraced the notion of angry slaves committing unspeakable violence against their masters and others. No longer hopeful for a political solution to the problem of slavery, Douglass was free to evoke the "horrors of St. Domingo" in a way that he mostly avoided during the years prior to the War. For the first time in his public life he gave voice to the hope that a successful repetition of the Haitian Revolution could, and probably would, occur in the United States. During the antebellum era any time he referenced the rebellious slaves of St. Domingue/Haiti he would then quickly downplay the notion of St. Domingue/Haiti serving as a model for the United States. By January of 1861, he believed that conditions in the United States mirrored those that existed in St. Domingue in the 1790s. Just as Douglass predicted that the Civil War itself would be violent so too did he predict an uprising of South Carolina's slaves. Though a bit lengthy, the following passage illustrates Douglass' newfound articulation of the insurrectionary

¹⁴⁷ For this quote and the one immediately preceding it see, Frederick Douglass, "Dissolution of the American Union," *Douglass' Monthly* (Rochester, NY: January, 1861).

violence committed by the slaves of St. Domingue. Slaves who rose in rebellion more than a half-century before any a Southern states decided to secede:

"Let them [the slaves of South Carolina] learn that there is enmity between the State and the Federal Government, and that South Carolina has broken away from the Union to defeat their liberation from bondage; that ABRAHAM LINCOLN, the President, is on their side, and against their masters; that he has only been defeated in giving them their liberty by taking the State out of the Union, and it is easy to see that such impressions and ideas might burst forth and spread havoc and death among slaveholders to an extent never surpassed even in the annals of St. Domingo. South Carolina, in such an event, would be more likely to fight her way back into the Union, than to fight her way out of it. Her salvation as a slave State might be made to depend upon Federal arms."¹⁴⁸

In comparing Douglass' antebellum evocations of the "horrors of St. Domingue" to this 1861 article several fascinating differences emerge. To begin with, even in antebellum speeches and articles where Douglass directly addressed the possibility of St. Domingue's slaves having committed atrocities against their former owners he never fully assented to the notion that the "horrors" actually occurred. Recall, that, in his 1846 speech in Great Britain, Douglass only repeated the convictions of a Southerner. Though he did allow the possibility to exist that Underwood's fears were legitimate he avoided confirming whether or not there was any truth undergirding those fears. Moreover, he avoided making any direct comparison between slaves in St. Domingue/Haiti and slaves

¹⁴⁸ Douglass, "Dissolution of the American Union," *Douglass' Monthly*...January, 1861.

in the United States. He agreed with Congressman Underwood that "three millions of hearts...are panting for emancipation..." without explicitly discussing whether or not an insurrection of America's slaves would mirror the level of Haitian violence and degradation that men and women like Mr. Underwood feared.¹⁴⁹ Most significantly, after introducing both the "horrors of St. Domingo," as well the possibility of America's slaves engaging in similar behavior Douglass immediately preceded upon a lengthy description of the violence committed by brutal slave owners. Implicitly, in those antebellum instances when he did acknowledge that the "horrors of St. Domingo," may have existed, Douglass sought to re-frame his audience's perception of slavery violence. By foregrounding the slave owner violence, rather than that committed by rebellious slaves, Douglass was presenting slavery as a system of enforced labor as the true "horror." By January of 1861, Douglass no longer allowed slave holders or their apologists to serve as the sole well-springs of fears of an American repetition of St. Domingue's supposed violence. Nor did he try to avoid conjuring images of marauding slaves, thirsty for slave holder blood. He was now willing to evoke that violence himself, directly. Though his use of the word "might" did allow him to be a bit coy about whether or not an insurrection of America's slaves would lead to a replica of St. Domingue's violence he no longer seemed coy as to whether or not the "horrors of St. Domingue," existed in the first place; nor did he attempt to shift the focus of his audience to slave holder violence. He explicitly and intentionally called to mind an event that he had been obscuring for most of his life up to that point.

¹⁴⁹ Douglass, "Slavery, The Free Church, and British Agitation Against Bondage,"...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume III*...321.

If an analysis of Douglass' antebellum rhetoric moves beyond the 1846 speech then it becomes even clearer how much his construction of a public memory of the "horrors of St. Domingue" changed once secession became official. In one of the first editions of the *North Star* Douglass addressed an article to Henry Clay, one of the country's most well-known politicians as well as one of the most prominent supporters of the American Colonization Society.¹⁵⁰ In this article, Douglass provided quotations from one of Clay's recent speeches and then attempted to refute the claims Clay made. Clay claimed that emancipation without colonization was untenable because "Collisions and conflicts between the two races would be inevitable, and after shocking scenes of rapine and carnage, the extinction or expulsion of the blacks would certainly take place."¹⁵¹ Douglass, like most people of the era, would have been familiar with the way that pro-slavery/pro-colonization individuals would have pointed to the "horrors of St. Domingo" as evidence to support their claims. Thus, in an effort to rebut Clay's rather commonplace claims, Douglass articulated a memory of St. Domingue/Haiti that placed the violence between slaves and slave owners within a post-emancipatory framework. In Douglass' version "It has been clearly proven that that revolution [of St. Domingue's slaves] was not the result of emancipation, but of a cruel attempt to re-enslave an already emancipated people. I am not aware that you have a single fact to support your truly terrible assertion."¹⁵² In short, Douglass was implying that though there was violent insurrection amongst the slaves, the most terrifying acts of violence were only committed after French landowners/Napoleon attempted to re-introduce slavery to the island. In this version of

¹⁵⁰ See chapter one for a brief discussion of the history and purposes of the ACS.

¹⁵¹ Douglass, "Letter to Henry Clay," *North Star* (Rochester, NY: December 3, 1847).

¹⁵² Douglass, "Letter to Henry Clay," *North Star*...December 3, 1847.

events the slaves were emancipated and then resorted to horrific acts of violence only as a means of maintaining their freedom.

Clearly, between the year 1847 and 1861 the political climate had changed. It makes sense that Douglass' antebellum evocations of the Haitian Revolution would avoid foregrounding the imagery that Edwards, Clay and others viewed as normative. Strategically, it would have been illogical for Douglass to push for a political solution to slavery while simultaneously providing ammunition to its defenders. Though America's slaves may have been "panting for freedom," Douglass was careful to avoid discussing the pre-emancipation insurrection in St. Domingue lest anyone assume that America's slaves wanted to draw slave holder blood more than they wanted freedom.¹⁵³ In early 1861, Douglass no longer avoided or denied the "horrors of St. Domingo" as he predicted scenes of rebellious slaves spreading "havoc and death among slaveholders to an extent never surpassed even in the annals of St. Domingo."¹⁵⁴ The question then is why secession would lead Douglass to alter his narrative. Why didn't Douglass, for instance, predict that slaves would flock to the North, or go on strike, or support the Union in some way that did not remind his readers of scenes that he steadfastly avoided describing during the preceding decades?

In 1861, Douglass finally felt comfortable articulating a vision of St. Domingue/Haiti that acknowledged the capacity of rebelling slaves to spread violence and destruction because secession provided him with a legitimate enemy for America's

¹⁵³ Historian, David Blight has noted that, "For Douglass, the question of violence was always more a tactical than a moral problem." The analysis herein of Douglass' rhetoric during both the Civil War and the antebellum era support this characterization. See, David Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War: Keeping Faith in Jubilee* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 92.

¹⁵⁴ Douglass, "Dissolution of the American Union," ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One... Volume III*...January, 1861.

slaves to attack. Prior to secession, if Douglass had celebrated the possibilities of slave vengeance he would have been forced to do so within the framework of a united country whereby slaveholders were still American citizens. During the antebellum era, Douglass had to be careful encouraging America's slaves to emulate the rebellious slaves of St. Domingue/Haiti. Practically, the political conditions were not ripe for rebellion during the antebellum era. Rhetorically, celebrations of violent slaves fighting their way to emancipation reinforced racialized notions of slaves as savages who were not fit for freedom. Thus, he obscured the violence many associated with the "horrors of St. Domingo," in order to avoid providing ammunition to opponents of emancipation while also reducing the possibility of slaves engaging in a rebellion that Douglass believed was doomed to fail.

As soon as slave states, like South Carolina, renounced their allegiance to the United States they became appropriate enemies for not only rebellious slaves but for anyone living in the North. In other words, an American repetition of a Haitian style insurrection was now possible from both a moral and a tactical standpoint. As historian David Blight notes "Douglass was able to unleash his rage against slaveholders in an officially sanctioned war..."¹⁵⁵ If, as Blight notes, in the years following his escape from slavery, Douglass' "...uncompromising aggression against slavery and racism had become largely verbal and literary," then it is reasonable to presume that South Carolina's

¹⁵⁵ Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War*...91. Blight acknowledges that his assessment of Douglass is influenced by the work of psychologist, Allison Davis. Davis suggests that one of the reasons that Douglass was able to survive and eventually triumph over slavery was due to his ability to channel his anger towards slaveholders. However, as Blight points out, he and Davis differ in their assessments of whether or not a Douglass was able to overcome his anger by the time the Civil War erupted. According to Blight, Douglass never fully overcomes his anger whereas Davis sees 1859 as a turning point for Douglass. See, Allison Davis, *Leadership, Love, and Aggression* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983).

secession provided him with the opportunity to give complete license to that aggression.¹⁵⁶ Douglass altered his public narrative of the Haitian Revolution because the transformation of many slaveholders into foreign enemies allowed him, for the first time in his life, to articulate a vision of America's slaves vengefully unleashing years of pent up anger and frustration.

Though the crisis of secession provided Douglass the opportunity to vent years of pent- up rage, it is also likely that he evoked the "horrors of St. Domingo," for more than just the opportunity to experience a personal catharsis. It seems likely that one of the reasons Douglass articulated slave insurrection in the manner that he did in early 1861 is that he was making sure that America's slaves understand that the time was ripe for insurrection. Just as during the antebellum era, such an interpretation is based on the assertion that not only were events in America influencing how Douglass articulated a public memory of the Haitian Revolution but also that Douglass' perception of the unfolding of events during the Haitian Revolution influenced his actions in America. During the antebellum era, even when he spoke of hoping to hear the news of rebellious slaves "spreading death and devastation....," throughout the South, Douglass made it clear that the political situation in the United States made a successful slave insurrection both unlikely and impractical.¹⁵⁷ Thus, once the union between the states was sundered Douglass took it upon himself to make sure the implications of the rupture were clear to those in bondage. It is likely that Douglass believed that the hypothetical scenario he described would filter down to South Carolina's slaves. In the last twenty years, historians

¹⁵⁶ Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War*...91.

¹⁵⁷ Frederick Douglass, "The Colonizationist Revival: An Address Delivered In Boston, Massachusetts, On 31 May 1849,"...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume II*...216-217.

have noted how successfully Northern print culture infiltrated slave communities in the South.¹⁵⁸ Douglass, as a former slave who surreptitiously accessed printed material during his time in bondage, was no doubt aware that his articulation of Abraham Lincoln as a liberator whose emancipatory aims had been thwarted by Southern secession would filter down to slaves throughout the South.¹⁵⁹

It is worth noting that in his attempts to signal to South Carolina's slaves that secession had provided them with an insurrectionary opening, Douglass characterized Lincoln as less ambivalent about emancipation than he actually was at the time.¹⁶⁰ In an attempt to encourage South Carolina's slaves to rebel, Douglass characterized Lincoln as similar to French legislators in the early 1790s: both were eager to abolish slavery but were being prevented from doing so by stubborn slave owners. In doing so, Douglass once more implicitly re-articulated his public memory of the Haitian Revolution.

Almost exactly a year before his January 1861 article, Douglass had endorsed Wendell Phillips' analysis of the Haitian Revolution.¹⁶¹ According to Phillips, not only

¹⁵⁸ See, Matthew J. Clavin, "American Toussaints: Symbol, Subversion...", *...African Americans and the Haitian Revolution...*; Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North & South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); David Kaser, *Books and Libraries in Camp and Battle: The Civil War Experience* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984).

¹⁵⁹ For Douglass' account of his clandestine access to reading material during his enslavement see, Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*...63-65.

¹⁶⁰ Douglass was under no illusion that the Lincoln he presented in the January 1861 *Douglass' Monthly* article was an authentic representation of the actual President-elect. The Republican Party platform of 1860 was more moderate on the question of slavery than their platform from 1856. Douglass himself admitted this frustrating truth in a speech he gave in August of 1860. In the course of this speech, Douglass publicly acknowledged how maddeningly moderate the Republican Party's stated aims were. According to Douglass, "The facts wear anything but a cheering aspect to those of us who looks hopefully to the speedy abolition of slavery by moral and political action...While I see...that the Republican party is far from an abolition party...I sincerely hope for the triumph of that party over all the odds and ends of slavery combined against it." See, Frederick Douglass, "Slavery and the Irrepressible Conflict: An Address Delivered in Geneva, New York, On 1 August 1860," ... *The Frederick Douglass Papers. Series One... Volume III*...381-382.

¹⁶¹ Frederick Douglass, "The Trials and Triumphs of Self-Made Men: An Address Delivered in Halifax, England, On 4 January 1860," ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers...Volume III*...294.

had emancipation come as a result primarily of France's calculations of how to best prevent Britain and/or Spain from acquiring a valuable colony but also that the initial slave insurrection had been directly and almost exclusively fomented by French republican authorities.¹⁶² Once secession became a reality, Douglass implicitly rejected Phillips' characterization of events in St. Domingue/Haiti by describing the hypothetical insurrection of South Carolina's slaves as being driven by the slaves themselves. A construction of slaves as being savvy enough to rebel only when political conditions are the most favorable is significantly different than Phillips' construction of Haiti's slaves as being goaded to rebel by French authorities.¹⁶³

The final reason that Douglass was so willing to conjure both the "horrors of St. Domingo" and the specter of American slaves inflicting even more carnage on slave owners than their Haitian counterparts has to do with the timing of his article. Douglass was being intentionally inflammatory in order to ensure that secession was not solved via political compromise. Once more, Douglass' understanding of how political instability contributed to the abolition of slavery in St. Domingue/Haiti influenced his desire to see the secession crisis morph into an actual Civil War, or, at least, a permanent separation between the Union and the Confederacy.¹⁶⁴ It is worth noting that Douglass' rhetoric in

¹⁶² Wendell Phillips, "Lectures: Toussaint L'Ouverture," ... *Lectures and Speeches*.

¹⁶³ Intentionally or not, Douglass' 1861 articulation echoed the antebellum narrative of the Haitian Revolution authored by African-American activist and minister, James T. Holley. See, James T. Holley, "A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race ... *Lift Every Voice*..." 288-304.

¹⁶⁴ It is unclear if Douglass' private perceptions of the Haitian Revolution changed over time, like his articulation of a public memory did, or if he maintained a consistent private memory of the Haitian Revolution throughout his life. In a sense, the question is moot. Whether Douglass' personal memory of the Haitian Revolution was plastic or not, his constructions of a public memory of the event always took for granted that political instability in France and on the island contributed to emancipation. Thus, whether his personal convictions mirrored his public articulations or whether they changed as the antebellum era gave way to the Civil War the relationship between emancipation and political instability remained constant. Though Phillips' antebellum version of events contrasts with Douglass' 1861 description, both versions see a correlation between instability and emancipation.

this instance was quite risky from a strategic standpoint. Though secession meant that the political instability he viewed as a necessary component of a successful large-scale slave revolt was now present he still had to convince his audience that African-Americans possessed an aptitude for citizenship. Additionally, celebrating the possibility of a violent slave revolt would certainly have angered residents of border-states, like Maryland or Kentucky, who were still part of the Union. However, Douglass' inflammatory comments seem designed to ensure one thing: that a peaceful reconciliation between the South and the North did not happen. From Douglass' perspective, if the border-states joined the Confederacy or if war was avoided altogether then emancipation, either via slave revolt or a flood of runaway slaves emigrating from the South, was imminent. Recall his antebellum comments that it was only a Union between the North and the South that prevented a successful slave revolt in the first place. In short, Douglass seemed to have presented an incendiary vision of rebellious slaves in an effort to make the Confederacy less likely to reconcile with the Federal government. All other considerations seemed to have been superseded by this goal.

The luxury of hindsight makes it easy for historians to forget that, even after secession was a reality, there were many who sought to avoid war at all costs. Douglass' comments from January 1861 seemed designed expressly to prevent any sort of compromise to the challenges presented by Southern secession. As the calendar turned and 1861 dawned, Douglass would have been justified in fearing that the crisis of disunion would be solved without a single shot fired and, more importantly, a single slave freed. Building upon the work of historian David Potter, Blight has even gone as far as asserting that "What," Douglass "...dreaded the most was the idea that a great

opportunity to strike a lasting blow for black freedom might be lost forever through the desire for peaceful reconstruction...¹⁶⁵ Douglass' fear of reconciliation was so great that it drove him to articulate a memory of the Haitian Revolution that he had previously avoided.

Several events from late 1860 and early 1861 illustrate how many Northerners, and even quite a few Southerners, sought to avoid war. Even before secession had become official, Douglass had a first-hand experience with Northern frustration with abolition and its supporters. On December 3rd, 1860 Douglass had been scheduled to speak at Boston's Tremont Temple in honor of the first anniversary of the execution of John Brown. Douglass, however, was prevented from presenting his formal address as the meeting devolved into violence and the subsequent arrests of several anti-slavery supporters. Partisans of the recently defeated Constitutional Union party had stormed the hall and used rhetoric and physical force in an effort to prevent the meeting from taking place.¹⁶⁶ The events at Tremont Temple illustrate the sentiments of the great number of individuals who viewed abolitionists, and particularly black abolitionists, as the ultimate cause of the secession crisis.¹⁶⁷ To a certain extent, Douglass' 1861 inflammatory comments about the possibility of an American repetition of the Haitian Revolution were informed by the desire to make sure Southerners shared these sentiments. Also, considering that the melee at Tremont Temple occurred just weeks after Douglass and others had failed to convince the voters of New York to repeal an onerous property

¹⁶⁵ Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War*...67. See, David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis: 1848-1861* (New York: Harper Collins, 1977).

¹⁶⁶ For more details on the meeting and its disruption see, Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War*...91; and, William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), 208-211.

¹⁶⁷ McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*...209.

requirement for African-American voters, one can imagine that Douglass clearly recognized that many Americans desired an end to secession much more so than a war to end slavery.¹⁶⁸

Broader political developments also contributed to Douglass' sense of despair over the possibility of a negotiated solution to secession. Blight has described the prevailing national mood during the brief time period between Lincoln's election and subsequent inauguration as characterized by "...a fervor to preserve the Union and to sustain normal economic relations with the South."¹⁶⁹ This fervor led to countless proposals being passed at pro-compromise meetings throughout the country. The well-known Crittenden Compromise is illustrative of the tone of most of the proposals being presented during December of 1860.¹⁷⁰ Though each of these proposals sought to solve the crisis of secession in unique ways, none of them suggested eliminating slavery. Taken as a whole, it is easy to see how the personal experiences of Douglass combined with the flood of compromise proposals delivered to Congress to create a feeling of pessimism for Douglass and other abolitionists.¹⁷¹ It is in the midst of this uncertain context, whereby many within the abolitionist movement were fearful that once more America's politicians would find a way to sacrifice emancipation on the altar of national compromise, that

¹⁶⁸ As evidence of how moderate the Republican Party platform must have seemed to voters in 1860, it is worth noting that Lincoln carried New York State on the same ballot whereby voters rejected nullifying a law requiring that African-American males possess \$250 in order to cast a ballot.

¹⁶⁹ Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War*...65.

¹⁷⁰ Presented to the Senate on December 18, 1860 by Kentucky Senator, John J. Crittenden. Crittenden proposed a series of amendments and congressional legislation, all designed to preserve the Union. In general, Crittenden's proposal was more popular with Southern legislators than Republicans as it preserved slavery and allowed for its territorial expansion.

¹⁷¹ According to Blight, "At least until late February, 1861, Douglass believed the possibility of compromise to be real." See, Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War*...65.

Douglass, more clearly than at any other time in his life, evoked the "horrors of St. Domingo."¹⁷²

In an effort to ensure that a military conflict or a permanent separation that he believed would lead to emancipation, either via insurrection or some other means, occurred Douglass presented himself and other abolitionists as exactly what many Southerners had believed they were for decades.¹⁷³ Just as he had at times during the antebellum era, Douglass' portrayal of the Haitian Revolution, in this specific instance, echoed Southern voices. In November of 1860, John C. Calhoun's son, Andrew, argued that abolitionists "would delight to see [the Haitian Revolution] re-enacted now with us."¹⁷⁴ Douglass, therefore, wanted to encourage the Southern fear that those in the North in general and those in the Republican Party specifically were aligned against them in a way that threatened their way of life. In his January 1861 letter, he not only revealed in the fact that America's slaves would exceed their Haitian counterparts in their ability to spread death and degradation but he also taunted Southern pride and honor by predicting that Southerners may need to turn to the North for protection from their slaves. According to Douglass, Southerners had little choice but to remain steadfast in their

¹⁷² For an extended discussion of the likelihood and perceived likelihood a compromised solution to secession see, David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis: America Before the Civil War, 1848-1861* (New York: Harper Collins, 1977).

¹⁷³ For the sake of comparison, it is worth noting that many of the themes expressed by Douglass in his January, 1861 article were quite similar to those expressed by Virginia's prosecuting attorney at the trial of John Brown in 1859. According to attorney Andrew Hunter, the men who invaded Harpers Ferry had "attempted to usurp the government, manumit our slaves, confiscate the property of slaveholders...and make it [the South] another Hayti." See, Robert M. DeWitt, *The Life, Trial, and Execution of Captain John Brown Known as "Old Brown of Ossawatimie," With a Full Account of the Attempted Insurrection at Harpers Ferry* (New York, 1859; reprinted New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 92-93.

¹⁷⁴ "Annual Address of President A.P. Calhoun, delivered in the State House, before the State Agricultural Society, on Tuesday Evening, November 13, 1860," *Daily South Carolinian*, 14 November 1860.

efforts at disunion.¹⁷⁵ Otherwise, they would be rejoining a country governed by a radical abolitionist, at least as Douglass described him, and teeming with activists eager to see slave owner blood drawn by the sword of rebellious bonds people. Recall, however, that Douglass was not only aiming his barbs at the South. He made sure to remind Northerners that secession was an act of treason, thus leaving those Northerners in the pro-compromise camp with the uninviting prospect of expecting the federal government to ignore acts of war in the name of securing a peaceful compromise.¹⁷⁶ With the publication of the February edition of his periodical, Douglass made explicit his hopes regarding the idea of compromise and conflict between the states. In an oft-cited passage, he wrote "All compromises now are but as new wine to old bottles, new cloth to old garments...If there is not wisdom and virtue enough in the land to rid the country of slavery, then the next best thing is to let the South go to her own place, and be made to drink the wine cup of wrath and fire, which her long career of cruelty, barbarism and blood shall call down upon her guilty head."¹⁷⁷ The preceding is an appropriate summary for Douglass' secession-era construction of a memory of the Haitian Revolution: he was willing and able to unleash the "horrors of St. Domingo" both

¹⁷⁵ Modern scholarship confirms what Douglass no doubt suspected at the time. According to Matthew J. Clavin, "the Haitian Revolution was a unifying symbol around which disparate southern people could find common cause." See, Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War...* 68.

¹⁷⁶ Douglass, "Dissolution of the American Union," *Douglass' Monthly*...January, 1861. Once secession became a reality and before shots were fired at Ft. Sumter, Douglass made a habit of challenging the bravery and honor of Northerners. Just as with his evocation of the most terrifying aspects of the Haitian Revolution his goal was simple: ensuring that the outcome of secession was decided on the battlefield and not on the floor of Congress. In the February, 1861 edition of *Douglass' Monthly*, he wrote that, "As between the North and the South, history will record the fact that, the latter...acts bravely, and displayed a manly spirit, while the former...acted the part of miserable cowards, insensible alike to the requirements of self-respect or duty." See, Douglass, "The Union and How to Save It," *Douglass' Monthly* (Rochester, NY: February, 1861).

¹⁷⁷ Douglass, "The Union and How to Save It," *Douglass' Monthly*...February, 1861.

triumphantly and provocatively in an effort to ensure that whatever else secession might lead to it would certainly be unable to avoid the crossroads of emancipation.

Douglass was not the only anti-slavery activist to use a Haitian framework to engage with the issue of secession in late 1860/early 1861. In his January inaugural address the recently elected Republican Governor of Massachusetts, John A. Andrew, referenced the slave insurrection of St. Domingue/Haiti. Though Andrew's usage of a memory of the Haitian Revolution was similar to Douglass', the tone of his statements was qualitatively different than those of Douglass. Andrew reminded his audience that secession would inevitably lead to "...the insecurity to life and property which will result throughout the whole South from fear of servile insurrection." He continued to conjure the image of rebelling slaves by paraphrasing a statement by Thomas Jefferson that emancipation would come as the result of "the generous energy of our minds, or by the bloody process of St. Domingo."¹⁷⁸ Moreover, just as Douglass, during the months separating secession from War, present revolting slaves, in St. Domingue/Haiti and in the United States, as savvy political observers who only rebelled when the timing was right, so too did Andrew. However, Andrew's speech lacked the triumphalism of Douglass' assertion and he, not surprisingly as an elected official, displayed more fealty to the idea of national reconciliation and union than Douglass. Whereas Douglass desired abolition or disunion, Andrew seemed to evoke the violence associated with Haiti in order to frighten Southern states back into the Union. His choice of Jefferson was not accidental: it suggests that he was attempting to advise the South of the folly of their actions by relying on arguments made by a Southerner and a slaveholder.

¹⁷⁸ John J. Andrew, "The Views of Massachusetts," *The Christian Recorder* (Philadelphia: January 19, 1861).

Governor Andrew was not the only New England abolitionist who, as secession threatened to become open war, referred to Jefferson's dire warning. In a Thanksgiving Day sermon, Rev. Samuel J. May, of Syracuse, N.Y, in the midst of describing how God was on the side of the oppressed, repeated Jefferson's warning to his congregation.¹⁷⁹ As opposed to Douglass' taunting of Southerners, both Andrew and May, though in no way sympathetic to slavery or its apologists, seemed to be admonishing South Carolina. Whereas Douglass seemed to be eagerly anticipating what may come, they were warning the South of what tragedy may befall them. In essence, they were referring to St. Domingue/Haiti as a means of negotiation.¹⁸⁰ For his part, Douglass seemed to have come to the conclusion that the time for negotiated solutions had passed.

The secession era evocation of a public memory of the Haitian Revolution that most closely resembled Douglass' was presented at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society the same month that Douglass published his views on secession. One of John Brown's attorney's, George H. Hoyt, addressed the meeting with comments that Douglass himself could have written. On South Carolina's secession, Hoyt stated that "I declare to-day that I believe the Southern States have a right to secede...I am glad of it...So I say the slave States have seceded, and will stay in that attitude, and I am glad of it, because I see in that condition of affairs a bright ray of hope for the persecuted and oppressed negro." Hoyt's "bright ray of hope," was based on a celebratory memory of the insurrection of St. Domingo's slaves. He, much like Douglass,

¹⁷⁹ William Lloyd Garrison, "No Compromise With Oppression," *The Liberator* (Boston: December 21, 1860).

¹⁸⁰ Prior to his election as Governor, Andrew had been one of the attorneys who defended the Boston citizens arrested in connection with the kidnapping/repossession of the escaped slave, Anthony Burns. For more information on this specific incident as well as the life of Andrew in general see, Henry Greenleaf Pearson, *The Life of John A. Andrew: Governor of Massachusetts, 1861-1865, Volume 1* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1904).

saw the coming conflict as fortuitous because "In the course of events, those States [that have chosen to secede] will either abolish slavery as a matter of self-preservation (and God speed that day) or else the sun of some morning will shine on another St Domingo."¹⁸¹ For Hoyt and Douglass, more so than for Andrew or May, a civil war was less a tragedy to be avoided and more an opportunity to be seized. Not surprisingly, given the influence of Garrisonian political thought on the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Hoyt's comments were greeted with a mixture of cheers and hisses.¹⁸² One can only imagine how most Northerners felt about Douglass' relatively newfound celebratory articulation of rebellious slaves killing their way to freedom.

Once shots were fired at Fort Sumter, Douglass' wish to see secession become a full-fledged civil conflict came true. As such, for the remainder of the war Douglass' articulations of a public memory of the "horrors of St. Domingo," were muted. On the whole, Douglass' war time insistence on ignoring the "horrors" was even more complete than it was during the antebellum era. He didn't evoke them to focus on slave owner cruelty, or as a means of frightening the South, or in an attempt to sabotage any efforts at compromise. From April of 1861 until April of 1865, he rarely mentioned them at all in his speeches or in the pages of his paper. As the crisis of secession morphed into military conflict, Douglass' attention was focused on one overarching goal: he wanted to ensure that African-Americans were given the opportunity to participate in the Civil War as

¹⁸¹ William Lloyd Garrison, "Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society," *The Liberator* (Boston: February 1, 1861).

¹⁸² Originally, the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society had been known as the New England Anti-Slavery Society and was founded by, among others, William Lloyd Garrison. As Garrison and others moved to launch the broader based, American Anti-Slavery Society the title New England was replaced with the Massachusetts moniker. Throughout the antebellum era, the Boston-based Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society was one of the largest and most staunchly Garrisonian of all the state auxiliary anti-slavery societies.

soldiers in the Union Army. Therefore, there was no need for him to remind his readers of the violent acts that rebellious slaves or their owners were capable of. Articulating a memory of the former would have made it more difficult to argue that African-Americans were civilized people who could fight within an organized military framework whereas the latter image, of cruel slave owners beating their slaves into a less than human state of existence, presented African-Americans as creatures worthy of pity more than men worthy of citizenship.

Douglass' insistence on African-American men being authorized to fight in the Civil War grew out of his conviction that being a soldier entitled one to reap the benefits of citizenship. The notion that citizenship and military service were mutually constitutive has a long history in European political thought and Douglass' sentiments on African-American soldiery reflected the accretion of centuries of Western values.¹⁸³ Unlike some of his African-American contemporaries, from the very beginning of the War, Douglass recognized the importance of African-American soldiers and their participation in the Union war effort.¹⁸⁴ To Douglass "...black soldiers came to symbolize their people's struggle for freedom, a recognition of their humanity, the rights of citizenship, and a

¹⁸³ For an introduction to the concept of citizen-soldiers as well as a discussion of how the concept was created in the classical era of Greece and Rome and transmitted throughout history see, Leo Braudy, *From Chivalry to Terrorism: War and the Changing Nature of Masculinity* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2010).

¹⁸⁴ In April of 1861, Elisha Weaver, editor of *The Christian Recorder*, wrote that, "To offer ourselves now [for military service] is to abandon *self-respect* and invite insult." According to Weaver, African-Americans had no reason to fight a war for a country where "not only our citizenship, but our common humanity is denied." See, Elisha Weaver, "The Star Spangled Banner and the Duty of Colored Americans to that Flag," *The Christian Recorder* (Philadelphia: April 27, 1861). Moreover, the Emancipation Proclamation did not silence all those African-Americans who opposed African-American participation in the War. For some, the lack of African-American officers and the inequity in the pay of African-American enlisted men was too much to stomach. See, J. P. Campbell, "Give Us Equal Pay And We Will Go To War," ...*Lift Every Voice*...426-428.

sense of belonging to a new nation."¹⁸⁵ In an oft-repeated formulation, Douglass argued that once an African-American had "...an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder, and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth...which can deny that he has earned the right of citizenship in the United States."¹⁸⁶ According to Douglass, arming African-Americans had political, as well as psycho-social benefits. He saw African-American participation in Civil War as affecting not only African-American citizenship but also their manhood. In his words "We [African-Americans] have been everywhere despised as cowards! As wanting in manly spirit, as tamely submitting to the condition of slavery. A time is at hand, I trust, when this reproach will be wiped out."¹⁸⁷ Thus, from the outset of the War, Douglass was one of the loudest and most persistent voices advocating in favor of the Union army allowing African-American soldiers to join its ranks. Incredibly, though Douglass presented his opinion regarding the usage of African-American troops countless times over the course of the War he steadfastly avoided incorporating a memory of the Haitian Revolution, generally, or Toussaint Louverture, specifically, into his arguments.¹⁸⁸ Given the fact that Toussaint and the troops under his command would seem to offer excellent evidence as to the martial

¹⁸⁵ Blight, *Frederick Douglass*...148.

¹⁸⁶ Frederick Douglass, "Address for the Promotion of Colored Enlistments," in *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass, Volume III: The Civil War, 1861-1865*, ed. Phillip Foner (New York: International Publishers, 1952), 365.

¹⁸⁷ Frederick Douglass, "Revolutions Never Go Backward: An Address Delivered in Rochester, New York, On 5 May, 1861,"...*The Frederick Douglass Papers. Series One...Volume III*...429.

¹⁸⁸ The closest that Douglass comes to conjuring the Haitian Revolution during his efforts to see African-Americans included, as soldiers, in the Union war effort was the 1863 appearance in *Douglass' Monthly* of an article that had been reprinted from the *New York Tribune*. This article will be discussed, in-text, in a later section. The argument presented above is not meant to imply that Douglass never once mentioned Toussaint during the course of the Civil War. However, the few times that Douglass did mention Toussaint by name it was in an almost perfunctory manner and Douglass never offered Toussaint as proof of the martial capabilities of African-Americans.

capabilities of African-Americans their collective absence from Douglass' Civil War era discourse is remarkable.¹⁸⁹

What makes Douglass' avoidance of all things Toussaint, in his efforts to argue for the usage of African-American soldiers, even more noteworthy is the fact that so many other people at this time *were* pointing to Haiti and Toussaint as evidence of the capabilities of African-American soldiers. Before examining the how and the why of Douglass' exclusion of Toussaint/Haiti from his Civil War era rhetoric it is worthwhile to look at those who *did* include memories of Toussaint/Haiti in their rhetoric.

Historian Matthew Clavin's recently published work on the relationship between the Civil War and the Haitian Revolution contains an entire chapter devoted to the myriad ways that anti-slavery activists used a memory of Toussaint/the Haitian Revolution to help them frame their arguments about the War and African-American participation in the War as soldiers. Not only does Clavin point to statements made by prominent European-America abolitionists, like Elizur Wright and Wendell Phillips, but he also uncovers evidence that many African-American activists relied on their constructed memories of Toussaint/the Haitian Revolution as well. Wright went so far as to publish a pamphlet, in early 1861, entitled, *The Lesson of St. Domingo: How to Make the War Short and the Peace Righteous* whereas well-known African-American abolitionist, William Wells Brown, celebrated not only Toussaint but also other Haitian generals in his 1863 reference book entitled, *The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His*

¹⁸⁹ Recall that during the antebellum era Douglass *did* indeed articulate a public memory of Toussaint and his troops that celebrated their ability to wage war against an organized foe. In a biography of Toussaint, penned by Douglass in early 1848, he praises Toussaint's, "undaunted courage," "foresight," and "superior military skill." See, Frederick Douglass, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *North Star* (Rochester, NY: February 18, 1848). For additional discussion of how African-Americans presented Toussaint during the antebellum era see previous chapter.

Achievements. Additionally, the preceding chapter of this study discussed Phillips' well-known oral biography of Toussaint and though originally performed prior to the Civil War it unequivocally celebrated the military capabilities of Toussaint and his troops and was presented countless times during the War.¹⁹⁰ Also, throughout 1862 the *Atlantic Monthly* published a serialized history of the Haitian Revolution. The publication of this history, during the first full year of the Civil War, was designed to provide a revolutionary framework from which Northerners could conceptualize the African-American participation in the War. The author of this history, John Weiss, pointed to Haiti as evidence that those of African descent possessed the requisite "valor and fighting qualities," needed to contribute to the Union war effort.¹⁹¹ Perhaps the country's most famous abolitionist, then and now, William Lloyd Garrison even turned to Haiti's revolutionary history when discussing the appropriate military role for African-Americans. In a speech given at Williams College in August of 1862, Garrison spoke what can be viewed as a summation of how many anti-slavery activists relied on a public memory of the Haitian Revolution during the War: "He is an ignoramus, or a slanderer, who impeaches their [those of African descent] courage or questions their capacity. In St. Domingo, they vanquished the best troops of Napoleon, and have maintained their independence to this day."¹⁹² Whether the words were written or spoken; whether they leapt from the imagination of Wright, Weiss, Brown, Phillips, Garrison, Redpath, or even

¹⁹⁰ Another example of the reappearance of antebellum memories of a Toussaint/Haiti is James Redpath's 1863 reprinting of John Beard's *Toussaint L'Ouverture: Biography and Autobiography*. See, John Beard and James Redpath, *Toussaint L'Ouverture: Biography and Autobiography* (Boston: James Redpath, 1863).

¹⁹¹ John Weiss, "The Horrors of San Domingo," *Atlantic Monthly* 11, 65 (March 1863), 289-306.

¹⁹² William Lloyd Garrison, "Extract from an Oration, Delivered before the Adelpic Union Society of Williams College," *Douglass' Monthly* (Rochester, NY: August, 1862).

anonymous authors who sent letters to Northern newspapers the argument was nearly identical each time.¹⁹³ These individuals argued that Toussaint, and the troops who fought under his command, were proof that African-Americans should and could contribute to a Northern victory in the Civil War by fighting in the Union army.

Though no one was probably more vociferous in their support of African-Americans being allowed to fight in the Union army, Douglass never once relied on a memory of the Haitian Revolution to buttress his arguments. From April of 1861 through July of 1863, Douglass spoke publically on the topic of African-American soldiers on a minimum of nine different occasions.¹⁹⁴ Whether he was speaking in the earliest days of the War, when many thought that the conflict would soon be over, or he was addressing crowds in the heady days after the Emancipation Proclamation, Douglass' avoidance of

¹⁹³ Clavin has discovered multiple letters, published in Northern newspapers, that argued for the inclusion of African-American soldiers in the Union army. Much like the published writings/speeches of more well-known activists, these letters almost invariably pointed to the Haitian Revolution as evidence that those of African descent/ex-slaves would be suitable for combat. For a lengthier discussion of not only this topic but all of the themes from this paragraph see, Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War...* 77-97.

¹⁹⁴ It is probably impossible to determine the precise number of times Douglass spoke about arming African-Americans as not all of his speeches were transcribed for posterity. Moreover, he frequently used the same or a similar speech on different occasions and in front of different audiences. The number of speeches referred to in-text is based on those that were transcribed and have been published in *The Frederick Douglass Papers*. For the full text of each of the speeches referenced above see, Frederick Douglass, "Hope and Despair in These Cowardly Times: An Address Delivered in Rochester, New York, On 28 April, 1861,"; "Revolutions Never Go Backward: An Address Delivered in Rochester, New York, On 5 May, 1861,"; "Pictures and Progress: An Address Delivered in Boston, Massachusetts, On 3 December 1861,"; "Fighting the Rebels With One Hand: An Address Delivered in Philadelphia: Pennsylvania, On 14 January 1862,"; "The Black Man's Future in the Southern States: An Address Delivered in Boston, Massachusetts, On 5 February 1862,"; "The Proclamation and a Negro Army: An Address Delivered in New York, New York, On 6 February 1863,"; "The Present and Future of the Colored Race in America: An Address Delivered in Brooklyn, New York, On 15 May 1863,"; "Black Soldiers, White Officers: Remarks Delivered in Boston, Massachusetts, On 28, 29 May 1863,"; "Negroes and the National War Effort: An Address Delivered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, On 6 July 1863,"...*The Frederick Douglass Papers. Series One...Volume III...*, 424-427; 428-434; 452-472; 473-488; 489-507; 549-569; 570-583; 584-589; 590-597.

all things relating to the Haitian Revolution was total and consistent. He did, however, rely on other constructed memories from America's past.

Though Douglass steadfastly avoided appealing to a memory Toussaint and the troops under his command, he did rely on the articulation of various other memories in framing his arguments about African-Americans soldiery. By far, the most common memories that Douglass referenced were those related to the American Revolution and the War of 1812. At times, the references were somewhat implicit such as, early in the War, when Douglass asserted that "...you Northerners are too aristocratic to March by the side of a "nigger.""¹⁹⁵ By calling Northerners, "aristocratic," while simultaneously pointing out that the South was "wiser," in their use of African-Americans as soldiers, Douglass was appealing to a collective American memory of the Revolution of 1776 and its legacy. He was attempting to embarrass the federal government by implying that they were more British than American; in this formulation, it was the South who truly carried on the legacy of the country's founding.¹⁹⁶

Typically, Douglass' arguments relied on more direct articulations of American history. One of his most commonly used stratagems was to look to America's founding and its earliest decades as a sovereign republic as halcyon days, long since lost. Just as Douglass accused Northerners of being "aristocratic" in order to remind them that America was founded, supposedly, on principles of equality so too did he employ memories of the country's earliest military engagements to remind his audience what they

¹⁹⁵ Douglass, "Hope and Despair in These Cowardly Times....," ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Volume III*...427.

¹⁹⁶ For the purposes of the present analysis, it matters little if the American War for Independence was anti-aristocracy in nature and/or results. What matters was that many nineteenth-century Americans believed that it was. For a deeper discussion of this topic see, Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

had lost and what they were fighting to recover. Ironically, Douglass relied upon the actions of slave holders to convince policy makers that they should utilize African-American soldiers. He frequently pointed out that not only had African-Americans fought alongside "...general Jackson at New Orleans," but also were not denied the right to fight by, "...the fathers of the Republic," during the course of the American Revolution.¹⁹⁷

Typically, Douglass was exceedingly direct in arguing that the United States had regressed in the decades since its founding. His articulation of memories of both General Washington and General Jackson provided him with excellent evidence of how racialized restrictions on who was allowed to serve his country were not, in fact, American traditions. In early 1862 he asserted that "It shows the deep degeneracy of our times-the height from which we have fallen-that, while Washington, in 1776, and Jackson, in 1814, could fight side by side with negroes, now, not even the best of our generals are willing so to fight. Is McClellan better than Washington? Is Halleck better than Jackson?"¹⁹⁸

Douglass relied on a memory of the country's infancy to frame the Civil War as a conservative revolution. One that, if executed properly, would bring momentous changes to the country, such as ending slavery and seeding African-American citizenship, by looking to its past.

Though he often relied on a memory of Washington and Jackson as pseudo-progressives who allowed African-American soldiers to join their ranks, he was not averse to using the memory of non-Haitian slave revolts to further bolster his arguments. In what is one of Douglass' most well-known speeches, he adapted the memories he used for his audience and his purposes. Once the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect

¹⁹⁷ Douglass, "Pictures and Progress...", *The Frederick Douglass Papers...Vol. III*...468.

¹⁹⁸ Douglass, "Fighting the Rebels With One. Hand...", *The Frederick Douglass Papers...Vol. III*...484.

and African-Americans were finally allowed to join the Union army, Douglass again looked to the past to convince African-Americans to enlist. In a speech, entitled, simply, "Men of Color, To Arms!" that was reprinted in *Douglass' Monthly* and in pamphlet form, he reminded African-Americans of their proud ancestors who chose to "die free," rather "than to live [as] slaves."¹⁹⁹ Besides mentioning two African-American participants in John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry, Douglass also implored his audience to "Remember Denmark Vesey of Charleston.—Remember Nathaniel Turner of South Hampton."²⁰⁰ Douglass turned rebellious slaves into brave martyrs for the anti-slavery cause; men who could serve as signposts to those African-American skeptics, cynics, and cowards who may have looked askance at the Northern war effort. Once more, just as was the case with his speeches designed to encourage changes in the government's enlistment restrictions, though the situation seemed to have warranted it, Douglass made sure to avoid discussing the most famous anti-slavery martyr of them all: Toussaint.²⁰¹

The pages of *Douglass' Monthly* reveal the same level of avoidance of Toussaint and his troops as do Douglass' speeches. Though articles on Haiti and its contemporary challenges and triumphs were frequently published, articles on Haiti's Revolutionary past appeared much less frequently. Moreover, even when Haiti's revolution *was* discussed

¹⁹⁹ Douglass, "Men of Color, To Arms!" *Douglass' Monthly*...March, 1863. According to Clavin, the title of Douglass' essay became a popular slogan on broadsides used in various cities to recruit African-American soldiers. See, Clavin, "American Toussaints...", *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution*...110.

²⁰⁰ Douglass, "Men of Color, To Arms!" *Douglass' Monthly*...March, 1863.

²⁰¹ Clavin argues that although Douglass never explicitly mentioned Toussaint in this speech, the Haitian Revolution is part of the speech's implicit sub-text. He points out that the phrase "to arms" was commonly associated with the Haitian Revolution in general and Toussaint's military exploits specifically. Though this is a fascinating assertion it fails to address the issue of why a memory of Toussaint/the Haitian Revolution would have been used only implicitly whereas the memories of Nat Turner and Denmark Vesey, for example, were articulated explicitly. A further discussion of this issue occurs in-text later in this essay. See, Clavin, "American Toussaints...", *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution*...109-110.

within the pages of his paper those discussions typically neglected to mention Toussaint or to place arguments in favor of arming African-Americans within a Haitian framework.²⁰² In order to better understand the degree that *Douglass' Monthly* avoided discussions of Toussaint, a comparison with Garrison's *The Liberator* is warranted. From 1861-1863, *Douglass' Monthly* mentioned the name Toussaint in a total of three articles out of thirty-six issues. During the exact same time frame, *The Liberator* mentioned Toussaint's name in a total of forty-eight articles over the course of one hundred fifty-six issues.²⁰³ Even when accounting for the fact that a single edition of a paper may have contained multiple articles about Toussaint, a reader of *The Liberator* saw Toussaint's name in print in 25% of the issues they read whereas a reader of *Douglass' Monthly* would have only seen that same name a little more than 8% of the time. Obviously this is a crude quantitative comparison that fails to account for the qualitative ways that each newspaper articulated a memory of Toussaint. Two of the *Douglass' Monthly* articles that mentioned Toussaint did so in the course of discussing the history of the Haitian Revolution: one of these was a response to Elizur Wright's aforementioned pamphlet and the other was an opinion piece, by James Redpath, that argued in opposition to Spain's attempted acquisition of the eastern part of the island of San Domingue. Redpath's article only briefly mentioned Toussaint as it provided a cursory summary of the island's

²⁰² Perhaps the closest Douglass came to using a memory of the Haitian Revolution to argue for allowing African-Americans to enlist in the Union army came in the form of the "Remarks" printed in response to a letter that someone had mailed to *Douglass' Monthly*. The anonymous letter writer mentioned that "...it seems to me extremely proper that the descendants of Africans should take a prominent part in a war which will eventually lead to a general emancipation of the race... Every body knows what bravery the blacks displayed in St. Domingo." Without specifically mentioning Haiti or her revolution, Douglass responded that "The measure recommended [in the anonymous letter]...meets our entire approval. [The author of the letter] speaks only what is passing in the minds of all thoughtful colored men of the North." See, Douglass, "Black Regiments Proposed," *Douglass' Monthly* (Rochester, NY: May, 1861).

history.²⁰⁴ Though Wright's pamphlet certainly argued that events from the Haitian Revolution could serve as a template for how the Union should wage the Civil War the response, authored by A. Tate and printed in *Douglass' Monthly*, was chiefly focused on correcting errors in Wright's account of the Revolution.²⁰⁵ In general, Tate was concerned that Wright's account made relations between the 'free coloreds' and slaves of St. Domingue appear more contentious than they actually were.²⁰⁶ Though Tate's response did contain excerpts from Wright's pamphlet, it is unclear why Douglass would choose to publish Tate's response and not Wright's pamphlet itself.²⁰⁷ Although Tate made it clear that he agreed with the main argument expressed in Wright's pamphlet, (Namely, that the United States should recall that the slaves of St. Domingue/Haiti were more than capable soldiers whose skill and discipline ensured both emancipation and Haitian independence.), by only publishing Tate's corrections Douglass, perhaps unwittingly, cast doubts on the veracity of the entirety of Wright's pamphlet.

In what must be viewed as the exception that proves the rule, Douglass did print *one* article that mentioned Toussaint in the midst of a discussion about African-American soldiers. In August of 1861, *Douglass' Monthly* published an article that celebrated the heroic deeds of William Tillman. After scuttling the efforts of Confederate privateers to abscond with a Northern merchant vessel, Tillman, employed as a steward on the T.J.

²⁰⁴ Recall, that, in 1863, Redpath re-published John Beard's antebellum biography of Toussaint. There were no excerpts from nor advertisements for this well-known book in any edition of *Douglass' Monthly*. On the other hand, both advertisements from and excerpts for this book appeared in *The Liberator* throughout 1863.

²⁰⁵ Tate was identified as a captain in the Haitian Presidential Guard.

²⁰⁶ A. Tate, "[from *The Liberator*] The Lesson of St. Domingo," *Douglass' Monthly* (Rochester, NY: August, 1861).

²⁰⁷ Clavin mistakenly asserts that Wright's pamphlet was re-printed in *Douglass' Monthly*. In fact, only Tate's response to Wright's pamphlet was printed. See, Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War...*209.

Waring before it was pirated, became something of a folk-hero for a Northern populace that was starved for good news in the earliest months of the war.²⁰⁸ Douglass used Tillman's actions as proof that the United States government was making a mistake by not using African-American soldiers in its war effort. He wrote that "...while the assistance of colored citizens in suppressing the slaveholders' rebellion is peremptorily and insultingly declined; while even Republicans still deny and reject their natural allies [African-Americans]...it has happened that one of the most daring and heroic deeds...has been struck by an obscure negro."²⁰⁹ Though Douglass argued that it was the actions of Tillman that serve as evidence of the bravery and loyalty of African-Americans he did nod to Toussaint. At the end of the article, Douglass mentioned, that Tillman, like Toussaint, Nat Turner, and Denmark Vesey among others, was inspired to act in the way that he did by his love of liberty. For the remainder of the War, Douglass would consistently argue that the majority of African-Americans were willing to act as selflessly as Tillman. Recall, however, that by 1863 Toussaint's name had disappeared from Douglass' pantheon of liberty-loving martyrs.²¹⁰ His December 1861 use of a memory of Toussaint is quite exceptional: for the remainder of the war Douglass made sure that Toussaint's name never crossed his lips publicly or spilled from the tip of his pen.

The question of why Douglass virtually ignored Toussaint and his troops is difficult to answer; an attempt to address this question, however incomplete and suggestive the results may be, is worthwhile as it promises to shed light on the way that

²⁰⁸ As an indication of how widespread Tillman's story became it is worth noting that perhaps the country's preeminent periodical at the time, *Harper's Weekly*, ran a story about Tillman's exploits. See, Paul E. Sluby and Stanton L. Wormley, "The Narrative of William Tilghman," *Harpers Weekly*, (New York: Aug. 3, 1861).

²⁰⁹ Frederick Douglass, "A Black Hero," *Douglass' Monthly* (Rochester, NY: August, 1861).

²¹⁰ See the earlier discussion of Douglass' March 1863 speech, "Men of Color, To Arms!"

historical memory bends to contemporary contexts. Clearly, many Civil War era commentators thought that Toussaint and the ex-slaves under his command proved that African-Americans could serve the Union army with dignity, competency, and bravery. Therefore, Douglass' insistence on keeping Toussaint, et. al. out of public discourse can be viewed as a strategic decision on his part. Based on logical conjecture, knowledge of the socio-political context at the time of the Civil War, and an analysis of some of Douglass' non-Haitian comments it is likely that the main factor that influenced his decision were notions of nationalistic loyalty.

For the last few decades, whenever a historian has addressed the question of why an abolitionist, like Douglass, may have avoided evoking the Haitian Revolution in a context that would have seemed to have warranted such an evocation they have often turned to the scholarship of Bruce Dain.²¹¹ In 1993, Dain published an article, entitled "Haiti and Egypt in Early Black Racial Discourse in the United States," that argues that, "For antebellum free blacks, one might have expected the Haitian Revolution to have furnished a powerful, heroic antislavery image. It did not."²¹² The reasons, according to

²¹¹ The following studies, each focused on some aspect of the lives and ideologies of antebellum African-Americans, have all been published in the last two decades. More specifically, each of the authors of these studies have cited Dain's work either to support their assertions or as a counterweight to their assertions. See, Dickson D. Bruce, *The Origins of African American Literature, 1680-1865* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2001); Clavin, "American Toussaints...", and *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War...*; Peter P. Hinks, *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance* (State College, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996); Mitch Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom: Meaning and Memory in African American Emancipation Celebrations, 1808-1915* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006); Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Protest...*; Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, "The Specter of Saint-Domingue: American and French Reactions to the Haitian Revolution," in *The World of the Haitian Revolution*, eds. David Patrick Greggus and Norman Fiering (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 317-338.

²¹² Bruce Dain, "Haiti and Egypt in Early Black Racial Discourse in the United States," *Slavery and Abolition*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (December, 1993), 139. Obviously, the entirety of the present study is a refutation of Dain's observation regarding the absence of African-American usages of imagery and ideas associated with the Haitian Revolution. Even in instances whereby specific individuals, like Frederick Douglass, avoided relying on images and names from the Haitian Revolution to assist them in framing their

Dain, why the Haitian Revolution did not furnish African-Americans with an icon of anti-slavery heroism is that Haiti conjured the image of race war and forced African-Americans to address the political instability that the island had experienced post-independence. However compelling historians may find Dain's argument, in the specific case of Frederick Douglass' articulation of memories of the Haitian Revolution, it is insufficient.

Though it is true that Douglass avoided discussing the "horrors of St. Domingo," in much of his wartime rhetoric, his secession era statements demonstrate that he was not wholly uncomfortable with conjuring the specter of a race war for his audiences. Recall, how he skillfully manipulated the image of a race war during the months that separated secession from the outbreak of war. At first glance, it may appear that Douglass' did indeed avoid any wartime discussions of the Haitian Revolution in order to avoid conjuring the very images that he used to incite Southern anger during the secession crisis. However, such an explanation seems to falter when one considers that during the Civil War Douglass did not completely avoid the image of angry ex-slaves spreading death and destruction throughout the South. He avoided the Haitian Revolution, not the notion of racial vengeance itself. If avoidance of any imagery associated with racial bloodletting was Douglass' goal then it is doubtful that he would have reminded his audience of the exploits of Denmark Vesey or Nat Turner in his famous "Men of Color, To Arms!" speech. Moreover, on some occasions Douglass explicitly discussed revenge

arguments it is not the case that such avoidance occurred throughout the entirety of anti-slavery circles, either in European- or African-American communities. In this regard, the present study builds upon the work of historian Patrick Rael who, in his study of antebellum African-American identity, states that "My evidence regarding...Haiti suggests that Dain seriously underplays the militant language and radical potential of Haiti in black protest thought." See, Rael, *Black Identity and Protest* ...338.

as a reason that African-Americans should enlist in the Union army. Speaking in April of 1863 he informed his audience that "Retribution," was what African-Americans, "owe to the slaveholders." "Retribution that was made possible because "...the government has given authority...to black men...to shoulder a musket and go down and kill white rebels."²¹³ No doubt, once Douglass started agitating for the inclusion of African-American soldiers in the Union war effort he had to be careful when navigating the various normative conceptions that portrayed African-Americans as bloodthirsty brutes, bent on spilling as much blood as possible in their lust for revenge against all European-Americans. However, fear of conjuring an image of African-American vengeance is an inadequate explanation for Douglass' reluctance to mention Toussaint and his army.²¹⁴ Consider both the evidence mentioned above and the fact that Dain admits that even as "Haiti was forsaken [by abolitionists in America]...the black hero Toussaint Louverture remained an example of African military virtue..."²¹⁵ One reason that Toussaint remained a potent symbol is precisely because "His name was not commonly associated with the horrible acts of vengeance that Haitian slaves committed against white colonists."²¹⁶ As noted in the previous chapter, many pro-slavery commentators even commended Toussaint for his magnanimous treatment of European-Americans in post-emancipation St. Domingue/Haiti. For many Americans, Toussaint was as much of a rebuttal to fears of an eruption of a war based on racial vengeance as he was evidence of its likelihood. Lastly, it is important to consider the respective socio-political contexts existent when

²¹³ Frederick Douglass, "Great Meeting at Shiloh Church," *Douglass' Monthly*...July, 1863.

²¹⁴ For his part, Blight has argued that Douglass did not avoid using the theme of vengeance in his Civil War era recruitment speeches. Blight asserts that "The war provided him ample opportunity to vent his own lifelong rage against slaveholders, and now he was inviting younger black men to do the work of slaying them." See, Blight, *Frederick Douglass*'...160.

²¹⁵ Dain, "Haiti and Egypt in Early Black Racial Discourse in the United States,"...142.

²¹⁶ Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War*...85.

Douglass relied on a memory of the Haitian Revolution and when he did not. Though he did avoid discussing the "horrors," during the antebellum era he did not, at that time, avoid using a memory of Toussaint or the Revolution itself. If anything, one would assume that once the Civil War erupted and the Confederate States of America provided Douglass and others with legitimate, traitorous targets to aim their vitriol at the usage of memories of Toussaint and the Haitian Revolution would have increased, not receded. It would appear that other factors must have affected Douglass' wartime decision to avoid articulating a memory of Toussaint and his army of ex-slaves.

Even if the evidence does not support Dain's claims regarding African-Americans and avoidance of anything that may symbolize a race war, perhaps he is correct when he asserts that African-Americans also avoided mentioning St. Domingue/Haiti because "Haiti's accomplishments might be questionable, or at least vulnerable to white derision..."²¹⁷ In the years since it had ended slavery and declared itself independent, Haiti had experienced a significant amount of political instability.²¹⁸ However, it is only Revolutionary-era Haiti, and her leaders, that Douglass avoided, not discussions of the island itself.²¹⁹ Though Douglass' personal views on emigration to Haiti were complicated and variable, he published advertisements for the General Haytien Bureau of

²¹⁷ Dain, "Haiti and Egypt in Early Black Racial Discourse in the United States,"...155.

²¹⁸ Historian John Blassingame has noted that "From the establishment of Haiti as a republic in 1807...until...1889, the government changed hands fourteen times. Revolutions deposed eleven of these fifteen presidents, three died in office, and only one...retired voluntarily." See, John Blassingame, Ed., *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One. Speeches, Debates, and Interviews: Vol. V: 1881-1895* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 516.

²¹⁹ Ironically, at least one scholar has implied that as Haiti's political fortunes suffered in the decades following emancipation/independence anti-slavery activists focused *more* on Haiti's revolutionary past so that "Its current woes, insomuch as they were discussed at all, were subordinated to a former glory that served...as a symbol of collective initiative for African Americans." See, Maffly-Kipp, *Setting Down the Sacred Past*...142.

Emigration in many wartime editions of *Douglass' Monthly*.²²⁰ Not only did Douglass publish advertisements promoting emigration to Haiti but he also published positive letters written by recent African-American emigrants to Haiti.²²¹ Additionally, during the Civil War *Douglass' Monthly* published articles that praised the refinement of Haitian visitors to the United States as well as statistics that touted how much cotton the island's farmers were producing.²²² All told, from 1861-1863, Douglass published one hundred-six articles that mentioned Haiti in his monthly newspaper. Many of these articles were some version of the aforementioned circular promoting emigration and the vast majority of these were focused on contemporary Haiti and not its revolutionary past. Thus, if Douglass was trying to avoid being associated with Haiti's political instability and post-emancipation challenges then he was doing a decidedly poor job of it.

Fear of race war and Haitian political instability notwithstanding, the main reason that Douglass avoided articulating a wartime public memory of Haiti's revolutionary past has to do with nationalistic loyalty. In short "The best way Douglass knew to agitate for black enlistment was to assert the loyalty of potential black soldiers."²²³ Recall, how skillfully Douglass employed memories from American history to agitate for African-American soldiery. Whether he was conjuring the image of George Washington or that of Nat Turner, Douglass seemed to be purposefully couching his arguments in nationalistic

²²⁰ Prominent British anti-slavery activist, James Redpath, served as the director of this bureau. The bureau, sponsored by the Haitian government, sought to encourage the immigration of African-Americans to the island nation. Seeded with a \$20,000 grant from the Haitian government, Redpath opened the bureau in late 1860. For more discussion on this topic see, Leslie Alexander, "The Black Republic: The Influence of the Haitian Revolution on Northern Black Political Consciousness, 1816-1862," in *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution...*57-76.

²²¹ Frederick Douglass, "Letter from the St. Mark Emigrants," *Douglass' Monthly*...July, 1862.

²²² Frederick Douglass, "Captain Tate," *Douglass' Monthly*...June, 1861; "Haitian Tourists," *Douglass' Monthly*...November, 1862; "Miscellaneous Items," *Douglass' Monthly*...November, 1861.

²²³ Blight, *Frederick Douglass'*...154.

symbols rather than images that could be associated with a racial or pan-Africanist sensibility. Recall, that when Dain mentioned the persistent popularity of Toussaint as an abolitionist icon he used the phrase "African virtues." As symbols, Toussaint and the ex-slaves of Haiti were potent reminders of the humanity and bravery of those of African descent. What they were not and could not be were images that could be easily associated with loyalty to the United States. During the antebellum era, when Douglass' overarching goal was the destruction of slavery, the Haitian Revolution was a perfect symbol of all that those of African descent could achieve once their fetters were thrown off. In fact, Haiti was the only available contemporary example of how ex-slaves would behave in a fully emancipated context. The previous chapter to this study details how artfully Douglass' recognized this fact and then articulated a memory of Toussaint and the Haitian Revolution that demonstrated the intellectual, political, and economic capabilities of Africans and their descendants. However, once the Civil War began and certainly once emancipation became official, Douglass recognized that African-American citizenship must be wedded to any discussions of emancipation. Once, Douglass became committed to "liberty and country first, everything else afterward," then it behooved him to rely solely on imagery from America's past.²²⁴ If Nat Turner and Denmark Vesey could serve as evidence that American slaves loved liberty, while the armies guided by Washington and Jackson could serve as proof that African-Americans could be competent as soldiers then there was no need for Douglass to conjure images of the non-American Toussaint and his army. By the middle of 1863, Douglass' assertions of African-American loyalty were even more significant given that "Dissatisfaction with the war spread in the

²²⁴ Frederick Douglass, "The Slave Democracy Again in the Field," *Douglass' Monthly*...November, 1862.

North...Peace Democrats gained an increasing audience, and Copperheads were being arrested in alarming numbers."²²⁵ As he continued to agitate for the inclusion of African-American soldiers in the War effort there would have been no benefit for Douglass to remind Northerners that African-Americans may identify with their race as much as their country of birth. Therefore, he purposely employed exclusively national imagery and relied on American memories only lest his audiences mistakenly concluded that African-Americans loved their race as much as they loved their country.

Despite the unpopularity, even amongst African-Americans themselves, of his stance Douglass was committed to the idea of African-American military service acting as a gateway to African-American citizenship.²²⁶ Douglass recognized that many African-Americans were angered at the notion that they were being asked to fight for an army that would not only refuse to commission them as officers but also refuse to pay them a salary equal to their European-American counterparts.²²⁷ What's more, Douglass recognized that even with the existence of discriminatory measures it was in the best interests of African-Americans to enlist nonetheless.²²⁸ In early 1863, in the same edition of *Douglass' Monthly* whereby the "Men of Color, To Arms!" essay was printed, Douglass published an article that voiced both his frustrations at discriminatory military

²²⁵ Blight, *Frederick Douglass* ...156.

²²⁶ The Militia Act, effective July 17, 1862, authorized the United States government to employ "persons of African descent," in the armed forces.

²²⁷ In June of 1864, Congress passed a bill that authorized equal pay for African-American troops, retroactive to January 1st of that year. Prior to the enactment of this legislation African-American soldiers typically received \$7/month compared to \$13/month for their European-American comrades.

²²⁸ Blight has noted that Douglass' strategy of encouraging African-American enlistment into an army replete with discriminatory practices and policies in order to strengthen their ability to simultaneously defeat a foreign enemy "abroad" and racism "at home" foreshadows arguments that many African-Americans would make in regard to participation in both world wars. See, Blight, *Frederick Douglass* ...163-164.

policies as well as his desire to see African-Americans enlist despite these very policies. He argued that "To say we won't be soldiers because we cannot be colonels is like saying we won't go into the water until we have learned to swim. A half loaf is better than no bread-and going into the army is the speediest way to overcome the prejudice that has dictated unjust laws against us...Once in the United States uniform...the colored man has a springboard under him by which he can jump to loftier heights."²²⁹ Douglass' insistence on African-Americans enlisting, despite the existence of an unequal pay scale, further underscores how critical he thought African-American military service was in the effort to achieve full citizenship.

Logic dictates that if Douglass envisioned military service to be the conduit to African-American citizenship then that service had to be enthusiastically subordinated to the authority of the national government. During the Civil War, Douglass had ample reason to believe that for many European- and African- Americans such enthusiasm, to say nothing of subordination, could not be taken for granted. Douglass had first-hand experience with less than enthusiastic crowds of potential recruits. Take, for instance, the outcome of a series of April 1863 recruitment meetings in New York. Despite the fact that during the course of these public meetings Douglass had convinced the decidedly militant anti-slavery activist Henry Highland Garnet to relent in his opposition to African-American enlistment into an army that would treat them as less than equal, he could convince few others. At the end of the second of what would be three of these enlistment drives/debates Douglass called for men from the audience to come forward

²²⁹ Frederick Douglass, "Another Law Against Common Sense," *Douglass' Monthly*...March, 1863.

and enlist: apparently only one person stepped forward.²³⁰ It wasn't only potential enlistees who were having doubts about Douglass' vision of military service being a pathway to citizenship. Throughout 1863, entire units of African-American soldiers threatened to mutiny over the issue of unequal pay. Douglass, no doubt aware of this dissatisfaction and certainly pained by the discrepancy in pay, had to have been fearful that "blacks would allow one enemy [Northern racism] to prevent them from exploiting an opportunity to destroy the other [Southern slavery]." As previously discussed, it was not only slavery that Douglass hoped would be defeated via African-American military service but rather it would be both slavery and racial prejudice that African-American service could "discredit, if not defeat..."²³¹ Douglass envisioned the Civil War as revolutionary but conservative in nature. He saw the War as a chance to change America by returning to the idealized roots represented by her founding. The Haitian Revolution had been, on the other hand, progressive: not only had slavery been slain but an entirely new polity had emerged from her carcass. It is likely that Douglass recognized the danger in presenting Haiti as an icon for African-Americans who would enlist or for European-American policy-makers who would decide if that service translated into citizenship. It wasn't the failure of the republic of Haiti that scared him, it was the success of their revolution that proved to be dangerous symbol for someone who believed that, as flawed as it may have been, the United States government represented best hope for the realization of African-American rights.

²³⁰ For an extended discussion of this meeting and its lack of success in recruiting African-Americans into the Union army see, Blight, *Frederick Douglass* ...164-165.

²³¹ Blight, *Frederick Douglass* ...164-165.

Douglass could not risk having either African-Americans or European-Americans view the military service of ex-slaves in the manner that a slave named Tom, whose interview appeared in the pages of the *New York Tribune* article, did. Tom informed his interviewer that America's slaves, just like their counterparts had in St. Domingue/Haiti, would fight for whichever side offered them freedom. "Our [that of the slaves] position...is like that of the San Domingo blacks. They put their freedom in the market between the white and mulattoes—put it for sale...We mean to sell ourselves for freedom—we hope to you Northern men. If your politicians and Generals kick us away, we will try to make our market with the rebels."²³² Relying on a memory of the Haitian Revolution may have given some people the impression that African-Americans were mercenaries in search of liberty and autonomy, beholden to any nation and thus, unworthy of citizenship. For his part, Clavin concludes that abolitionist appeals to historical memories of Toussaint/the Haitian Revolution were essentially subversive in nature.²³³ According to Clavin, "... for those African-Americans who read [the above-quoted] the exchange [between a Southern slave named Tom and his Northern interviewer] understood that Tom placed his allegiance to freedom first and the nation second."²³⁴ To Douglass' way of thinking the two concepts Clavin mentions, freedom and nation, were inseparable. As Douglass informed a Boston audience in 1862 "I am an American citizen. In birth, in sentiment, in ideas, in hopes, in aspirations, and responsibilities, I am an American citizen."²³⁵ Conjuring an image of a progressive and

²³² Douglass, "Views of an Intelligent Negro," *Douglass' Monthly*...January, 1863.

²³³ Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War*...121-143.

²³⁴ Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War*...143.

²³⁵ Douglass, "The Black Man's Future in the Southern States..." *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume III*...493.

autonomous army of former slaves, marching to the commands of ex-slave generals, would have made it only harder for other Americans to believe that Douglass or any other African-American was being wholly forthright.

A Union victory in the Civil War combined with passage of the Thirteenth Amendment would seem to stand as a monument to the wisdom of Douglass' wartime strategies regarding the usage of a memory of the Haitian Revolution. Certainly the end of slavery in the United States was a significant achievement, one that Douglass no doubt helped to bring about. However, the end of the Civil War and the course of events subsequent to Lee's surrender at Appomattox must have left Douglass as disillusioned as he was hopeful. The second half of the nineteenth century would find him along with all other African-Americans struggling to reconcile legal freedom from bondage with legal discrimination. Not surprisingly, Douglass would once more be forced to re-articulate his memory of the Haitian Revolution as events in his life as well as in the life of the country he called home charted a new course. During the antebellum era he had relied on the Haitian Revolution to argue that African-Americans were part of the human family, whereas the Civil War saw him alter his articulation of the Revolution in order to argue that African-Americans were part of the American family. Reconstruction and its dissolution would force him to refashion his memories of the Haitian Revolution in order to meet the challenges posed by the demise of slavery and the rise of Jim Crow.

Chapter 3: “A spirit of evil has been revived.”²³⁶

Though speeches and newspaper descriptions have survived, one can only imagine what thoughts swirled in the heads of the more than fifty attendees who gathered together in the nation's capital on the evening of January 1st, 1883. Though not necessarily a representative sample of their entire racial group, the African-American men who gathered in a well-appointed banquet hall on Ninth Street did represent a range of personal experiences that, taken as a whole, spoke to the complex and frequently dualistic nature of being both of African descent and being American in the United States.²³⁷ In attendance were, among others, politicians, newspaper editors, wartime heroes, professors, and social activists. Men like Martin Delaney, Blanche K. Bruce, George Washington Williams and the estimable guest of honor, Frederick Douglass, spent more than five hours feasting, toasting and generally celebrating the progress of their race. Certainly many if not all of the men who came together that night to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation must have felt a sense of pride as they recollected their individual and collective accomplishments from the past few decades. However, prideful reminiscences undoubtedly mingled uneasily with

²³⁶ Frederick Douglass, "This is a Sad and Mournful Hour: An Address Delivered in Washington, D.C., on 2 June 1879," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One. Speeches, Debates, and Interviews: Volume IV: 1864-80*, eds. John W. Blassingame and John McKivigan (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 502.

²³⁷ Perhaps no single phrase better describes the dualistic nature of being both of African descent and being American as the phrase "double consciousness." This well-known descriptor first appeared in DuBois' seminal collection of essays, *Souls of Black Folk*. Though DuBois' book wasn't published until 1903, the conceptual framework that he lays out is useful for anyone wishing to better understand the political, sociological, cultural and existential challenges that nineteenth century African-Americans faced. See, W.E.B. DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Courier Corporation, 1903).

anxious concerns that the difficult struggle for African-American freedom and equality was far from over.²³⁸

Less than a year after the Ninth St. celebration the United States Supreme Court made it painfully clear to all African-Americans that in their long night of racial oppression they were far from seeing dawn. The Court's ruling in *United States v. Stanley* (often referred to as the civil rights cases) effectively negated much of the political progress that African-Americans had made since the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. Broadly speaking, the Court's decisions from 1883 not only rendered the Fourteenth Amendment impotent as a safeguard of African-American rights but it also declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875 to be unconstitutional.²³⁹ Not long after, Jim Crow laws would become de rigueur throughout the South. Though outraged to the point that he felt as if all African-Americans had been "...grievously wounded, in the house of our friends," Frederick Douglass and other African-Americans could not have been surprised by the Court's ruling.²⁴⁰ More than four years prior to the *United States v. Stanley* decision Douglass, in the course of eulogizing William Lloyd Garrison, noted that "A spirit of evil has been revived which we had fondly hoped was laid forever. Doctrines are proclaimed, claims are asserted, and pretensions set up, which were, as we thought, all extinguished

²³⁸ For a more detailed discussion of this event and its attendees see, David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 301-303.

²³⁹ In essence, the Court's decision made matters of civil rights solely a state matter. A person who experienced racial discrimination could only address this matter by looking to state legislation or judicial authority. By recognizing that only states had the authority to protect the civil rights of its citizens, the Court effectively made it impossible for the federal government to enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Blight discusses the specifics of the Court's rulings in multiple works. See, Blight, *Race and Reunion*...309-310; and Blight, *Frederick Douglass*'...221. In crafting his summaries of the effects of the Supreme Court's decision Blight mentions that he was assisted by the scholarship of historian Rayford W. Logan. See, Logan, *The Betrayal of the Negro: From Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1965), 114-118.

²⁴⁰ Frederick Douglass, "This Decision Has Humbled the Nation: An Address Delivered in Washington, D.C., on 22 October 1883," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One... Volume V*... 112.

by the iron logic of cannon balls."²⁴¹ By 1879, Douglass and all other African-Americans could not help but notice that their highest hopes for the Civil War and Reconstruction had been dashed. As millions of recently enslaved African-American families struggled to make a living in an economic climate that frequently precluded them from owning land, and as all African-Americans confronted a political system that, despite the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, did not see them as full-fledged citizens it was apparent that though the Civil War may have been a war of liberation, it was most decidedly not a war of equality.

Thus, the decades immediately following the Confederate surrender at Appomattox found African-Americans collectively grappling with a dualistic dilemma that was not altogether unlike the personal "double consciousness" that W. E. B. DuBois would write about at the turn of the twentieth century. On the one hand, slavery as a legalized system of perpetual bondage for those of African descent had been forever destroyed; as the men toasting this accomplishment at the aforementioned banquet certainly recognized. Moreover, emancipation had provided opportunities for African-Americans to participate in political processes like never before in the country's history. Though these opportunities waxed and waned over the course of the nineteenth century, it was a significant sign of progress that, for a time, African-Americans were able to cast ballots and even serve in statewide and national legislative bodies. Though mostly ceremonial in nature, Douglass' appointments as Marshall for the District of Columbia, recorder of deeds for the District of Columbia, and as a minister to Haiti all serve as evidence that, despite the numerous challenges they faced, there were opportunities for

²⁴¹ Frederick Douglass, "This is a Sad and Mournful Hour...", ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One. ... Volume IV*... 502.

African-American participation in government that had heretofore not existed in the United States. On the other hand, America's post-War years represented a tragic socio-political reneging on the promises inherent in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments. Douglass was all too aware of the competing sense of both triumph and tragedy for African-Americans. In a speech given at a Syracuse celebration of the anniversary of the 1851 rescue of the fugitive slave, Jerry McHenry, Douglass reminded his audience that African-Americans were now citizens who could carry mail, vote and were "eligible to any office or profit in the gift of the nation." However, in the course of the same speech, he also noted that "There is no denying that there has been a decided reaction against the negro since the war. It has been marked rapid and violent. It has swept him from nearly all the high places of the nation. He has almost entirely disappeared from the legislative halls of the South, as well as the halls of the national Congress. It has driven him from the ballot-box. It has denied him civil rights, arrayed the Supreme Court against him, and swollen the tide of popular prejudice against him to the danger point."²⁴² In many ways, African-Americans in the second half of the nineteenth century were collectively like a free African-American living in a Northern state in the antebellum era. Though they no longer had to fear of an unscrupulous slave catcher they were still confronted with the challenges of being simultaneously free and unfree. They had escaped slavery but not the perniciousness of racial prejudice.

Just as he had throughout the course of his life, at various times during the post-War era Douglass turned to a public memory of the Haitian Revolution in order to more clearly define the issues that African-Americans were facing. In the late 1860's and

²⁴² Frederick Douglass, "An Inspiration to High and Virtuous Endeavor: An Address Delivered in Syracuse, New York, on 1 October 1884,"...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One... Volume V*... 164.

throughout the 1870's Douglass articulated a memory of the Haitian Revolution that sought, for the first time in his public career, to present the challenges being faced by African-Americans as exceptional in the history of the Atlantic world. During this time period, the Haitian Revolution became a foil for the experiences of African-Americans during Reconstruction. Sociologist Paul Gilroy has suggested that post-emancipation African-Americans were forced to address the very nature of their memories in relation to slavery, its destruction and their identities in the modern world that was unfolding all about them.²⁴³ Early in the post-War era Douglass seemed to struggle with the proper balance between looking to the past for meaning and seeking to embark on a new journey for which the past would be an ineffective guide. It was not that Douglass' articulations of the Haitian Revolution during this time represent an effort to erase the past, but rather that he sought to escape the past so that he could present contemporary society as altogether untethered to memories of slavery and rebellion. He was optimistic that those of African descent living in the United States could set forth on a hopeful path of citizenship and self-fulfillment; a path that was informed yet not directly defined by memories of the Haitian Revolution. As time passed and the revolutionary nature of the Civil War and the amendments that it birthed became increasingly forgotten by a nation bent on reconciliation and economic progress Douglass returned to his memories of the Haitian Revolution. Stymied in his efforts to chart a new course for African-Americans, by the end of his life he sought to reduce the distance between historical memory and contemporary reality that he had worked to create in the 1860's/70's. In many ways, when compared to his antebellum articulations of memories of the Haitian Revolution,

²⁴³ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 196-201.

Douglass would come full-circle in how he deployed historical memory. Memories of the Haitian Revolution and the connective tissue that they provided between all those who had faced the horrors of Atlantic slavery became a welcome refuge in a postbellum world that had seen the disappearance of slavery but not those who had been enslaved.

Before delving into Douglass' post-War articulations of memories of the Haitian Revolution, it is prudent to briefly discuss how frequently others articulated post-War memories of Haiti. Given the amount of scholarship devoted to the relationship between the Haitian Revolution and the United States during the first sixty-five years of the nineteenth century, it would be easy to assume that for many former abolitionists and progressive minded thinkers forgot about the Haitian Revolution in the decades subsequent to the end of the Civil War.²⁴⁴ Despite the lack of systematic historical studies on the topic, in the latter half of the nineteenth century memories of the Haitian Revolution continued to act as prisms through which many public intellectuals interpreted contemporary events and socio-political challenges. In many cases, memories that had originally been articulated in an antebellum context were simply rehashed whereas in other instances fresh interpretations of the meaning of the Haitian Revolution emerged during this era. Frederick Douglass' post-War articulations of a memory of the Haitian Revolution can be best understood as belonging in both these categories. At times, Douglass returned to themes he had originally explored during the antebellum era,

²⁴⁴ Within this sub-field there are quite a few well researched and well-argued pieces of scholarship. In fact, the earlier chapters of this study would not be possible without the work of many of the following historians. Nevertheless, their work is illustrative of a tendency, on the part of scholars who study the relationship between the Haitian Revolution and the United States, to focus almost exclusively on either the antebellum or the War years. See, Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture ...*; David Gregus, *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2001); Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America...*; Jackson and Bacon, Eds., *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution...*; Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation...*; and, Ashli White, *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

while in other contexts he relied on new articulations of a Haitian memory in order to frame his arguments.

Though it would be an exaggeration to claim that memories of the Haitian Revolution or of Toussaint achieved normative status within the mainstream of America's post-War culture, there is ample evidence that antebellum memories of the Haitian Revolution continued to hold meaning for numerous African- as well as European-Americans. For countless African-Americans, both elites and non-elites alike, Toussaint remained a popular symbol of racial pride and achievement. Thus, in 1883, when hundreds, if not thousands, of Washington D.C.'s African-American residents turned out to parade in commemoration of the twenty-first anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the District an African-American reporter noted that a dapper Civil War veteran, dressed in his uniform and wearing a feathered cap, reminded on-lookers of Toussaint.²⁴⁵ Douglass no doubt understood the pervasiveness of Toussaint as a cultural symbol for African-Americans. In 1873, he offered subscribers to his short-lived post-War newspaper, the *New National Era*, a complimentary photograph of Toussaint with their subscription.²⁴⁶ Douglass' various visual and textual articulations of a memory of the Haitian Revolution/Toussaint will be discussed at length below. However, at the moment, it is sufficient to point out that Douglass' decision to offer an image of Toussaint as a means of enticing people to subscribe to his newspaper speaks to Toussaint's enduring

²⁴⁵ *Washington Bee* (Washington, D.C.: April 21, 1883).

²⁴⁶ *New National Era*, Volume 4, Issue 15. (Washington, D.C.: April 4, 1873). Douglass along with his son, Lewis, published this weekly paper from 1870-1874. The name of Douglass' paper was a reference to *The National Era* an anti-slavery paper that was published from 1847-1860. Since Toussaint died prior to the invention of photography, Douglass' offer likely refers to a photographic reproduction of a portrait owned by Wendell Phillips. In the brief article where Douglass offered the image to his subscribers he implied that Phillips was the owner and other contemporary sources confirmed that Phillips did indeed possess a supposedly realistic portrait of Toussaint. See, "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *The Christian Recorder* (Philadelphia: June 16, 1866).

popularity within the African-American community. Though African-American memories of Toussaint were certainly preserved via the use of oral storytelling mechanisms that have always allowed folk communities to create useful memories of past events, there were plenty of opportunities for African-Americans, to say nothing of Americans in general, to access memories of Toussaint even if traditional oral transmission had not occurred. Antebellum articulations of memories of Toussaint and the Haitian Revolution were often reprinted with such frequency that successive generations would have had difficulty avoiding memories of Toussaint/the Haitian Revolution, even if they had so desired. For example, Wendell Phillips' popular speech eulogizing Toussaint was reprinted for decades after the Civil War. Additionally, William Wells Brown's lecture on the history of "St. Domingo" was republished in 1874 as part of a collection of his speeches and essays, entitled, *Rising Son; or, the Antecedents and Advancement of the Colored Race*.²⁴⁷ Together the masses and various antebellum elites who crafted speeches and historical essays ensured that a public memory of Toussaint and his fellow revolutionaries as archetypes of "...negro genius, pure, simple and resplendent," withstood the passage of time.²⁴⁸

Not only did antebellum voices survive in the form of reprinted and repackaged articulations but also a new crop of African- and European commentators constructed contemporary memories of the Haitian Revolution during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Between 1886 and 1900 at least three book-length histories of the

²⁴⁷ For a brief, yet well-researched, overview of the resiliency of antebellum articulations of a public memory of Toussaint/the Haitian Revolution see, Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War*...181-185.

²⁴⁸ "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *The Christian Recorder*...June 16, 1866.

Haitian Revolution were published by African-American authors.²⁴⁹ It was not only African-Americans, however, who strove to preserve and reinterpret memories of the Haitian Revolution. No less a historian than Henry Adams discussed the relationship between the Haitian Revolution and American history when he published his multi-volume history of the United States in 1889. Adams devoted an entire chapter of the first volume of his history to Toussaint specifically and the Haitian Revolution more generally. Ironically, despite the fact that Adams recognized the effects of Haiti's revolutionary legacy on the course of American history he also saw himself as somewhat exceptional in having this perspective. In a comment that simultaneously revealed his ignorance of African-American cultural traditions as well as his awareness of the more normative histories authored by European-Americans he noted that, "The story of Toussaint Louverture has been told almost as often as that of Napoleon, but not in connection with the history of the United States..."²⁵⁰ It is unclear if Douglass ever read the work of Adams but his post-War public articulations of memories of the Haitian Revolution serve to underscore the notion that while professional historians may have neglected the Haitian Revolution in trying to explain America's past, he was more than willing to rely on memories of the Haitian Revolution to try to alter the present.

²⁴⁹ Robert C.O. Benjamin, *Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture, Warrior, and Statesman, with an Historical Survey of the Island of San Domingo from the Discovery of the Island by Christopher Columbus, in 1492, to the Death of Toussaint, in 1803* (Los Angeles: Evening Press Print, 1888); Charles W. Misspell, *Toussaint L'Ouverture, the Hero of Saint Domingo, Soldier, Statesmen, Martyr: or, Hayti's Struggle, Triumph, Independence, and Achievements* (Lockport, NY: Ward & Cobb, 1896); David Augustus Straker, *Reflections on the Life and Times of Toussaint L'Ouverture, the Negro Haytien, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Ruler Under the Dominion of France, and Author of the Independence of Hayti* (Columbia, SC: Charles A. Calvo, Jr., 1886).

²⁵⁰ Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America*, Vol. I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1889), 378.

Before the first post-War frost had a chance to settle on the still blood-stained battlefields of the Civil War, Douglass was evoking a memory of Toussaint that was at first glance quite similar to many of his antebellum articulations. Readers may recall that during the Civil War, Douglass steadfastly avoided conjuring memories of Toussaint.²⁵¹ However, once the War was over he resumed an articulation of a memory of Toussaint that often echoed his antebellum memories. Given that the immediate post-War socio-political context, for African-Americans, resembled what life was like for free African-Americans living in the North prior to the War it is no surprise that he occasionally relied on an interpretive theme that he frequently discussed during the 1840/50's. The scene was Douglass' pseudo hometown of Baltimore and the occasion was the inauguration of a post-secondary educational institution that was being named in his honor.²⁵² The Douglass Institute, founded both by and for African-Americans, represented the optimism that many African-Americans, including Douglass, felt in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War. In the course of his speech that day Douglass explained what the opening of the school meant for African-Americans: "The very existence of this Institute, established and sustained by colored men in this city, so recently a slaveholding city...is a most striking, cheering and instructive fact. It attests to the progressive spirit, the sagacity, the courage, the faith, the intelligence and manly ambition of the colored people of this city

²⁵¹ See previous chapter for a discussion of this topic.

²⁵² In the spring of 1865 a collection of local African-American businessmen and civic leaders pooled their funds and purchased a building that used to house Newton University. On either September 29th or October 1, 1865 the Douglass Institute was formally opened with a ceremony that featured Douglass as its keynote speaker. For more background information on that day's events and speakers see, Frederick Douglass, "The Douglass's Institute: An Address Delivered in Baltimore, Maryland, On 29 September 1865," ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One... Volume IV*...86-96; and Phillip Foner, "Address of Frederick Douglass at the Inauguration of Douglass Institute, Baltimore, October 1, 1865," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (April 1969), 174-183.

and State, and reflects credit upon the colored people of the country generally."²⁵³ A hopeful optimism had also infused many of Douglass' antebellum era speeches as he had frequently lauded the abilities of "Self-Made Men," like Benjamin Banneker and Toussaint.²⁵⁴

Given the importance that Douglass and others of his time attached to education as a means of elevating oneself from less than auspicious circumstances, it is unsurprising that both Banneker and Toussaint would appear in the speech delivered that day in Baltimore. Just as he had during the antebellum era Douglass discussed the "genius and learning of Benjamin Banneker," and the "wisdom and heroism of Toussaint..."²⁵⁵ However, a significant change had occurred in terms of why Douglass evoked a memory of Toussaint that praised his intellectual abilities. During the antebellum era, Douglass had celebrated Toussaint's unaided efforts at self-education as a means of both inspiring his fellow African-Americans and of rebutting claims of racial inferiority directed at his people. Once the War was over and despite his feelings of optimism referenced above, Douglass was also cognizant of the reality that singular examples of African-American achievement were not enough to defeat racialized notions of inferiority. He lamented the fact that "It is the misfortune of our class [African-Americans] that it fails to derive due advantages from the achievements of its individual members..." Thus, according to Douglass, "A Benjamin Franklin could redeem...the mental mediocrity of our young white Republic, but...the wisdom and heroism of Toussaint are not permitted to do the same service for the colored race."²⁵⁶ He went on to bemoan the fact that men like

²⁵³ Douglass, "The Douglass Institute: An Address...", ...90.

²⁵⁴ For further discussion of these speeches see, Chapter 1.

²⁵⁵ Douglass, "The Douglass Institute: An Address...", ...91.

²⁵⁶ Douglass, "The Douglass Institute: An Address...", ...91.

Banneker, Toussaint, and indeed "the highly progressive and civilized elements," then present in the country of Haiti were not enough to defeat racial prejudice amongst his fellow countrymen. Douglass noted that either "the progress made by the emancipated people of the West Indies is not believed," or that the achievements of Toussaint and others were perceived as not being representative of the potential of the entire race as "They are treated as exceptions..."²⁵⁷ Douglass' goal, in this particular instance, was to critique the way that racism has prevented African-Americans from using, "'great men'" as representatives of national or racial excellence.²⁵⁸ He then concluded his speech by pointing to the eponymous school as significant because it offered the hope that a vast majority of African-Americans could be educated therefore making it unnecessary for them to look to memory as a vehicle for rebutting notions of racial inferiority.

Widespread education in the present could be a more powerful argument than well-crafted memories of the past. In a sense, Douglass was pointing out the limits of constructions of public memories of African/African-American achievement. The irony of this assertion could not have been lost on a man who had, throughout the antebellum era, helped to contribute to the construction of Toussaint as an exceptional figure.²⁵⁹

When one compares Douglass' comments made in Baltimore in 1865 to other contemporaneous articulations of memories of Toussaint it becomes clear that while many individuals were not ready to abandon their celebrations of Toussaint others were noticing similar trends. Douglass' longtime ally in the fight for African-American rights,

²⁵⁷ Douglass, "The Douglass Institute: An Address..."...91-95.

²⁵⁸ Maffly-Kipp, *Setting Down the Sacred Past*... 143.

²⁵⁹ Despite Douglass' arguments in Baltimore that day, he did not fully abandon his efforts to articulate powerfully utilitarian memories of the Haitian Revolution. The subsequent sections of this chapter are a testament to this fact.

William Wells Brown, echoed his assertions that the past, however glorious it may be, can be a trap as much as a springboard. Despite the fact that he continued to publish laudatory accounts of prominent individuals of African descent, Brown recognized that in post-War America African-Americans would be judged on their contemporary achievements much more than on the glory of their collective past.²⁶⁰ Thus, in the same year that he published a book that celebrated the lives of Toussaint and other successful individuals of African descent, Brown reminded his fellow African-Americans that "...the world asks us for our men and women of the day." Brown, like Douglass, argued that "We [African-Americans] may talk of Hannibal, Euclid, Phillis Wheatley, Benjamin Banneker and Toussaint L'Ouverture...", but "We cannot live upon the past..."²⁶¹ Not only were Brown and Douglass aware that celebratory narratives of the actions of men like Toussaint were not powerful enough weapons to overcome racial prejudice but also it seems logical to assume that in a society where slavery had ended and where civil rights for all citizens seemed possible they hoped that in a short time there would be plenty of contemporary examples of African-American excellence.

Throughout the 1860's and 1870's, Douglass turned to memories of the Haitian Revolution as a way of distinguishing the actions and experiences of African-Americans from their Haitian brethren. In short, Douglass frequently relied on the Haitian Revolution as a point of comparison in order to argue that the emancipatory experiences of African-Americans in the United States were historically unique. He was, in a sense, attempting to break free from memories of the past; he desired to live in a post-historical

²⁶⁰ William Wells Brown, *Rising Son; or, the Antecedents and Advancement of the Colored Race* (A.G. Brown, 1874).

²⁶¹ William Wells Brown, "How it May Secure its Own Advance," *The Christian Recorder*...January 22, 1874.

society whereby the pain of slavery had been replaced by the potential of millions of newly freed citizens embarking on a path of progress. In the early years of a Reconstruction, before African-American optimism in their futures had been overshadowed by frustration, Douglass articulated a memory of the Haitian Revolution that allowed him to present the experiences of the millions of recently freed slaves then living in the United States as exceptional.

In a speech given in celebration of the recent passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, Douglass saw the future for both his country, generally, and African-Americans, specifically, as auspicious.²⁶² Obviously in 1870 he had no way of knowing that the revolutionary promises embedded in the Fifteenth Amendment would not be fully realized for almost another century. The spring of 1870 seemed to be the spring of the nation and the millions of ex-slaves who were now its citizens. The possibilities seemed almost limitless as Douglass argued that "Never was a revolution more complete. Nothing has been left for time." Relying on historical memory to strengthen his point, he noted out that even "Hayti rose to freedom only by degrees and by limited concessions."²⁶³ In an astonishing assertion that clearly underestimated the longevity of racial prejudice, Douglass saw the revolution of the Civil War as being so complete that "The black man has no longer any apology for lagging behind in the race of civilization...Character, not color, is to be the criterion [by which an individual will be judged]."²⁶⁴ In hindsight it seems absurd that Douglass would argue that the changes

²⁶² The Fifteenth Amendment states that the "right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

²⁶³ Frederick Douglass, "At Last, At Last, The Black Man Has a Future: An Address Delivered in Albany, New York, on 22 April 1870," ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume IV*...267.

²⁶⁴ Douglass, "At Last, At Last...", ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume IV*...271.

wrought as a result of the Civil War were somehow more revolutionary than those caused by the Haitian Revolution. This sense of absurdity only exists because historians are aware of all that transpired between the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment and the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's. If modern scholars can put aside any teleological bias, then Douglass' comparisons to Haiti are significant because they speak to the truly revolutionary nature of the Civil War as well as to how thoroughly that nature was destroyed in the decades subsequent to Reconstruction. Douglass' hopeful comments regarding the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment are reminiscent of those from the opening of the Douglass Institute in 1865. Memories of the past, he seemed to be implying, were no longer necessary as the future seemed to hold so much promise. It speaks volumes then that only three years after the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment he began offering his readers a photograph of Toussaint and that before the end of the century he would be once more seek to embed the African-American experience within a broader framework that sought unity with and not separation from a collective past of slavery and rebellion. This reunification, far from being optimistic and hopeful, symbolized the growing frustration that Douglass and other African-Americans must have felt when it became clear that the persistence of racialized prejudice might prevent each African-American from being the "...architect of his own fortunes."²⁶⁵

By the end of the 1870's, as an economic downturn and the end of federal protection of African-American civil rights combined to threaten whatever progress Southern African-Americans had made since the end of the Civil War, Douglass returned

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

to a memory of the "horrors of Santo Domingo."²⁶⁶ He did so in an effort to convince the federal government to protect the rights guaranteed in the Thirteenth-Fifteenth Amendments. In the spring of 1879, Douglass found himself embroiled in a debate with many of his staunchest anti-slavery allies. This debate centered on the emigration of thousands of African-American "Exodusters" out of the South and into Midwestern states and territories. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Douglass did not offer his unqualified support for this mass migration. He thought that though many African-Americans certainly had ample reasons to quit the South to do so as a matter of national policy would represent an abdication of the revolutionary promises inherent in the Civil War and its subsequent amendments.²⁶⁷ To abandon the South to exist as a land whereby African-Americans were not welcome was, in Douglass' mind, to abandon the principles that undergirded America's democracy; principles that gave meaning to emancipation. As such, Douglass thought it made more sense, fiscally as well as morally, for the federal government to return to its pre-1877 policies in regard to the South. As Douglass argued in a paper prepared as a rebuttal to his most vociferous critics, "Congress is not likely to be in a hurry to make any such appropriation [to assist those seeking to emigrate from the South]. It would much more willingly and readily enact the necessary legislation to

²⁶⁶ For a concise description of the economic and political challenges faced by Southern African-Americans during the 1870's see, Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 189-213. Douglass, though somewhat sequestered from the slings and arrows of Southern racism was directly affected by the economic depression that swept the country in the second half of the 1870's. In 1874, not only did the Freedman's Savings Bank, which Douglass was the president of and investor in, collapse but the *New National Era* also folded amidst financial woes.

²⁶⁷ Those who supported the "Exoduster" movement included: William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Henry Highland Garnet, and Sojourner Truth. For a brief summary of the migration as well as the debate surrounding it see, John Blassingame and John McKivigan, editors, *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume IV*...510.

protect the freedmen where they are..."²⁶⁸ Douglass could make such a bold claim regarding Congress' desire to support the rights of African-American because, despite the evidence to the contrary and due in part to the fact that he did not reside in the South, he still believed in the value of self-reliance as well as the notion that the federal government would vigorously enforce the rights protected by the Civil War amendments.²⁶⁹ He counseled African-Americans in the South to be patient because "The permanent powers of the Government are all on his side."²⁷⁰ Needless to say, Douglass' optimism in the fealty of the federal government would prove unwarranted.

In an effort to remind the members of Congress why they should place their power on the side of African-Americans, Douglass once more returned to the theme of American exceptionalism. As with his arguments in 1865/1870, Douglass relied on a memory of the Haitian Revolution to present the actions of African-Americans living in the United States as uniquely exemplary and thus worthy of reward. Douglass reminded his audience that the migration of African-Americans out of the South was "a simple, lawful and peaceable measure..."²⁷¹ The precise manner of their response to oppression revealed the depth of their love of country and therefore made them, in Douglass' opinion, worthy of protection. According to Douglass, they could have "...copied the

²⁶⁸ Frederick Douglass, "The Negro Exodus from the Gulf States: A Paper Read in Saratoga, New York, on 12 September 1879," ... *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume IV*...520.

²⁶⁹ It is worth noting that Douglass somewhat complicated views on the "Exoduster" movement were illustrative of the broader patterns of his thought during the post-War era. Historian David Blight has observed that "A decade after the Emancipation Proclamation, Douglass found himself...trying to strike the difficult balance between unrequited black claims on American society and the everlasting necessity of self-reliance." See, Blight, *Frederick Douglass*...204.

²⁷⁰ Douglass, "The Negro Exodus from the Gulf States...", ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume IV*...523.

²⁷¹ Douglass, "The Negro Exodus from the Gulf States...", ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume IV*...512.

example of his own race in Santo Domingo, who taught their French oppressors by fire and sword the danger of goading too far the "energy that lumbers in the black man's arm."²⁷² Recall that during the antebellum era Douglass avoided openly articulating a memory of the "horrors of Santo Domingo", whereas during the secession crisis he opined that anxious American slaves might enact a facsimile of the "horrors" before avoiding the topic once more as secession morphed into the Civil War. However, during the "Exoduster" debate he intentionally articulated a memory of the Haitian Revolution that conjured images of violence and terror carried out by ex-slaves against their oppressors. A memory of those of African descent spreading fear and death served as the perfect foil for the actions of the "Exodusters." By resisting Southern oppression lawfully through emigration instead of through violence, Douglass was arguing that African-Americans were demonstrating their ability to be loyal citizens of the United States. He was also arguing for a more modern conception of emancipation and the rights bestowed in its wake. Modern African-Americans, he seemed to be arguing once more, were not beholden to a collective past of slavery and violent rebellion but could embark on a new path to freedom and civil rights. As such, Douglass believed, they should not leave the South since the federal government would certainly move to protect any group that behaved in such a loyal, lawful and peaceful manner. Artful as it may have been, Douglass' comparative history lesson did little to convince the federal government to protect the millions of ex-slaves that then resided in the South. As the years progressed and as the federal government continued to ignore the plight of African-Americans,

²⁷² Douglass, "The Negro Exodus from the Gulf States...", *...The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume IV*...511-512.

Douglass would once more, in the dusk of his own life, return to articulations of a memory of the Haitian Revolution.

Not all of those sympathetic to the plight of African-Americans shared Douglass and Brown's wariness of "exceptionalizing" figures from the past.²⁷³ For instance, in 1873 Miss Anne Whitney unveiled a sculpture of Toussaint at a Boston gallery by the name of Dohl & Richard's. During her career, Whitney, raised by a Unitarian family in the Boston area, used her artistic ability to celebrate several anti-slavery figures including Charles Sumner, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and William Lloyd Garrison. Her very choice of Toussaint as opposed to a contemporary African-American figure, like Douglass himself, points to the way that nineteenth century African-Americans risked being trapped in their own memories. Choosing to sculpt an anti-slavery figure who had been dead for more than fifty years, Whitney illustrated why Douglass was so excited about the opening of the institute in Baltimore that bore his name. Besides providing future sculptors with more contemporary subject matter, widespread African-American education and achievement also promised to make the actions of Toussaint appear less singular in comparison to those of individuals living in the 1870's. Though Douglass would have certainly been thankful for a statue of Toussaint rather than the alternative of no statue of a prominent individual of African descent, the manner in which Whitney presented Toussaint is emblematic of the dangers of memory that both he and Brown recognized.

²⁷³ Though the OED may take exception with the term "exceptionalizing" it seems to be useful in so much as it succinctly describes a process whereby memories of the lives of individuals from the past can be constructed in such a way as to render the subject(s) of those memories as almost superhuman or, in the very least, exceptional. This process can proceed to an extent that it precludes these subjects from being viewed as representative of the abilities of whichever racial, ethnic or national group that they are a member of.

According to newspaper reports, Whitney presented Toussaint as "...an ideal figure expressing...the highest type of his race in all its characteristics." Realism was not her intended goal and she took pains to avoid reminding her audience of the image of an "...uncomely and degraded slave, imbruted by ignorance and oppression..."²⁷⁴ Whitney's statue and the way that it was perceived by audiences represent the complicated relationship that Douglass had with memories of a glorious African/African-American past. Much of the analysis above details how Douglass, somewhat counterintuitively, sought to use memories of the Haitian Revolution as a counterpoint to the present conditions being faced by African-Americans. He seemed, at times, to want to escape the past. Whitney's presentation of Toussaint as an ideal, a myth as much as a reality, threatened to forever trap contemporary African-Americans in their efforts to create new lives for themselves post-emancipation. A mythical Toussaint promised to damn contemporary African-Americans by comparison, forever forcing them to look to the past and not the present or the future for the seed of their collective greatness. Douglass was trapped in a dilemma created by memory and its uses. On the one hand, Toussaint represented the abilities of those of African descent who had experienced the horrors of enslavement; on the other hand, memorializing him as an ideal figure threatened to obscure not only his origins as a slave but more importantly those of the vast majority of those of African descent. If America remembered Toussaint as an idealized symbol as opposed to a man who refused to allow himself to have been bludgeoned by "ignorance and oppression" then it lessened the collective triumph of the millions of slaves/ex-slaves, men and women like Douglass himself, who had overcome slavery and its psycho-social

²⁷⁴ "Statuette of Toussaint L'Ouverture," *The Christian Recorder*...April 17, 1873.

effects. Put another way, if Toussaint was a near-mythical, heroic figure then it implied that all other slaves and former slaves had been impotent victims waiting to be rescued. Toussaint had to be less than exceptional in order for contemporary African-Americans to aspire to be more than symbols themselves. If African-American history became nothing more than a series of heroic figures, Toussaint or perhaps Lincoln, delivering millions from bondage to freedom then slaves/ex-slaves ceased to be historical actors. They would become object that were acted upon.

If memories of the past, especially ones of exemplary figures like Toussaint, threatened to either overshadow or doom by comparison the abilities of contemporary African-Americans, how then was Douglass to engage with the Haitian Revolution and her most famous leader? He could have simply ignored the Haitian Revolution but such a tactic may have made it even easier for post-War Americans to forget the painful legacies that slavery had bequeathed them. When writing of Douglass' insistence on recalling memories of slavery and the Civil War, historian David Blight makes the observation that "Douglass insisted that whatever the psychological need of avoiding the woeful legacy of slavery, that legacy would resist all human effort at suppression...Better to confront such a past, he believed, than to wait for its resurgence...he despised the politics of forgetting."²⁷⁵ Though Blight's observation was made specifically in reference to Douglass' memory of the Civil War, it seems appropriate for a Haitian context as well. Avoiding all talk of the painful legacy of slavery not only dulled the triumph of emancipation, whether it be in Haiti or the United States, but it also allowed post-War America to deny its role in creating the crippling poverty and socio-political impotence

²⁷⁵ Blight, *Race and Reunion*...316.

that many African-Americans faced after 1865. Moreover, despite Douglass' insistence that glorifying "great men" from African-Americans' past would not elevate the race in the present he was not arguing for collective amnesia. If one was to avoid reveling in the glory of the past yet not avoid the past altogether, then how exactly did Douglass want to approach memories of Haiti? Douglass' solution to the dilemma described above was simple. Rather than avoid all talk of the past he chose, as he had for most of his life particularly when it came to Haiti, to shape his articulations of a public memory of the Haitian Revolution in such a way as to allow them to support, and not smother, the struggles of contemporary African-Americans. Just as Whitney had created an idealized image of Toussaint that separated him from his brethren of African descent, Douglass sought to present his audience with an image of Toussaint that simultaneously recognized his contributions to African-American history while also presenting him as an ordinary man whose struggles and triumphs, though impressive, could serve to represent the experiences and capabilities of countless others. In the same year that Whitney's statue was unveiled, Douglass offered his readers a copy of a portrait of Toussaint that was the owned by Wendell Phillips.²⁷⁶ Given Douglass' comments from the ceremony in Baltimore, it seems that he intentionally chose this particular image of Toussaint. No doubt, he could have offered his readers a copy of a portrait of Toussaint that had first appears in Marcus Rainsford's 1805 hagiography of Toussaint, *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti*. However, Douglass did not want to provide his readers with an image of Toussaint that, as historian Matthew Clavin notes "extended the image of Louverture as a Great Man from print to visual culture."²⁷⁷ Douglass chose to provide his

²⁷⁶ *New National Era* (Washington, D.C.: April 17, 1873).

²⁷⁷ Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War*...25.

readers with an image of Toussaint that anti-slavery activist James Redpath described in the following manner. "I believe it [the portrait owned by a Wendell Phillips and offered to readers of the *New National Era*] to be the more likely correct, as all the contemporary pen-portraits of Toussaint that I have seen agree in describing him as entirely devoid of personal charms. He was small in stature, and almost repulsive in aspect at first sight...His fine conversational powers, and his brilliant eyes, soon causes his friendly listeners to forget his stature and his ugliness. I spoke with some negroes in Hayti who were his soldiers, and they agree that he was no Adonis."²⁷⁸ Given Douglass' fears about "exceptionalizing" memories as well as his faith in the power of visual imagery to shape people's perceptions it seems highly likely that he specifically chose to provide his readers with the most realistic image of Toussaint possible.²⁷⁹ Ironically, Douglass found himself trying to combat racial prejudice by providing his readers with the ugliest possible picture of one of his people's most accomplished heroes. Instead of presenting Toussaint as an exceptional figure, he wanted to use a realistic memory, articulated visually, in order to argue that he was indeed representative of the potential abilities that all African-Americans possessed. In the Baltimore speech analyzed above Douglass pointed to the self-awareness one gleans from history as a crucial distinction between men and beasts. "He [mankind as a species] learns from the past, improves upon the past,

²⁷⁸ "Toussaint L'Ouverture," *The Christian Recorder*...June 16, 1866.

²⁷⁹ Douglass was enthralled by the power of the "...wonderful discovery and invention," created by Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre. He spoke frequently in the topic of the photograph and its revolutionary possibilities. To Douglass, the power of photographs lay in their ability to influence society in a manner that speeches or essays could not. "The picture and the ballad are alike, if not equally social forces-the one reaching and swaying the heart by the eye, the other by the ear." See, Frederick Douglass, "Pictures and Progress: An Address Delivered in Boston, Massachusetts, on 3 December 1861,"...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume III*... 454-456. For further discussion on Douglass fondness of photographs, both generally and specifically as a tool to achieve social change, see, John Stauffer, "Creating an Image in Black," in *Prophets of Protest*...256-267.

looks back upon the past, and hands down his knowledge of the past to after-coming generations that they may carry their achievements to a still higher point. To lack this element of progress is to resemble the lower animals, and to possess it is to be men.”²⁸⁰

To Douglass, the memories of the past should lead to “progress” in the present; he wanted memories of the Haitian Revolution to be a springboard that could propel the achievement of contemporary African-Americans as opposed to a blanket that threatened to smother them with hollow tales of heroes whose achievements could never be replicated.

Douglass' faith in the power of realistic historical imagery to shape both how African- and European-Americans understood the relationship between the past and the present was something that he had cultivated for much of his career. Ever since the 1839 invention of the Daguerreotype, the popularity of the photograph had only grown. Douglass himself commented on the accessibility of the photographed image when he noted that "Men of all conditions may see themselves as others see them. What was once the exclusive luxury of the rich and great is now within reach of all."²⁸¹ Douglass' offer, to his readers, of a realistic photograph of Toussaint was driven not only by his faith in the power of photographic imagery to shape society but also by his awareness of the popularity of both photographs, in general, and Toussaint, in particular. An African-American resident of Georgia illustrated all of these strands when he wrote to the editors of *The Christian Recorder*. The author of the letter to the editors, John Henry Lee, asserted that he desired to see photographs of, among others, "...Toussaint, and Banneker,

²⁸⁰ Douglass, "The Douglass's Institute... *The Frederick Douglass Papers. Series One...Volume IV*...95.

²⁸¹ Douglass, "Pictures and Progress...", "... *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume III*...454.

and Douglass...upon our own walls, also in our own parlors, drawing-rooms and our sanctum."²⁸² Douglass' offer of a realistic photograph of Toussaint was an acknowledgement of the optimism of the Reconstruction era as well as the idea that African-Americans desired to celebrate the "great men" of their collective past.²⁸³ However, Douglass was also relying on the picture as a tool; an effort to shape how they and others viewed those "great men" relative to the millions of ex-slaves who strove to make lives for themselves and their families in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Alas, Mr. Henry concluded his letter with the complaint that he knew not where to find photographs of prominent African-Americans. Unfortunately for him, it appears that he must not have been a subscriber to the *New National Era*.

Just two years before he would pass away, Douglass stood before audiences in Chicago and delivered a pair of speeches about Haiti's revolutionary history that illustrate his continued willingness to look to memory as a vehicle for understanding what it meant to be both African and American.²⁸⁴ Delivered on the same day amidst the bustling cosmopolitan spirit that marked the Chicago World's Colombian Exposition of 1893, these speeches demonstrate the flexibility of Douglass' articulation of a public memory of

²⁸² John Henry Lee, "Pictures of Our Prominent Men," *The Christian Recorder*...June 13, 1878.

²⁸³ In 1870, in reference to the production of a printed image of the African-American Senator Hiram R. Revels, Douglass celebrated the optimism inherent in the owning of pictures when he noted that "Heretofore, colored Americans have thought little of adorning their parlors with pictures. They have had to deal with the stern, and I may say, ugly realities of life. Pictures come not with slavery and oppression and destitution, but with liberty, fair play and leisure." Quoted in, Foner, *Forever Free*...101.

²⁸⁴ The first of these speeches was very brief and presented by Douglass to a small audience on the Fair's grounds during the day of January 2nd, 1893. This speech was given as part of a brief ceremony marking the completion of Haiti's pavilion on that same day. According to historian John Blassingame, the pavilion was completed ahead of schedule and there was little time to plan for an extended or elaborate ceremony. Later that evening, at Chicago's Quinn Chapel, Douglass delivered a longer and more formal speech, to an audience of more than a thousand people, on contemporary conditions in Haiti and her revolutionary history. Both speeches were subsequently published together in pamphlet form. See, Frederick Douglass "Haiti Among the Foremost Civilized Nations of the Earth: An Address Delivered in Chicago, Illinois, on 2 January 1893," and "Haiti and the Haitian People: An Address Delivered in Chicago, Illinois, on 2 January 1893,"...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One... Volume V*... 501-509 and 509-534.

the Haitian Revolution. Specifically, Douglass eschewed much of the strategic distancing of African-Americans from the Haitian Revolution that informed many of his post-War uses of Haitian memory. As such, his comments on what was no doubt a frigid and windy day on the banks of Lake Michigan represent, on some levels, a return to memories that had first been articulated during the antebellum era. However, these two speeches are too layered to easily place them within either an antebellum or a post-War category. Rather, they contain themes from both eras and at times present seemingly contradictory versions of the past. Presented in his role as Haiti's official representative at the World's Fair and coming on the heels of having recently spent nearly two years as the American minister resident and consul general to Haiti, (1889-1891), Douglass' comments from that day served as a fitting capstone to a lifetime worth of articulations of public memories of the Haitian Revolution.

Historian Glen McClish has observed that Douglass' Chicago speeches "...are not among his most well-known or frequently quoted orations. Nor have they been emphasized by scholars of Douglass, the Haitian Revolution, or African-American rhetoric who tend to overlook the significance of late-nineteenth century texts."²⁸⁵ For the most part, McClish's observation is accurate. As evidence, one may recall the earlier sections of this chapter that discuss the relative dearth of scholarship relating to the topics discussed in this chapter when compared to studies that focus on the antebellum era. Even biographers of Douglass, like William McFeeley, have failed to explore these

²⁸⁵ Glen McClish, "The Spirit of Human Brotherhood, the Sisterhood of Nations and Perfect Manhood: Frederick Douglass and the Rhetorical Significance of the Haitian Revolution," ... *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution*... 124.

speeches in any meaningful way.²⁸⁶ Outside of McClish's own work, the most cogent analysis of these speeches is probably provided by a scholar of literature and English, Dr. Robert S. Levine. In his collection of essays, *Dislocating Race and Nation: Episodes in Nineteenth-Century American Nationalism*, Levine argues that Douglass' 1893 usage of a memory of the Haitian Revolution presented a pan-African conception of racial identity that overshadowed any nationalistic feelings that Douglass may have had. In Levine's words, "Douglass...speaks less as a U.S. American or African American than as a black man..."²⁸⁷ Although McClish, much more so than Levine, sees the two Chicago speeches as relying on distinctively different themes he is in agreement with the idea that the speech at Quinn Chapel represents a black nationalist critique of racism that "seeks not so much to establish membership in an old family as to form powerful new brotherly bonds."²⁸⁸ Though much of the following analysis builds upon the work of these two scholars it is important to note that their conclusions are a bit oversimplified. Douglass certainly used the 1893 speeches to argue for a racialized bond between African-Americans, Haitians and all individuals of African descent but his articulations of a memory of the Haitian Revolution revealed that such a racial identity was not meant to subsume but rather to coexist with an American one. Moreover, there are specific contextual factors that may have influenced Douglass' decision to appeal to a pan-African identity at that moment in time.

²⁸⁶ In fact, though McFeely discusses Douglass' participation in the 1893 World's Fair he does not analyze or even mention the speeches Douglass gave in January 2, 1893. See, McFeely, *Frederick Douglass...* 366-373.

²⁸⁷ Robert S. Levine, *Dislocating Race and Nation: Episodes in Nineteenth-Century American Nationalism* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 234.

²⁸⁸ McClish, "The Spirit of Human Brotherhood...", "...*African Americans and the Haitian Revolution...* 137.

In many ways, Douglass' 1893 articulations of a memory of the Haitian Revolution echoed ideas that he first presented prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. Thus, he sought to praise Toussaint less for his martial capabilities than his compassionate humanity and wisdom. Just as he had during his 1848 biography of Toussaint, Douglass reminded his audience on the fair grounds that "His [Toussaint's] motto from the beginning of the war to the end of his participation in it, was protection to the white colonists and no retaliation of injuries."²⁸⁹ Later that night, in an effort perhaps to avoid hoisting Toussaint above all other members of his race and thus allowing commentators to claim he was exceptional and therefore not a representative example of what those of African descent were capable of, Douglass expanded his list of notable Haitians. Like he had during the antebellum era, Douglass looked to Haiti as confirmation of the intellectual abilities possessed by African-Americans. In a statement that he may have avoided making in the 1870's he reminded his audience that "No better test of the intelligence of a people can be had than is furnished...in their great men."²⁹⁰ However, in this instance he was sure to heap praise on more than just Toussaint. "Her Toussaint L'Ouvertures, her Dessalines, her Christophes, her Petions, her Riguid and others...were men of decided ability. They were great in all three departments of human greatness."²⁹¹ It appears likely that Douglass, much as he had been during the 1860's/70's

²⁸⁹ Douglass, "Haiti Among the Foremost Civilized Nations of the Earth...", *...Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V...507*.

²⁹⁰ Douglass, "Haiti and the Haitian People...", *...Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V...530*.

²⁹¹ Douglass, "Haiti and the Haitian People...", *...Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V...531*. The three departments of human greatness that Douglass referenced were first articulated by Theodore Parker in a speech that he gave in 1848. Douglass reminded his audience of them just prior to discussing the names cited above. In Douglass' words they are: "greatness of administration", "greatness of organization", and "greatness of discovery". Jean-Jacques Dessalines ruled Haiti from 1801 until his assassination in 1806; Henri Christophe ruled the northern part of Haiti from 1807 until his suicide in 1820; Alexandre Petion ruled the southern part of Haiti from 1807 until he died in office in 1818; Andre Riguid had once fought

was wary of "exceptionalizing" Toussaint. It was as if he wanted to present a version of the Haitian Revolution whereby Toussaint's greatness was no more exceptional than that of several of his contemporaries. Thus, Douglass, whose antebellum articulations of a memory of the Haitian Revolution rarely mentioned any Haitian leader other than Toussaint, sought to use multiple examples of Haitian "greatness" to argue that "greatness" was not an exceptional but rather a natural characteristic of those of African descent. In doing so, Douglass was forced to confront not only the racism of his enemies but also the prevailing trends then prevalent in the writing of history. Recall that multiple book length biographies of Toussaint were published by African-American authors during the last decade and a half of the nineteenth century. These books, rather than seeking to place Toussaint amongst his peers sought to elevate him to a heroic pedestal.²⁹² For example, Robert C. O. Benjamin, author of one of these biographies informed his readers that he was attempting to provide America's youth with a biography of "the Greatest Negro the world has ever seen."²⁹³ Douglass took a different approach. He was not fully rejecting the trends in nineteenth-century cultural thought whereby an entire national or racial group was thought to be represented by the actions of their "greatest" of men but rather trying to expand the list of those considered "great." All of these men, according to Douglass, had undertaken to accomplish what, for the most part only Toussaint was typically given credit for. Namely, raising, training, and

against Toussaint as the leader of an army made up predominately of "mulattos" or "free colored" people. After being released from a French prison in 1810 he returned to Haiti and shared power with Petion until his death in 1811. See, Blassingame and McKivigan, eds., *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One... Vol. V...* 531.

²⁹² See footnote # 12 of this chapter for the authors and titles of these books.

²⁹³ Robert C. O. Benjamin, *Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture, Warrior, and Statesman, with an Historical Survey of the Island of San Domingo from the Discovery of the Island by Christopher Columbus, in 1492, to the Death of Toussaint, in 1803* (Los Angeles: Evening Press Print, 1888), ix.

administering both armies and governments.²⁹⁴ The more examples of "greatness" that Douglass could point to, the harder it would be for anyone to claim they were exceptions rather than the rule.

Douglass' return to themes he had first presented in the antebellum era was not limited to using the Haitian Revolution as evidence of the intellectual abilities of those of African descent. He also articulated a complete causal relationship between Haiti's Revolution and the abolition of slavery throughout the Atlantic world. During the antebellum era he had noted that Great Britain's decision to abolish first the slave trade and then slavery entirely had been driven in part by their fears that a Haitian-style Revolution could erupt in the West Indies.²⁹⁵ What was new about Douglass' return to this theme in 1893 was his assertion that not only British emancipation but also the foundation for the entirety of the global movement to abolish slavery, including in the United States, could be traced to the Haitian Revolution. The following is extensive yet worth quoting at length as it is the most explicit articulation that Douglass ever made regarding the connections between Haiti and the rest of the Atlantic world:

"Speaking of the Negro, I can say, we owe much to [David] Walker for his appeal; to John Brown for the blow he struck at Harper's Ferry, to [Benjamin] Lundy and [William Lloyd] Garrison for their advocacy and to the abolitionists in all the countries of the world. We owe much especially to Thomas Clarkson, to William Wilberforce, to Thomas Fowell Buxton, and to the anti-slavery societies at home and abroad; but we owe

²⁹⁴ Douglass, "Haiti and the Haitian People...", *...Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V...531*.

²⁹⁵ Frederick Douglass, "The Significance of Emancipation in the West Indies: An Address Delivered in Canandaigua, New York, on 3 August 1857," *...The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume III...207*.

comparably more to Haiti than to them all...Until Haiti struck for freedom, the conscience of the Christian world slept profoundly over slavery...The Negro was in its estimation a sheep-like creature...The mission of Haiti was to dispel this...dangerous delusion, and to give the world a new and true revelation of the blackman's character."²⁹⁶

The quote above is certainly a departure from Douglass' Civil War-era arguments that the actions of African-Americans during the Revolutionary War were sufficient evidence of the fact that those of African descent were willing to fight for their liberty as men rather than to accept a sheep-like existence. However other comments made in the course of his Chicago speeches reveal that it would be a mistake to imply, as both McClish and Levine have done, that Douglass had abandoned his American nationalism in favor of a pan-African identity.

Though in 1893 he sought to use the Haitian Revolution as a means of arguing for a shared identity amongst all those of African descent, he did not argue that a racialized identity could replace a nationalistic one. Rather, he relied on the Haitian Revolution, in this instance, to argue for a dual identity that was simultaneously racial *and* national. For example, as he had done during much of his life, he took pains to once more inform his audience that widespread emigration, either to Haiti or to Africa, was not a viable solution to the problems that those of African descent faced in the United States. He argued that "Neither Haiti or Africa can save us [those of African descent] from a common doom...until we can make ourselves respected in the United States, we shall not be respected in Haiti, Africa, or anywhere else."²⁹⁷ Additionally, in a statement that

²⁹⁶ Douglass, "Haiti and the Haitian People...", *...Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V...528-529.*

²⁹⁷ Douglass, "Haiti and the Haitian People...", *...Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V...522-523.*

echoed his 1870's sentiments regarding the uniqueness of the situation facing the millions of America's newly emancipated ex-slaves, Douglass pointed to national characteristics within Haiti that separated it from its northern neighbor. Early in the post-War era, Douglass had argued that America's former slaves deserved full protection of their civil rights because they had, unlike their Haitian counterparts, forgone the revolutionary path to emancipation and remained loyal to their country of birth. Again, in 1893, Douglass implied that, despite the significance and foundational importance of the Haitian Revolution, there were flaws in the Haitian model of socio-political change. In an effort to explain why Haiti had not achieved more in the almost ninety years after the completion of her Revolution, Douglass was clear. "The explanation [for Haiti's instability] is this: Haiti is a country of revolutions. They break forth without warning and without excuse...Such are the uncertainties and insecurities caused by this revolutionary madness on the part of her people..."²⁹⁸ To be fair, Douglass blamed this revolutionary spirit on Haiti's "educated and ambitious few," rather than her "...common people...", but such a distinction does little to weaken the implied comparison that undergirds his argument. Unlike Haiti, he seemed to be noting, the educated and ambitious African-Americans who would seek to lead their brethren to complete freedom were not filled with a revolutionary madness. He was also clear about this flaw being evidence of a national and not a racial deficiency.²⁹⁹ By pointing to what he saw as a national characteristic of the people of Haiti, or at the very least of the educated classes of Haiti, this argument served to establish, by comparison, the exceptionalism of the American situation.

²⁹⁸ Douglass, "Haiti and the Haitian People...", *...Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V...516.*

²⁹⁹ Douglass, "Haiti and the Haitian People...", *...Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V...516.*

For Douglass, there was no reason to see an American identity as incompatible with a broader pan-African one. Perhaps, this was because he viewed his pan-African identity as having been foisted upon him and all others of African descent by the increasingly normative racialized notions of humanity that were on full display at that year's World's Fair. As one of Douglass' biographers has pointed out "All that was to revealed by human progress of the human race lay along the road-the midway [of the Fair's grounds]-that led to the central cluster of formal display pavilions. The throngs of visitors taking the instructive stroll along the midway advanced from the grass huts of the Dahomey village...upward to a Teutonic village where the germ of true civilization was to be encountered."³⁰⁰ Douglass and every other African-American alive in 1893 could not have failed to notice that the universalist promises inherent in the revolutionary amendments of the Civil War-era had given way to a view of humanity whereby those of African descent were believed to permanently occupy the lowest rungs in an increasingly rigid racial hierarchy. Thus, for Douglass, any pan-African identity that he possessed was not one that he chose but one that he believed had been chosen for him. At Quinn Chapel he informed his audience that "...the Negro, like the Jew, can never part with his identity and race. Color does for one what religion does for the other and makes both distinct from the rest of mankind."³⁰¹ However, unlike many of those who bought into the pseudo-science of racialized biology then prevalent, Douglass refused to acknowledge a fractured human family.

Though he did acknowledge the variegated nature of humanity his articulation of the importance of the Haitian Revolution was emblematic of his faith in a unified vision

³⁰⁰ McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*...368.

³⁰¹ Douglass, "Haiti and the Haitian People...", "...*Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V*...522.

of mankind. When he spoke to his audience of Haiti's place in world history he did not mention her as having joined Egypt or Ethiopia as resplendent civilizations ruled by Africans and/or their descendants. Instead, he viewed Haiti's significance in global terms that transcended race.³⁰² "It is said of ancient nations, that each has its special mission in the world and that each taught the world some important lesson. The Jews taught the world a religion, a sublime conception of the Deity. The Greeks taught the world philosophy and beauty. The Romans taught the world jurisprudence. England is foremost...in commerce and manufactures. Germany has taught the world to think, while the American Republic is giving the world an example of a Government by the people...Among these large bodies, the little community of Haiti...has taught the world the danger of slavery and the value of liberty."³⁰³ In a way, Douglass' 1893 public memory of the Haitian Revolution foreshadowed the dilemma of race and nation that much of the modern world still faces. One cannot escape his/her racial identity any more than his/her national identity because these identities are still frequently defined by circumstances beyond the control of individuals.

It is fitting that the last time Douglass publicly referred to a memory of the Haitian Revolution was in the course of a little known speech given in March of 1893 at the Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. This speech is fitting because it contained elements of so many previous articulations discussed throughout this essay. That day in Carlisle was the last time that Douglass presented his speech on "Self-Made

³⁰² For a lengthy discussion of the importance of historical memory of both Egypt and Ethiopia in the development of nineteenth century African-American identity see, Bruce Dain, "Haiti and Egypt in Early Black Racial Discourse in the United States," *Slavery and Abolition*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (December, 1993), 139-161.

³⁰³ Douglass, "Haiti and the Haitian People...", *...Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V...528*.

Men"; a lecture that he originally presented during the antebellum era and had been reviving for audiences on both sides of the Atlantic on more than fifty different occasions spanning the bulk of his public life.³⁰⁴ The setting is significant because one may guess that Douglass' willingness to speak to a group of students who had been stolen from their Native American families and transported halfway around the country in order to learn how to be more civilized represented his approval of what may be best described as domestic imperialism; one could argue that it represented his faith in American exceptionalism. Early in the speech, it is clear that Douglass was still uncertain as to how to navigate the complex waters of presenting the memories of "great men." On the one hand, he paraphrases Ralph Waldo Emerson's assertion that "it is natural to believe in great men."³⁰⁵ However, it is clear that he was still fighting the tendency of many to see "great men," especially those of African descent, as exceptional figures whose achievements did not speak to the abilities of the racial or ethnic group he was a member of. Immediately after his Emerson paraphrase he reminded his listeners that people "...seek out our wisest and best men...not because he is essentially different from us, but because of his identity with us."³⁰⁶ After mentioning the names of several European-Americans whose hard work and dedication led them to achieve great things he turned to his articulation of a final memory of Toussaint.³⁰⁷ Douglass had intentionally divided his

³⁰⁴ Blassingame, ed., *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V*...545-546. For a discussion of Douglass' antebellum presentations of this lecture see Chapter 1.

³⁰⁵ Frederick Douglass, "Self-Made Men: An Address Delivered in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in March 1893,"...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume V*... 548.

³⁰⁶ Douglass, "Self-Made Men..."...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V*...548.

³⁰⁷ Some of the men Douglass used as examples of self-made men, like the Hungarian revolutionary leader Louis Kossuth, or Benjamin Banneker, had been appearing in versions of this speech for decades. Others, like Abraham Lincoln, were more recent inclusions that only appeared in the post-War versions of this speech.

examples of "great" American men into two categories: those of mainly European descent and those who were identifiable as having been descended from Africa. Thus, after he mentioned examples that "...belong to the Caucasian race," he expounded on "the African race."³⁰⁸ Douglass had little new to offer his audience, in terms of his interpretations of Toussaint's character, but he reminded them of all that Toussaint represented nonetheless. "...I can name no man [as an example of self-made men] with more satisfaction than I can Toussaint L'Ouverture, the hero of Santo Domingo. Though born a slave and held a slave till he was fifty years of age; though...he was black and showed no trace of Caucasian admixture, history hands him down to us as a brave and generous soldier, a wise and powerful statesmen, an ardent patriot and a successor liberator of his people and of his country."³⁰⁹ When compared to his antebellum iterations, Douglass had changed few of the details that colored his description of Toussaint. Speaking on the same topic, in England more than thirty years prior, he had also pointed to Toussaint's life of slavery and his achievements as a "brave and generous soldier," as well as a "clear-headed, calm and sagacious statesmen."³¹⁰ Interestingly, one of most obvious alterations to his description of Toussaint in 1893 was his insistence that the hero of Santo Domingo "showed no trace of Caucasian admixture." This addition suggests that Douglass was fully aware of how rigid racialized categorizations of humanity had become de rigueur amongst his countrymen. It as if he was still waging a battle against those who would look to the "great men" of African-American history and

³⁰⁸ Douglass, "Self-Made Men...", *...The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V...*566.

³⁰⁹ Douglass, "Self-Made Men...", *...The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V...*568.

³¹⁰ Frederick Douglass, "The Trials and Triumphs of Self-Made. Men: An Address Delivered in Halifax, England, on 4 January 1860," *...The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume III...*297.

try to find a reason, in this case perhaps claiming that Toussaint actually had some European ancestors, to view them as unrepresentative of the entire racial group.

The remainder of Douglass' speech on that day in Carlisle is illustrative of the dualistic consciousness that both empowered and perhaps haunted him for the entirety of his life. After identifying "industry," as "...the most potent factor in the success of self-made men," he concluded his remarks with his observations about why America was the home of so many self-made men.³¹¹ The nationalistic side of him extolled the virtues of the United States: "Search where you will, there is no country on the globe where labor is so respected and the laborer so honored, as in this country." However, the side of him that was, or was forced to be, African, immediately reminded his audience that America's respect for industry, hard-work and labor was not without caveats. "Of course these [the comments that assert how much America valued hard work] remarks are not intended to apply to the states where slavery has but recently existed...the Southern black laborer stands abashed, confused and intimidated."³¹² Within the course of a single speech, before a small audience of individuals who also likely grappled with what it meant to be American and yet not American, Douglass presented the dilemma of being both African and American. A dilemma whose tensions modernity has yet to resolve.

When Douglass originally gave this speech there was no need for him to insert any comments about how labor was treated in the South. At that time, slavery was the law of the land and he and his audience were aware that such a labor system was antithetical to the idea that America welcomed and rewarded toil and industry. It is not

³¹¹ Douglass, "Self-Made Men...", ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V...569.*

³¹² Douglass, "Self-Made Men...", ...*The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Vol. V...569-570.*

foolhardy to imagine that Douglass and many others perceived slavery to be the principle impediment to individual or collective advancement amongst African-Americans.³¹³

Hence, Douglass' efforts in the 1860's and 1870's to move, intellectually, beyond the confines of the past and focus on the present and the future. Once slavery was defeated and once the early years of radical Reconstruction faded into the ascendancy of Jim Crow, Douglass and countless others were forced to acknowledge that America's heart, despite all of the opportunities that she appeared to offer to those who were willing to work hard, had been blackened by the sickness of racism. Returning to historical memories of, among numerous other stories, the Haitian Revolution could not resolve the tensions inherent in being both an American nationalist and a pan-African racialist. Memories of the Haitian Revolution were not, however, altogether useless for Douglass and other African-Americans. These memories, if they could not resolve the tensions present in the dualistic self, could at least serve as protection in a modern world that still saw shackles around the hands and feet of those who had suffered in and triumphed over their enslavement.

³¹³ William Lloyd Garrison's behavior as editor of the country's preeminent anti-slavery newspaper is testament to the pervasiveness of the belief that slavery was the fundamental obstacle African-Americans faced in their efforts to be successful American citizens. In December of 1865, Garrison informed his readers that *The Liberator* would henceforth cease to exist as its mission, namely, to destroy slavery, had been completed. Garrison's comments to his readers in the final edition of his paper reveal both the hope and the naïveté that so many like-minded Americans must have felt at the time. "Farewell, noblemen and women who have wrought so long and so successfully, under God, to break every yoke! Hail, ye ransomed millions! Hail, years of jubilee!" See, William Lloyd Garrison, "Valedictory. The Last Number of the Liberator," *The Liberator* (Boston: December 29, 1865).

***Epilogue: "Be not discouraged. Accept the inspiration of hope."*³¹⁴**

When Frederick Douglass passed away in 1895 five separate state legislatures adopted resolutions of regret. He was born a slave in Maryland, spent the early years of his post-slavery existence in Massachusetts, and lived much of his life in Rochester, New York prior to relocating to Washington, D.C. In addition to his permanent residences in the United States, Douglass traveled widely and even spent a few years living in Haiti. He lectured on a wide-range of topics and published/edited newspapers during the antebellum, the Civil War, and postbellum eras. The topics he spoke on combined with the geographic range of his travels mark him as an emblematic figure in United States and Atlantic world history. In short, one cannot fully understand the nineteenth century without understanding Douglass as both a reformer and a symbol of change himself.³¹⁵

In a significant way, the changes in Douglass' residences mirrored the changing way that his country approached the twin issues of slavery and race. At the time of his birth in Maryland, slavery was booming both in the United States and the Atlantic world. The British abolition of slavery was still more than a decade away and although many governments had begun to outlaw the international trade in enslaved persons, Eli Whitney's cotton gin ensured that a booming domestic trade saw hundreds of thousands of slaves sold away from the Atlantic coast and into the newly plowed cotton fields of the Deep South. By the time Douglass escaped from slavery, in 1838, the global movement to abolish slavery as a legalized labor system was underway. It makes sense that he found himself drawn to America's hotbed of anti-slavery sentiment: New England. As he

³¹⁴ Frederick Douglass, "The Blessings of Liberty and Education: An Address Delivered in Manassas, Virginia, on 3 September 1894,"...*Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One...Volume V*...629.

³¹⁵ John W. Blassingame introduction to, *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One. Speeches, Debates and Interviews: Volume I: 1841-1846* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), xi-xiv.

became more and more comfortable with sharing his own thoughts as opposed to simply being a human face for the degradations inherent in the slave system Douglass distanced himself from William Lloyd Garrison and his acolytes: the move to Rochester and the establishment of the *North Star* are emblematic of this new found intellectual independence on his part. Once the Civil War was over and the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments had been passed Douglass' move to D.C. represented not only the new opportunities available to African-Americans, (Recall Douglass' appointments to various civil service jobs.), but also a new outlook. No longer the capital of a country dedicated to preserving slavery, D.C. had become the capital of a country that had sacrificed thousands of lives to ensure that its founding principles were not hollow clichés. Even Douglass' brief sojourn in Haiti fits nicely within the analog described above. Though he went as an emissary of the United States his time abroad can be viewed as the result of his frustration that the revolutionary potential of the Civil War had been subsumed by a country that, save for the millions of ex-slaves who struggled to make a living in the postbellum era, was not yet prepared to face the racialized prejudiced that lurked within its psyche.

It would be a mistake however to view Douglass' return from Haiti or his life in general as prodigal. Though he personally escaped from the clutches of slavery and though he played a meaningful role in destroying slavery as a legally sanctioned institution his story is more tragic than triumphant. Douglass would die long before the United States ever made good on the promises inherent in the Emancipation or the Amendments that were authored in its wake. In a life where the present was filled with racialized oppression and the future was uncertain, Douglass often turned to memories in

order to sustain himself as well as his fellow African-Americans. He looked to variety of sources, from the Bible to America's founding in an attempt to put the past to use for those in the present. In particular, memories of the Haitian Revolution were significant because they were so plastic. Depending on the specific circumstance, Douglass could turn to the Haitian Revolution as a rhetorical tool that could assist him in presenting a wide range of arguments more clearly and more forcefully. At various times the Haitian Revolution served as a prophet, a talisman, a referendum, and/or a cautionary tale.

Though it is easy to see Douglass' life as being tragic in nature, his tragic flaw being of course his race, it would be a mistake to argue that the challenge of being both African and American defeated him. His last public words stand as testament to this fact. In September 1894, at the opening of the Colored Industrial School in Manassas, Douglass compared the plight of African-Americans to a ship at sea. Using a metaphor that was apt for a man who had relied on fraudulent sailor's identification papers to abscond from slavery so many years prior, he argued that the ship only faced resistance when it "sets out on her voyage," and "turns prow to the open sea." Moreover, he pointed out that "the higher shall be her speed, the greater shall be her resistance." Thus, Douglass saw the reemerging racism of the late nineteenth century as a hopeful sign; it was evidence of how much progress African-Americans were making. Progress, ironically, that had been achieved, in part, because of the willingness of Douglass and countless others to look to their collective pasts for hope and sustenance. One imagines that if not for the succor provided by memories of triumph in the direst straights then it would have been impossible for him to conclude his speech that day with the following advice. "In conclusion, my dear young friends, be not discouraged. Accept the inspiration

of hope. Imitate the example of the brave mariner who, amid clouds and darkness, amid hail, rain and storm bolts, battles his way against all that the sea opposes to his progress, and you will reach the goal of your noble ambition safely."³¹⁶ Fitting words for a man who, armed with historical memories as a guide, never ceased to battle his way against all that the storms of racism and oppression could place in his path.

³¹⁶ Frederick Douglass, "The Blessings of Liberty and Education: An Address Delivered in Manassas, Virginia, on 3 September 1894,"...*Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One... Volume V*...629.

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