Steve Yeh 12/28/12

Ms. Schiller Frederick Douglass Essay

Frederick Douglass experienced numerous ineradicable memories during his lifetime. He became a very well-known and famous abolitionist and spokesperson for the abolitionists’ movement. Douglass became the face of all abolitionists, making speeches and writing narratives of his experiences as a slave himself. He made slavery not just an issue limited to slaves, free blacks, and abolitionists, but for the whole nation. Douglass became a close friend of President Lincoln’s, aiding him in making difficult decisions during the Civil War. He became one of the leaders in eliminating slavery because he, before becoming a free man, was a slave.

One of the most indelible events that Douglass experienced was when his grandmother left him at the master’s plantation. Prior to his grandmother’s abandoning of Douglass, Douglass knew only of his grandmother’s authority. He was ignorant that he was a slave, a person owned by someone else. Afterward, his grandmother left him at the master’s plantation. She did this because she knew it was time that Douglass had to start working as a slave for the master. For this reason, Douglass felt betrayed and tricked by his grandmother. He pushed away all of the other children trying to console him. Soon after, Douglass understood that he was a slave and that his childhood ended. Douglass would have to work day and night for the master on the plantation. He would not be ignorant of the fact that he did not have freedom. Douglass states that this was “my first introduction to the realities of slavery.” To conclude, after Douglass’ grandmother left, he felt deceived and became conscious of the fact that he was a slave and that his childhood ended.

Another unforgettable incident of Douglass’ life was his fight with Edward Covey. Before the fight happened, Covey, the “Slave Breaker”, treated Douglass very harshly and cruelly. Covey gave Douglass beatings and whippings on a daily routine. He even beat Douglass when he was sick and couldn’t work. During the fatiguing two-hour fight, Douglass overpowered Covey. Douglass remembers it as “the turning-point in my career as a slave”, which was the start of the transition of Douglass from being a slave to a free man. Furthermore, Douglass felt that the fight “rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood.” This meant that Douglass’ spirit rose along with his willpower to be free, his boldness, defiance and ambitiousness. In addition to Douglass’ feeling of liberty, Covey did not have him have a public beating by the constable. Douglass thought that Covey didn’t have him beat because Covey’s reputation as the “Slave Breaker” would be on the line if the public knew that one of the slaves Covey was breaking fought back. Covey let Douglass go unpunished for his rebellious actions. Thus, Douglass’ fight with Covey made Douglass’ defiance and aspirations to be free come to life again.

Douglass’ grandmother abandoning him at the master’s plantation and his fight with Covey all proved to be the defining moments of Douglass. They molded him into a tough and defiant man who later became one of the most famous abolitionists. Douglass became a free man in 1846, with the help of his friends, who purchased his freedom while he was in England. Douglass turned out to be one of the noteworthy motivators who changed America, from a land of slavery to a land of free people.