

DOUGLASS EXPOSES EVILS OF SLAVERY

By our civil rights correspondent
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FREDERICK DOUGLASS has been hailed a new national leader of the abolitionists' anti-slavery movement after his autobiography was published yesterday.

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave describes his earlier years as an enslaved man and his struggle for freedom. He wrote the book in the town of Lynn, after he became a free man. The work is predicted to become an instant bestseller, adding momentum to the campaign to end slavery across America.

The book describes the evils of slavery in chilling detail. But some whites question his authorship, saying a slave is incapable of writing such a work.

In the book, Douglass recounts his early life, years in which he saw an aunt whipped and enslaved people punished by their masters, even for telling the truth. Later, one particularly cruel owner regularly whipped Douglass, working and beating him to exhaustion, until Douglass collapsed one day while working in the fields.

Somehow, Douglass learned to write, and read everything he could to educate himself.

Eventually, he escaped to the North, reaching New Bedford, where he lived for a time. The whaling port town has become an important stop on the Underground Railroad—the network of secret routes and safe houses used by southern slaves to escape to northern free states and Canada. Many fugitive slaves have found places in whaling crews.

For years now, abolitionists have been drawn to Massachusetts. The 1780 Massachusetts Constitution, drafted primarily by John Adams, second U.S. President, effectively abolished slavery in the state. Using the state constitution, enslaved people won their freedom in a series of court cases, including Elizabeth Freeman and Quock Walker. In Boston's Beacon Hill, free African-Americans and escaped slaves have helped to make the state a center of the national anti-slavery movement.

Elsewhere, African-American campaigner Sojourner Truth, who was born into slavery, joined a community in Northampton, while John Brown, a leading white abolitionist, moved to Springfield.

In 1831, William Lloyd Garrison published *The Liberator*, a Boston newspaper that called for the immediate emancipation of all slaves



in the U.S. A white man born in Newburyport, Garrison is a cofounder of the American Anti-Slavery Society and an early advocate for women's right to vote, inspiring many African-Americans—including Frederick Douglass—to make their voices heard.