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Main content

Article Preview :

Gregory P. Lampe: (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1998. Pp. xvi, 350. \$45.00. \$22.95, paper.)

Frederick Douglass is the opposite of an acquired taste. To the reader with even a slight interest in autobiography, political thought, slavery, abolitionism, American history, or the art of rhetoric, an exposure to one of the autobiographies or to the published speeches of Frederick Douglass is an immediately captivating experience. For the thoughtful reader, to read the writings of Frederick Douglass is to love them. Thus any biographer of Douglass confronts formidable competition: for sheer power of language and forcefulness of style the biographer has trouble competing with Douglass himself as an attraction to the uninitiated reader. In other words, this new book by Gregory Lampe is not the place to start for a reader unfamiliar with Douglass's writings. Nor is it meant to be: it is designed for the specialist, scholars of rhetoric or of American history - groups to whom two out of the three blurbs on the back cover recommend it.

For such an audience, for the reader already familiar with the three versions of Douglass's autobiographies and with the standard five volume Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass (ed. Philip Foner, 1950-75) and who has become entranced enough to want a closer look, this book can be recommended, along with others. They would include the exhaustive Yale University Press collection, edited by John Blassingame and others (The Frederick Douglass Papers, 1979-), a projected fourteen-volume series (of which several volumes are already in print), and the several biographies of Douglass that are now available (see the list in Lampe's ample bibliography).

Lampe's look at the first 27 years of the life of Frederick Douglass has a dual focus: he is interested, first, in understanding as fully as possible...

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Frederick Douglass, 1818-1895. Funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities supported the electronic publication of this title. Text scanned (OCR) by Sarah Reuning Images scanned by Carlene Hempel Text encoded by Carlene Hempel and Natalia Smith First edition, 1999 ca. 300K Academic Affairs Library, UNC-CH University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1999. Call number E 449 D746 1845 (Murrey Atkins Library, UNC-Charlotte). The electronic edition is a part of the UNC-CH digitization project, Documenting the American South, Beginnings to 1920. Any hyphens occurring in line breaks have Frederick Douglass was an escaped slave who became a prominent activist, author and public speaker. He became a leader in the abolitionist movement, which sought to end the practice of slavery, before and during the Civil War. While overseas, he was impressed by the relative freedom he had as a man of color, compared to what he had experienced in the United States. During his time in Ireland, he would meet the Irish nationalist Daniel O'Connell, who would become an inspiration for his later work. Frederick Douglas, National Parks Service, nps.gov. Frederick Douglas, 1818-1895, Documenting the South, University of North Carolina, docsouth.unc.edu. Frederick Douglass Quotes, brainyquote.com. "Reception Speech.