NARRATOR's NOTES: Frederick Douglas

Nineteenth Century America was indeed "a land of opportunity" for self-made men and women. The latter-day MYTH of people being able to "drag themselves up by their bootstraps" was spawned by this Era ushered in by so-called JACKSONIAN DEMOCRACY.   There was no faulting the proposition that any person with Drive, Determination, a little Skill and a measure of Luck, could overcome all obstacles to reach whatever plateau they might aim for. "Breeding" had ceased to be the sole measure of Success.

Perhaps no Individual better fit this paradigm than a man of Afro-American heritage who despite status as "Slave" for much of his Life, was able to distinguish himself as a renowned citizen of the U.S. despite having to confront insurmountable social barriers.

His original name was FREDERICK AUGUSTUS WASHINGTON BAILEY. He was born to a slave-woman named Harriet Bailey in the State of Maryland. It is likely that his Father was a white-man though there is no record of this fact. The year of his birth is believed to have been 1818. Twenty years later he changed his name to "Frederick Douglas" to make it more difficult for slave-catchers to trace him.