

Frederick Douglass to Benjamin Franklin Auld, March 24, 1894

Image

Cedar Hill,
Anacostia, D. C.

March: 24 1894

Capt. B. F. Auld.

My dear Sir and friend:

By the pains you have taken to obtain for me the date when your father began ship building in conspiracy with Mr Edward Harrison on the City Block you have made me deeply obliged to you. Should, ^{it} be in my power to render you any service or any other service, I beg you will not hesitate to call upon me. I value your letter highly. I think however, that Mr Dorgan is mistaken. It must have been as early as 1827. When your father went into business on the City B. and I must have been eight years old when I came to Baltimore in 1825 to look after your Brother Thomas. I know the date because Capt Anthony My Master died in

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(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC07484.01)

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My dear Sir and friend:

By the pains you have taken to obtain for me the date when your father began ship building in company with Mr Edward Harrison on the City Block you have made me deeply obliged to you. Should [inserted: it] ever be in my power to render you alike service or any other service, I beg you will not hesitate to call upon me. I value your letter highly – I think however, that Mr. Dorgan is mistaken. It must have been as early as 1827 when your father went into business on the City B. and I must have been eight years old when I came to Baltimore in 1825 to look after your Brother Thomas. I know the date because Capt Anthony my master died in [2] in that year and I was then in Baltimore. I was big enough to bring a good sized bucket of water from the pump on Washington Street to our house on Allisana Street where your father lived – and to carry your father's dinner from there to Dorgan & Bailey's Shipyard where he was then employed. The only fear your kind mother then had in sending [inserted: me] was that Jim Teel and other big bad boys would set upon me & beat me. I however got along pretty well and soon learned to defend myself. We however, soon moved from Allisana Street to a house that belonged to Dr Allender on Philpot Street near the entrance to Dorgan & Bailey's Ship yard. Gustavus who I am sorry to learn by your letter is in feeble health was then in the clothes of a very small boy – not big enough to send to school. The principle thing I desired in making the inquiries I have of you was to get some idea of my exact age. I have always been troubled by the thought of having no birth day. My Mistress Lucretia Auld, said that I was eight or nearly eight when I went to Baltimore in the [3] Summer of 1825 – and this corresponds with what you have heard your kind mother say on the subject – so I now judge that I am now about 77 – years old. I am further confirmed in this because Mrs Amanda Sears was born Jan: 28.1826. and that was after I went to live with your Father and Mother in Baltimore. In 1825. I was sent from Baltimore to Hillsboro where your uncle Thomas lived – to be devided with the other property among the heirs – I was much exercised as to my fate. [inserted: The] thing I feared most was that I might fall to a branch of the family unfriendly to sending me back to my good house in Baltimore. Happy I was when I was told that I was the property of Mrs Lucretia for then I felt sure that I should go back to Baltimore to my good home. But my dear Sir: you are a man of business and I must not take up your time further. I give you my thanks and the assurance of my high Respect, esteem and best wishes for you and all who are dear to you.

Frederick Douglass,