

# New historic walking trail for Cork

Trail traces the footsteps of anti-slavery crusader Fredrick Douglass

**Douglass descendant and *Hamilton* star to walk in the footsteps of 19th-century abolitionists**

*Cork, Ireland (22 July 2021)* – A new historic walking trail – “**The Cork Abolitionists Trail**”- launches today (Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> July) in Cork City. The trail across the city has been created to trace the footsteps of the abolitionist Frederick Douglass who visited Cork in 1845, and the 12 stop route will be launched by City and County officials, a direct descendant of Fredrick Douglass and a star of the hit musical *Hamilton*.

Born into slavery, Frederick Douglass would become a powerful leader in the anti-slavery movement in the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He visited Ireland in 1845 to build support for the abolitionist cause in America, and would spend a transformative month in Cork, delivering powerful denunciations of slavery to crowds of thousands. This inspiring social reformer, freedom fighter, statesman, orator and writer had a decisive impact on America’s path to abolishing slavery and his contribution to American history is now being fully recognised.

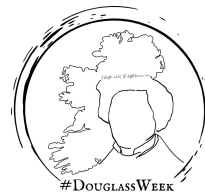
“**The Cork Abolitionists Trail**”, created by #DouglassWeek and Cork City Council, weaves its way across Cork City and includes iconic local landmarks such as the City Courthouse and the Imperial Hotel, where Douglass delivered powerful speeches to rapt audiences. A highlight of Douglass’s time in Cork was meeting Fr Mathew, the famed “Apostle of Temperance” whose statue bestrides St Patrick’s Street. While in Cork, Douglass stayed with the Unitarian Thomas Jennings and his family at Brown Street (now Paul Street). The current Trail will soon be available online (self-guided trail tour) and future plans also include the installation of physical markers to serve as points of reflection on the experience of abolitionists in Ireland.

The Trail will be launched today (Thursday 22 July, 10am) at the Frederick Douglass Mural in Cork City by the Lord Mayor of Cork, Colm Kelleher, and Cork City Council Chief Executive Ann Doherty. A great-great-great grandson of Frederick Douglass, Kenneth B. Morris, Jr. will also be in attendance, as will American actor Paul Oakley Stovall (Tony-Award-winning musical *Hamilton*), who is in Ireland to research a television series about Douglass in Ireland. A guided walk of the trail will occur led by the author of *Frederick Douglass in Ireland*, Dr. Laurence Fenton. A group of twenty “Frederick Douglass Global Fellows,” American university students of colour visiting Ireland on a four-week study and leadership development programme hosted by the *Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE)*, will also be in attendance as well as staff from University College Cork (UCC).

Direct Frederick Douglass descendant and Co-Founder & President of the Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives **Kenneth B. Morris, Jr.** said “I am so excited to be traveling back to Ireland and especially to Cork, where my great ancestor found solace and friendship, and was a place so special to him. I know I’ll get emotional when retracing his footsteps on the same streets he trod over 175 years ago!”

Actor **Paul Oakley Stovall** said, “The Cork Abolitionists Trail is a key element in sustaining the memory of this historical giant. It’s also an inspiration in the continuing development of my series about Douglass’s time in Ireland. My research has led me thus far to Belfast, Limerick, and Dublin of course, but it’s a particular thrill to be back in Cork with the #DouglassWeek team, and having Ken Morris join us is a dream come true.”

“We are absolutely thrilled to launch *The Cork Abolitionists Trail* in partnership with the Cork City Council,” said University College Cork (UCC) lecturer **Dr. Caroline Schroeter**, founding member and leader of the #DouglassWeek team. “The Trail has been a labour of love for our team for nearly two years and something we wanted to do during #DouglassWeek 2021 but couldn’t because of COVID-19. We’re really looking



forward to continuing our collaborations nationally and internationally with Cork City Council, CIEE and all our other fantastic partners in the months and years to come.”

More information on the Frederick Douglass and the walking trail can be found on [www.douglassincork.com](http://www.douglassincork.com)

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**For media information and interviews contact:** Dr Caroline Schroeter 083 406 8613/  
[caroline.schroeter@ucc.ie](mailto:caroline.schroeter@ucc.ie)

### *About Frederick Douglass*

Speaking at the Imperial Hotel in Cork on the afternoon of Tuesday, 14 October, 1845, Douglass declared “There is nothing slavery dislikes half so much as the light. It is a gigantic system of iniquity, that feeds and lives in darkness, and, like a tree with its roots turned to the sun, it perishes when exposed to the light.”

For an account of Frederick Douglass time in Ireland please access this article by the Ireland’s Ambassador to the United States, Daniel Mulhall.

<https://www.dfa.ie/irish-embassy/usa/about-us/ambassador/ambassadors-blog/frederick-douglass-in-ireland-1845-46---ambassadors-blog.html>

Other suggestions on the topic of Frederick Douglass in Ireland and the UK include:

- Laurence Fenton’s *Frederick Douglass in Ireland: 'The Black O'Connell'* by Gill Books <https://www.gillbooks.ie/biography/biography/frederick-douglass-in-ireland> as well as Fenton’s website [www.laurencefentonbooks.com](http://www.laurencefentonbooks.com)
- Hannah-Rose Murray’s *Advocates of Freedom* <https://www.waterstones.com/book/advocates-of-freedom/hannah-rose-murray/9781108487511>) and *Frederick Douglass in Britain and Ireland*, co-authored with Prof. John R. McKivigan <https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-frederick-douglass-in-britain-and-ireland-1845-1895.html>) as well as Murray’s online abolitionist mapping website would be great: [www.frederickdouglassinbritain.com](http://www.frederickdouglassinbritain.com)
- Adrian Mulligan’s “As a Lever Gains Power by its Distance from the Fulcrum”: Tracing Frederick Douglass in the Irish Atlantic World“ which is free to download here: [https://digitalcommons.bucknell.edu/fac\\_journ/1316/](https://digitalcommons.bucknell.edu/fac_journ/1316/)

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