

Resource Sheet #09

Source: Letter From Thomas Jefferson to Edward Coles Monticello: August 25, 1814, *Jefferson's Farm Book*

“...For men probably of any color, but of this color we know, brought from their infancy without necessity for thought or forecast, are by their habits rendered as incapable as children of taking care of themselves, and are extinguished promptly wherever industry is necessary for raising young. In the mean time they are pests in society by their idleness, and the depredations to which this leads them. Their amalgamation with the other color produces a degradation to which no lover of his country, no lover of excellence in the human character can innocently consent.

Document Analysis:

1. How does Jefferson feel about slaves and African-Americans when considering their capabilities as citizens?
2. How does Jefferson react to the possibility that, if slavery is abolished, inter-racial offspring (amalgamation) may occur?
3. What does Jefferson believe that slaves will do, if they are not used actively as laborers?
4. How does this document help to answer the question, “Where Did Thomas Jefferson Stand on the Issue of Slavery?”

Resource Sheet #10

Source: Thomas Jefferson, in an omitted portion of the draft of the Declaration of Independence. South Carolina and Georgia delegates to the Continental Congress refused to approve of the passage.

Thomas Jefferson, The Writings of Thomas Jefferson: Being His Autobiography, Correspondence, Reports, Messages, Addresses, and other Writings, Official and Private
(Washington, D.C.: Taylor & Maury, 1853-1854).

“He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating the most sacred right of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither, keeping open the markets where men should be bought and sold.”

Document Analysis:

1. Who is Jefferson referring to in this document when using the term “He?”
2. What event is he describing when referring to transportation?
3. What evidence does Jefferson provide that makes slaves seem powerless?
4. Who does Jefferson blame for the slave business in colonial America and what evidence does he cite?
5. How does this document help to answer the question, “Where Did Thomas Jefferson Stand on the Issue of Slavery?”

Resource Sheet #12

Source: Thomas Jefferson's letter to Benjamin Banneker, Philadelphia, Aug. 30, 1791

Sir,

I thank you sincerely for your letter of the 19th. instant and for the Almanac it contained. No body wishes more than I do to see such proofs as you exhibit, that nature has given to our black brethren, talents equal to those of the other colours of men, & that the appearance of a want of them is owing merely to the degraded condition of their existence both in Africa & America. I can add with truth that no body wishes more ardently to see a good system commenced for raising the condition both of their body & mind to what it ought to be, as fast as the imbecillity of their present existence, and other circumstance which cannot be neglected, will admit. I have taken the liberty of sending your almanac to Monsieur de Condorcet, Secretary of the Academy of sciences at Paris, and member of the Philanthropic society because I considered it as a document to which your whole colour had a right for their justification against the doubts which have been entertained of them. I am with great esteem, Sir,

Your most obedt. humble servt.

Th. Jefferson

Document Analysis:

1. What proof does Jefferson cite that African Americans are capable of equal talents.
2. How does Jefferson feel about slavery and its affect on the progress of African Americans?
3. Does Jefferson sound like an abolitionist or slave owner in his letter? Explain.
4. How has Banneker inspired him to do more? What are Jefferson's plans?

Resource Sheet #13

Source: Deed of Manumission for Robert Hemings, December 24, 1794.
From *Free Some Day: The African-American families of Monticello*, by Lucia Stanton, and Courtesy of the University of Virginia Library.

Note: Robert Hemings was the son of Betty Hemings and brother of Sally Hemings.

"This indenture witnesseth that I Thomas Jefferson of the county of Albemarle have manumitted and made free Robert Hemings, son of Betty Hemmings: so that in future he shall be free and of free condition, with all his goods and chattels and shall be discharged of all obligation of bondage or servitude whatsoever: and that neither myself, my heirs executors or administrators shall have any right to exact from him hereafter any services or duties whatsoever. In witness whereof, I have put seal to this present deed of manumission. Given in Albemarle County, this twenty-fourth day of December, one thousand, seventeen and ninety-four."

*Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of D. Carr
Th. Jefferson*

Document Analysis:

1. Define or describe exactly what the term manumitted means to a slave.
2. When Robert was freed, what happened to his possessions?
3. If Jefferson were to die, what would Robert's obligation be to the Jefferson family?
4. Explain how this document could be used to help answer the question, "Where Did Thomas Jefferson Stand on the Issue of Slavery?"