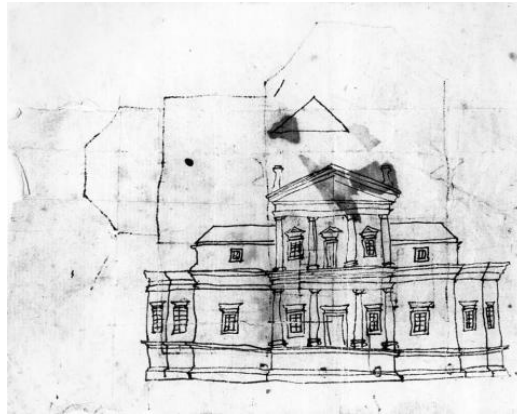




Phrasing is essential to understanding many things, and in the case of Jefferson the phrase author Carole Bos used is most adept: "A Man of Contradictions".

This phrase was used to describe how Thomas Jefferson was one to describe the inherent flaw of slavery but also to own slaves himself. It would have been honorable, radical even, if he had written about the need to abolish slavery and had actually changed his lifestyle at Monticello to be one of servants, paid employees, not 'property'.

However he did no such thing. I wonder if it was because no one else had done it yet, he feared what the people who were his slaves would do, he maybe feared what all the people in his social class would think and say, and perhaps he feared most of all that it would work and would force a huge change that many in power weren't ready for.

What surprised me about reading about his life was that often his name is dropped in conversation as a hero, a great mind, and exquisite thinker, and praised for his harsh words about slavery. BUT I feel he is rarely described, to students anyway, as a man of truly ironic behavior. Even the push for saying all men are truly equal- did he mean all humans? Did he mean to include women?

I don't think he did mean to include women- and that we don't really talk about either. I am surprised that he is still idolized when we know so much about his flaws. Perhaps we can always focus on the negative and forget to see what he was doing in his time was really radical and did set the stage for more positive stuff to happen.

In the media stream to the right, you can see his notes on slavery being bad, and his ad in a paper offering to pay a bounty hunter to return his run away slave. So not only did a slave run from his 'care' which makes me think that his slaves were still treated like property, but also that he was ok supporting the violent bounty hunter capture of a man to be returned to be enslaved!

This reminds me of those kids who are really heavy and start to realize they shouldn't drink soda and talk about the things they learn in health class as important truths in life but still haven't broken the habit of drinking soda. Anyway another thing to look at is the slave quarters at Monticello- they look pretty nice in a modern picture. You can see a digital tour of the place [HERE](#). So perhaps he was trying to treat slaves better than others as a step towards hiring paid employees but he just didn't get that far.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Jefferson-More-Than-a-Scribe->

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

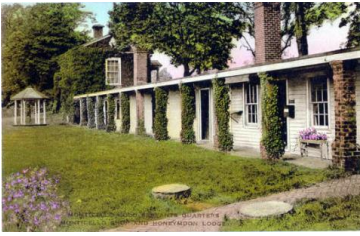
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Jefferson-More-Than-a-Scribe->

Questions 2 Ponder

Hero or Slavemaster

Can a person be a radical positive force through writings even though his or her actions are negative?

Media Stream

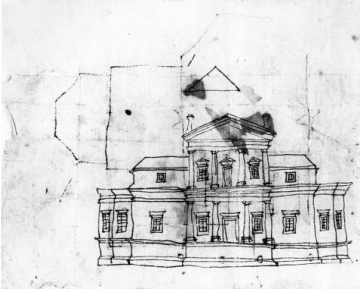


Monticello - Small Cottage and Servants Quarters

Image online, courtesy the USGenWeb Archives [website](#).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Monticello-Small-Cottage-and-Servants-Quarters>



Jefferson's Plan - Creating Monticello

Drawing, courtesy University of Virginia Library.

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View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Jefferson-s-Plan-Creating-Monticello>