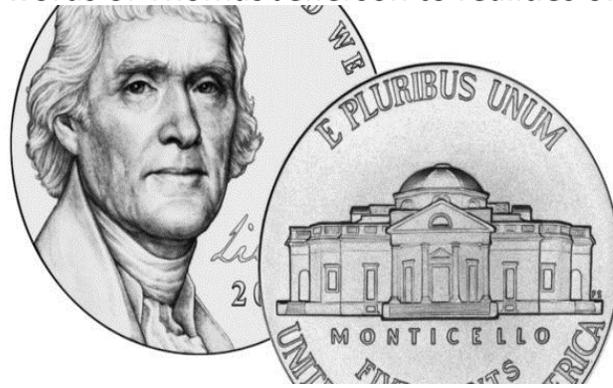


Every Coin Has Two Sides

Comparing the words of Thomas Jefferson to realities of slave life at Monticello



Overview: One of the hardest things to do as a scholar of history is to place ourselves in the exact time, place and ways of life as the people we are studying. Based on the extent of our experiences outside of our hometowns, state, region of the country and /or out of the country we may find ourselves categorizing the people we are learning about as good/evil or hero/villain, but the truth is we were not alive to experience the systems in which they were living with the information or resources that were available to them at that place in time.

We have already analyzed the process of writing the Declaration of Independence, and we know that in Jefferson's first draft he included a slavery clause that was edited out for the purpose of keeping the states unified in the process of splitting from Britain. *For the purpose of this lesson we are using the nickel as a metaphor to compare the contradiction of Jefferson's words about ending slavery (heads), to the reality of life for people working at Monticello (tails).*

Directions: Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. You should be able to answer more thoroughly as the lesson progresses.

Step One: Analyze the two sides of the Jefferson nickel image.

1. Summarize the words & ideas that come to mind when you think of Thomas Jefferson.

2. We know that Jefferson was a self-taught architect which is one reason why his unique design for a house has been placed on the nickel. Take a moment to imagine what was happening on Jefferson's property that we cannot see on the nickel. Describe what you have imagined in 2-4 sentences.

Step 2: Read to yourself and analyze *at least five* of Jefferson's quotes from at least *three decades*. Use the *Thomas Jefferson's Monticello* (www.monticello.org) "On Slavery and Emancipation"
<http://www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/quotations-slavery-and-emancipation>

1. Discuss with your partner the similarities and/or differences in the quotes.
2. Write down 2-4 excerpts from a few quotes that give us an idea or picture of how Jefferson felt about slavery.

3. Make two generalizations about Thomas Jefferson's views on slavery.

Step Three: Analyze the images in slide show, "Putting Thomas Jefferson into Perspective"; As you follow the images, keep in mind Jefferson's membership of one of Virginia's wealthiest families.

1. What you can tell about him from the way his house looks on the outside, where it's located and how it's decorated? Write down five statements and label your comments as facts **(f)** or opinions **(o)**.

2. What do you think it would have taken for someone of Jefferson's status to maintain this inheritance and lifestyle?

Step Four: As you look at images of an artist's interpretation of daily life at Monticello, answer the following questions:

1. Summarize the types of activities the slaves are shown doing in the paintings.
2. Is this what you imagined? Why or why not?
3. As a scholars of history, what are possible questions can we ask about *perspective* when analyzing these pictures?
4. Look back on your description of Monticello in step one. How do these images compare to your description? Explain your answer.

Step Five: Analyze and discuss the slides of slavery at Monticello.

1. Write down question that are coming to you as you see and read the information.
2. Based on what you have seen and read, how would you describe Thomas Jefferson as a slave-owner?

Step Six: Respond to the following questions in the space below.

1. How did where and when Thomas Jefferson lived influence his lifestyle and point of view?

2. How did the geography, climate and natural resources affect the way people lived and worked at Monticello?

3. How did economic systems of colonial America affect the lives of the individuals and groups of people at Monticello?

4. What are our roles and responsibilities as citizens in a democratic society when it comes to understanding why historical figures said and did what they did during their place in time? Hint: reread the overview.

5. Without using the words hero, villain, good, bad describe your perception of Thomas Jefferson in relation to the things he said about slavery and his ownership of slaves. Consider your responses above.

If you could show our country your perception of life at Monticello, what would you draw on the back of the nickel. Draw your image in the “nickel” provided, and explain your drawing on the lines provided.

