

Teacher Page: Resource Sheet #08

Source: Provisions Provided to Slaves, *Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book, 1774.*

Note: Jefferson inherited slaves from both his father and father-in-law. In a typical year, he owned about 200, almost half of them under the age of sixteen. About eighty of these enslaved people lived at Monticello; the others lived on adjacent Albemarle County and Central Virginia plantations, including Lego, Shadwell, Dun-Lora, Elk Hill, and on his Poplar Forest estate in Bedford County, Virginia.

Document Analysis:

1. How many properties does Jefferson appear to own or manage?
Several. Perhaps 6. In addition to Monticello, Jefferson owned and managed over 5,000 acres of property at several sites including Lego, Shadwell, Elk Hill and Polar Forest.
2. What supplies does Jefferson distribute to his slaves?
In this particular source, blankets and beds were distributed to individual slaves at multiple locations.
3. Which materials seem to be in greater abundance and need?
Blankets seem to be in greater demand and there appears to be an adequate supply of them.
4. How does this data make you feel about Jefferson's treatment of his slaves?
While Jefferson does distribute blankets and beds, he seems to provide little else, at least in this source. Despite the provisions, one cannot help but feel that the slaves were inadequately provided for.
5. Does this source support the idea that Jefferson opposed slavery or supported it?
Perhaps both. One could argue that Jefferson did provide needed blankets and beds for his slaves and that could indicate a caring provider; but the large numbers of slaves and the lack of other provisions seems to support the concept that Jefferson was, indeed, a powerful slave owner that intended to continue the practice.