

## **Teacher Page: Resource Sheet #09**

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

**Note: Edward Coles was born into a wealthy slave-owning family in Albemarle County, Virginia. Coles studied at the College of William & Mary and was convinced that slavery was wrong. He sought for many years to find a way to free the slaves he inherited from his father; one of the wealthiest men in what was then the western frontier of Virginia. He became the second governor of Illinois, serving from 1822 to 1826. He was influential in opposing a movement to make Illinois a slave state in its early years. He often corresponded with Jefferson at Monticello.**

### **Document Analysis:**

1. How does Jefferson feel about slaves and African-Americans when considering their capabilities as citizens?

**Jefferson equates African-Americans to children, unable to take care of themselves and destined to become a burden to society as free persons.**

2. How does Jefferson react to the possibility that, if slavery is abolished, inter-racial offspring (amalgamation) may occur?

**It would be a horrible condition, one that which “no lover of his country, no lover of excellence in the human character can innocently consent.”**

3. What does Jefferson believe that slaves will do, if they are not used actively as laborers?

**Non-working slaves could create a problem for the society at large. “. . . In the mean time they are pests in society by their idleness, and the depredations to which this leads them.”**

4. How does this document help to answer the question, “Where Did Thomas Jefferson Stand on the Issue of Slavery?”

**Jefferson has a critical view of abolition in this source passage and is also critical of African-Americans as a race. This may be one of the most compelling arguments to support Jefferson's stand for slavery.**