



Original Thomas Ball maquette for an Emancipation Group statue. Rev. William Greenleaf Eliot first viewed this maquette in Ball's studio in Italy. *From the collection of Jon White*

"The original group was in Italian marble, and differs in some respects from the bronze group now to be inaugurated. In the original the kneeling slave is represented as perfectly passive, receiving the boon of freedom from the hand of the great liberator. But the artist justly changed this, to bring the presentation nearer to the historical fact, by making the emancipated slave an agent in his own deliverance. He is accordingly represented as exerting his own strength with strained muscles in breaking the chain which had bound him. A far greater degree of dignity and vigor, as well as of historical accuracy, is thus imparted. The original was also changed by introducing, instead of an ideal slave, the figure of a living man.... His name was Archer Alexander, and his condition of servitude legally continued until the emancipation act became the law of the land. A photographic picture was sent to Mr. Ball, who has given both the face and manly bearing of the negro. The ideal group is thus converted into the literal truth of history without losing anything of its artistic conception or effect."

Excerpt from the April 14, 1876 Dedication Ceremony Program