

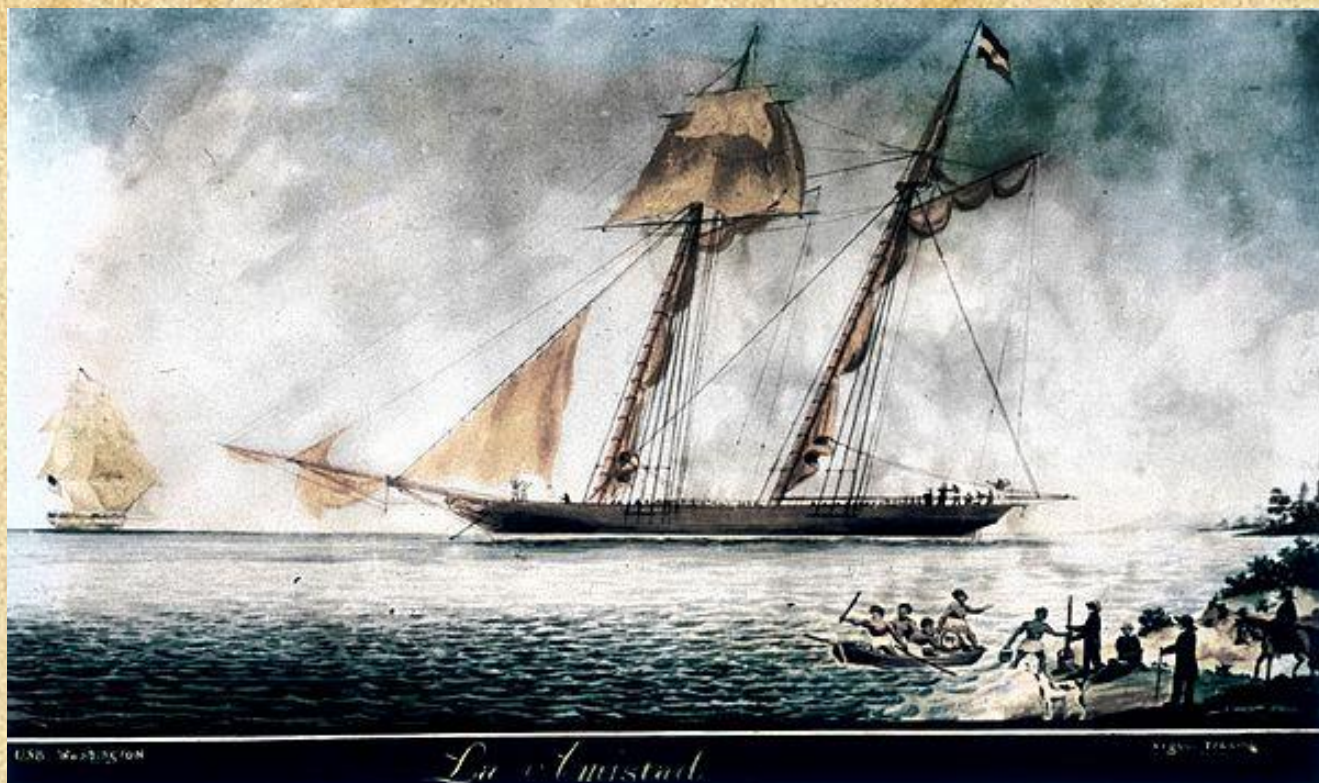
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AFRICAN WOULD-BE SLAVES FREED BY SUPREME COURT



Captives on La Amistad Granted Freedom

Almost two years have passed since forty-nine adults and four children revolted against their captors on the ship La Amistad in July 1839. They had been kidnapped in Mendiland in West Africa by Portuguese slave hunters and sold into slavery to Spanish nationals in Cuba. Not long before reaching their final destination, they killed the captain, took control over the ship and demanded that the crew set sail for Africa in order for them to return home. The sailors tricked the Africans and sailed North in the hope that the U.S. government would send the mutineers back to Cuba as slaves. However, upon arrival in the U.S. two court cases began in Washington D.C. and the State of Connecticut concerning the salvage of the ship and the Africans' destiny.



Death of Capt. Ferrer, the Captain of the Amistad, July, 1839.

Don Jose Ruiz and Don Pedro Montez, of the Island of Cuba, having purchased fifty-three slaves at Havana, recently imported from Africa, put them on board the Amistad, Capt. Ferrer, in order to transport them to Principe, another port on the Island of Cuba. After being out from Havana about four days, the African captives on board, in order to obtain their freedom, and return to Africa, armed themselves with cane knives, and rose upon the Captain and crew of the vessel. Capt. Ferrer and the cook of the vessel were killed; two of the crew escaped; Ruiz and Montez were made prisoners.

Despite multiple interests and pressure from the Spanish government to return the African captives to slavery in Cuba, the Supreme Court ruled that they should be granted their freedom.

EDITORIALS

Joseph Cinquez, a brave leader

Cinquez is under 30, but he has a wife and three children back in Mendiland, whom he has not seen for about three years. He had the courage to lead a revolt against the slave traders, who were taking him and fifty-two others into slavery. Cinquez found an old, rusty file, which he used to cut through his manacles. He then freed his companions, who helped him take control of the ship. Cinquez risked his life and fought for liberty, something that the founding fathers of our country also did. We rejoice that our Supreme Court has granted Cinquez and the other Africans their freedom and we wish them a safe trip back home.



What was it like travelling on a slave ship from Africa to America

Imagine yourself in a can of sardines. No air, no room and no food. That is pretty much what it was like travelling as a future slave on a ship from Africa to America. The red arrows in the picture show where the African captives would have been kept in chains in a narrow and cramped-up section of the hold. The ceiling would be so low that it would be impossible to stand up. There would be no sanitation and besides the unbearable stench, epidemics with a high mortality rate would be very frequent. In addition to the inhuman conditions they travelled in, once they arrived in America the destiny of African slaves was pitiful. Happily we have done away with slavery for good. Let us hope it will be so some day all over the world!

