

AMISTAD *America*

2007 ATLANTIC FREEDOM TOUR



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AMISTAD America's Atlantic Freedom Tour

In the spring of 2007, Freedom Schooner Amistad will embark on its first transatlantic voyage joining international agencies and organizations in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Europe and West Africa as part of the international commemoration of a most significant milestone: the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade in the former British Empire.

The proposed voyage will retrace the infamous slave trade triangle that dominated maritime commerce for hundreds of years and will include visiting ports with significant ties to the history of the original trade and the social, political and cultural aspects of the African Diaspora engendered by the trade.

The Freedom Schooner Amistad serves as a profound symbol for all the groups and stakeholders striving to educate the public about the history of slavery and those attempting to achieve reconciliation and social healing. As such, it is hoped that Amistad's visit can serve as an important symbol and reminder of the scope of that history.

The theme of the voyage is similar to that of many organizations involved in Wilberforce 2007 and embodies a common transformational aspiration:

Confronting the Past; Transforming the Future

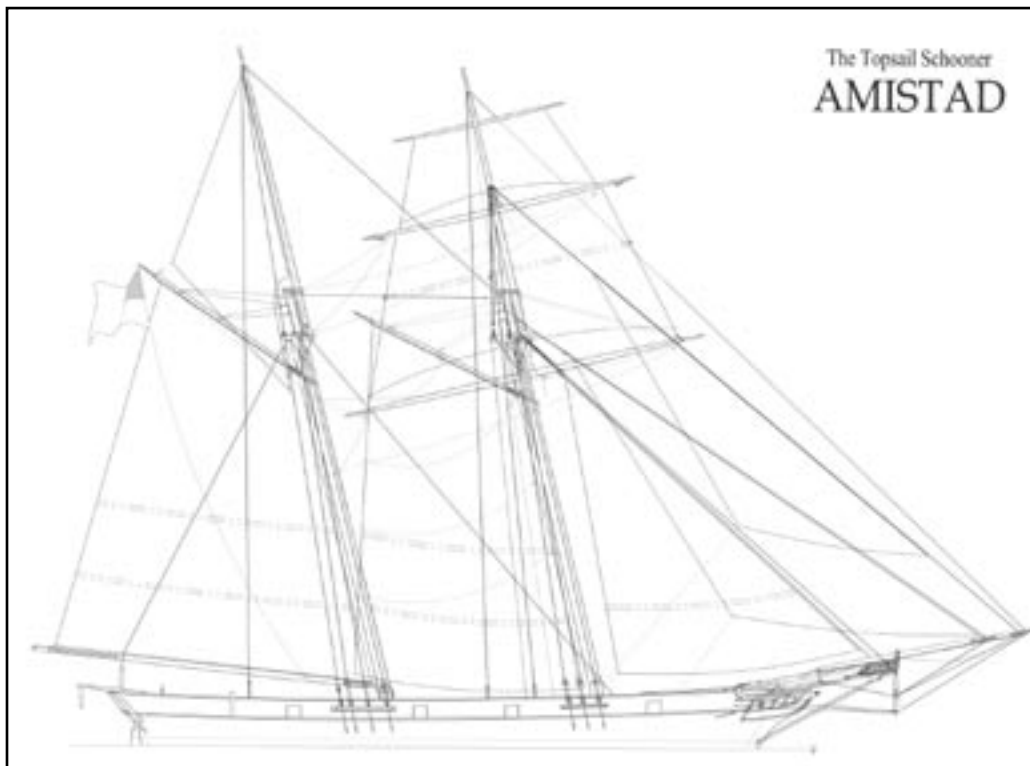
Amistad will depart from New Haven, Connecticut on June 21st, 2007 and will sail to Shelburne and Halifax, Nova Scotia. These two Canadian communities have direct links to the British abolition movement and the founding of Freetown, Sierra Leone, the homeland of the original Amistad captives. From Halifax, the Amistad - with students from England, Canada and the United States onboard - will cross the North Atlantic and arrive in England for the commemoration events planned for August/September of 2007.

The 1807 Act abolishing the slave trade was the first major initiative that began the march towards the end of slavery; the Amistad Affair was the first American civil rights case won against chattel slavery. Moreover, both events are inextricably linked because the Act provided the legal foundation for the verdict granting the Amistad captives their freedom. (They had been illegally transported from Africa in violation of the ban). In other words, there exists a direct and tangible connection between the 1807 Act of the British Parliament and the emancipation of this small group of brave, proud and determined Africans who sought freedom at any cost.

As part of Wilberforce 2007, the arrival of this icon of freedom will strike a powerful and indelible impression for today's diverse communities of Britain. Experience has shown, that the presence of the Freedom Schooner Amistad affords communities an unprecedented opportunity to confront the past with a story that can inspire and foster inter-racial dialogue and mutual understanding. The telling of the story of the captives from the burnished decks of this beautiful wooden schooner will help illustrate the profound importance and direct impact that the 1807 Act had on the struggle for freedom and restoration of human dignity.

AMISTAD America Inc.

Amistad America, Inc., was created as a consortium between Mystic Seaport, the Connecticut Afro-American Historical Society, the Amistad Committee of New Haven, Amistad Affiliates of New York and other interested individuals working in partnership to promote the Amistad project. The impetus for building Amistad came from Warren Q. Marr II, former editor of the NAACP's Crisis Magazine. Marr's inspiration for the replica emerged during Operation Sail 1976, a spectacular parade of the world's tall ships in New York Harbor. Participating in that event was a representation of the historic 19th century schooner, La Amistad. It was actually the schooner Western Union with its name temporarily hidden undersigns proclaiming her Amistad. Marr wanted the story of the African captives' fight for freedom on the seas, in a New Haven court and in a landmark United States Supreme Court case to be told. Marr's goal was to design the recreation as a floating exhibit, assemble a crew and sail her from port to port teaching the history of the Amistad Incident of 1839. Marr believed the Amistad story could foster unity among people of diverse backgrounds and help improve race relations. Since Amistad was launched in March of 2000, hundreds of thousands of individuals have crossed her decks. In the past several years, Amistad America has grown from a small regional resource to an organization with international influence. The mission of Amistad America is fulfilled in part by bringing the vessel and related educational programming to cities around the nation. As part of the port visit, families and people of all ages experience dockside exhibits, interactive programs, and diversity sails.



The Freedom Schooner is ten feet longer than the original La Amistad. The extra length was built into the ship to accommodate an engine room. The keel is made of a tropical hardwood known as Purpleheart. The wood was harvested using sustainable forestry management practices in Guyana, South America. Amistad's two masts are carved from Douglas Firs donated by the Washington Department of Natural Resources. The frame is made of live oak salvaged in South Carolina from the devastation caused by Hurricane Hugo in 1989, and from highway projects on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. In addition to live oak, the vessel is made of angelique and iroko from Sierra Leone. Amistad is a working sailing vessel with up to fifteen sailors and educators living aboard.



**2006
HALIFAX
CANADA**



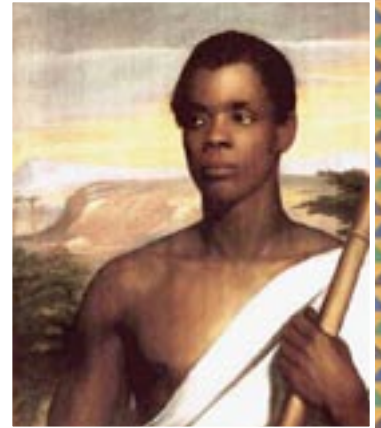
**2005
BERMUDA**





AMISTAD Incident

In 1839, 53 Africans were illegally kidnapped from West Africa and sold into the transatlantic slave trade. Shackled aboard the Portuguese vessel Tecora, the captives were brought to Havana, Cuba, where they were fraudulently classified as native Cuban-born slaves. They were purchased by Spaniards José Ruiz and Pedro Montez, who planned to transfer the captives to another part of the island by way of the coastal cargo schooner, La Amistad. Three days into the journey a 25 year-old Mende rice farmer named Sengbe Pieh lead a revolt and took over the schooner. With no navigation experience the captives were dependent on Ruiz and Montez to sail the schooner east toward Africa. At night, however, the two altered the ship's course to the northwest. Following this zigzag course for weeks, La Amistad eventually anchored off eastern Long Island, where it was seized by the U.S. naval cutter USS Washington and then towed to Connecticut's New London Harbor. A hearing was held in New London, Connecticut. The Africans were arrested, charged with mutiny and murder, and were jailed in New Haven to await trial. The case took on historic proportions when former President John Quincy Adams argued on behalf of the captives before the United States Supreme Court and won their freedom. In 1841 the 35 surviving Africans were returned to Africa.



**Sengbe Pieh
1813-1879**

Timeline:

- **April 1839:** Slave ship Tecora leaves Lomboko, West Africa.
- **June 1839:** Tecora arrives in Havana. Jose Ruiz buys forty-nine adult males, paying \$450 for each, and Pedro Montes buys four children, three girls and one boy.
- **June 28, 1839:** La Amistad sets sail for the other end of Cuba with fifty-three African captives, Ruiz, Montes and a crew of five.
- **July 2, 1839:** Africans revolt and seize control of La Amistad.
- **July through August 1839:** La Amistad sails east by day and north by night, up the U.S. coastline.
- **August 25, 1839:** La Amistad anchors off Long Island and lands ashore to obtain provisions.
- **August 26, 1839:** La Amistad is seized by U.S.S. Washington.
- **August 27, 1839:** La Amistad is brought to New London and the Africans are taken to a New Haven jail to await trial on charges of murder and piracy.
- **September 9, 1839:** Yale professor Josiah Gibbs finds British sailor and Mende speaker James Covey on the docks of New York and takes him to New Haven to serve as a translator.
- **September 19, 1839:** The first round of trials begins in the U.S. Circuit Court at Hartford.
- **November 19, 1839:** The second round of trials begins in Hartford, with Judge Judson presiding.
- **January 8, 1840:** Sengbe testifies in court.
- **January 13, 1840:** Judge Judson rules that the Africans were illegally enslaved and orders them to be returned to Africa. The Van Buren administration appeals the District Court decision.
- **February 22, 1841:** U.S. Supreme Court begins hearing the Amistad case.
- **February 24, 1841:** John Quincy Adams begins presenting his argument.
- **March 9, 1841:** Justice Story delivers the Supreme Court's decision, affirming the Africans' freedom.
- **November 27, 1841:** African survivors and American missionaries depart New York for Africa aboard the Gentleman.
- **January 15, 1842:** The Gentleman arrives in Sierra Leone.

2007 ATLANTIC FREEDOM TOUR



New Haven, CT

Shelburne - Halifax, NS, Canada

Hull - London - Liverpool - Bristol, UK

Lisbon, Portugal

Freetown, Sierra Leone

Dakar, Senegal - Praia, Cabo Verde

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Charleston, SC - Washington, DC - New York City, NY

New Haven, CT

Departure - June 21

June

August/September

October

December/January

February/March

April

June

Return - July