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David Chmielewski

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A Case of Conflict and Compromise: *United States v. The Amistad*

David Chmielewski

Senior Division (The division consisting of National History Day entries made by students in
grades 9-12)

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“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights.”¹ These are perhaps the most famous words Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, a series of words that have come to represent how the concepts of freedom and equality are fundamental to the identity of America. The fight to honor those words, to expand the number of people who have access that freedom, is one of the longest political struggles in the history of the United States. In that struggle, despite some failings like *Dred Scott v. Sandford* and *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court has been essential in delivering many victories on the side of freedom. A key example of such a victory delivered by the Court is the Supreme Court’s ruling in the case of *United States v. The Amistad*. In this case of conflict and compromise, the Supreme Court lived up to Jefferson’s words and expanded the reach of freedom by resolving a conflict between captured Mende people and their Spanish captors in favor of the Mende, stating that the Africans were not property under international law.

Ask essentially any historian today if the Atlantic slave trade was humane and their answer will be a resounding no. The belief that the slave trade was inhumane was one that many of the powers involved in that trade ironically began to hold. While the Constitution stated that the slave trade “shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight,”² on March 2, 1807, Thomas Jefferson signed a bill that would prohibit the importation of slaves to the United States beginning in January 1, 1808.³ The United Kingdom

¹ “Declaration of Independence: A Transcription.” *National Archives*. The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 26 Jun. 2017, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>. Accessed 17 Feb. 2018.

² *U.S. Constitution*. Art. I, Sec. 9.

³ United States, Congress. Public Law 9-22. United States Statutes at Large, vol. 2, 1807, pp. 426-430. *Library of Congress*, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/9th-congress/c9.pdf>.

followed suit by banning importation in 1807 as well.⁴ This commitment by the United States and United Kingdom was then reinforced by Article Ten of the Treaty of Ghent, the treaty that ended the War of 1812. Article Ten included a recognition by both nations that “the Traffic in Slaves is irreconcilable with the principles of humanity and Justice,”⁵ and a commitment on both nation’s parts to “continuing their efforts to promote its entire abolition.”⁶ The United Kingdom then signed a treaty with Spain on September 23, 1817 with a similar goal of limiting the slave trade.⁷ In the treaty, the Spanish agreed that “the slave trade shall be abolished throughout the entire dominions of Spain, on the 30th day of May 1820,”⁸ an obligation that Spain fulfilled.⁹

But while the United States had taken an active role in suppressing the international slave trade abroad, the debate over slavery at home remained highly controversial. Three years prior to the beginning of the events of the Amistad case, the House of Representatives passed a gag rule proposed by Representative James Hammond of South Carolina that automatically tabled all petitions, memorials, and resolutions regarding slavery.¹⁰ President Martin Van Buren’s position on the slavery debate was similar; the position that the debate over slavery was not one that should be had for the sake of national unity. Despite later running for president in 1848 under the banner of the abolitionist Free Soil Party,¹¹ Van Buren generally did not wish to stir up the

⁴ Sherwood, Marika. “Britain, slavery and the trade in enslaved Africans.” *History in Focus*. Institute of Historical Research, 2007, <https://www.history.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/Slavery/articles/sherwood.html#20t>. Accessed 16 Feb. 2018.

⁵ United States, Senate. Treaty of Ghent. *Ourdocuments.gov*. <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=20&page=transcript>. Treaty between the United States and the United Kingdom.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ *The Parliamentary Debates From the Year 1803 to the Present Time*. T.C. Hansard, 1818. (Page 67-68).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Strother, Horatio T. *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut*. Wesleyan University Press, 1962. (Page 66)

¹⁰ “The House ‘Gag Rule.’” *History, Art, & Archives, United States House of Representatives*. Office of the Historian. <http://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1800-1850/The-House-of-Representatives-instituted-the-%E2%80%99Gag-rule%E2%80%99D/>. Accessed 14 Feb. 2018.

¹¹ The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. “Martin Van Buren.” Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 2 Feb. 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Martin-Van-Buren>. Accessed 16 Feb. 2018.

slavery debate, as explained in his autobiography: “I thought nothing had arisen that would justify us in making the subject of slavery a matter of political controversy.”¹² It was in this environment of stubbornly ignoring the question of slavery that the events of the Amistad barged in and placed the issue in the limelight.

In the spring of 1839, two Spanish men in Cuba named Jose Ruiz and Pedro Montez purchased fifty-three newly imported Mende people from the region of Mendeland, an area within the modern day African nation of Sierra Leone.¹³ While the importation of new slaves was illegal in Spanish territories by then, corruption in Cuba allowed for even the most recent captives to be deemed longtime and legal slaves, something that Ruiz and Montez took advantage of.¹⁴ Following that, they loaded the Mende onto the Amistad, a ship whose name ironically translated to friendship.¹⁵ But while travelling down the coast of Cuba, the Mende, led by a man named Cinque, managed to successfully stage a revolt and kill or drive away every member of the crew except Ruiz, Montez, and a slave named Antonio.¹⁶ The Mende left the three alive with the expectation that they would guide the Amistad back to Africa. Instead, Montez covertly navigated the ship towards the United States.¹⁷ Montez’s efforts were successful, and on August 26, 1839, Lieutenant Commander T.R. Gedney captured the Amistad off the shore of

¹² Van Buren, Martin. “The Autobiography of Martin Van Buren.” *Volume 2 of Annual report of the American Historical Association for the year 1918, American Historical Association Volume 14 of Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission*, edited by John Clement Fitzpatrick. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1920. (Page 140)

¹³ McCain, Diana. *Free Men: The Amistad Revolt and the American Anti-slavery Movement*. Connecticut Humanities Council, 1989.

¹⁴ Strother, Horatio T. *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut*. Wesleyan University Press, 1962. (Page 67)

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ McCain, Diana. *Free Men: The Amistad Revolt and the American Anti-slavery Movement*. Connecticut Humanities Council, 1989.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Long Island and escorted it to New London, Connecticut.¹⁸ This arrest set of an complex legal conflict that went all the way to the Supreme Court.

Like most issues involving race in America, the public reaction to the arrival of the Mende was polarized. Some, especially abolitionists, viewed the story of the Amistad as a tale of bravery where a group of captives rightfully fought for their freedom. Abolitionists were infatuated with the story, leading to paintings of the Mende and the Amistad being made.¹⁹ *The Colored American*, for example, called Cinque a “Noble African,”²⁰ and compared him to American statesman Daniel Webster, stating that Cinque had “Webster’s lion aspect. — his majestic, quiet, uninterested cast of expression.”²¹ On the other hand, many viewed the Mende as murderers and believed that they were the rightful property of the Spanish traders. *The New York Morning Herald* published an article stating that the Mende “did little else but eat and steal,”²² and accused abolitionist newspapers of trying “to get the black murderers set free.”²³ Prominent politicians, most notably Senator John C. Calhoun, endorsed this view. The Senate Foreign Relations committee, led by Calhoun, issued a report regarding maritime property that expressed principles that would make the Mende Spanish property if applied to the Amistad case.²⁴ Not wishing to anger the South with the 1840 election approaching, President Van Buren also sided

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See Appendix A and Appendix B.

²⁰ “On Cinques.” *The Colored American*, 19 Oct. 1839, *The Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition*, <https://glc.yale.edu/cinques>. Accessed 18 Feb. 2018.

²¹ Ibid.

²² “The Case of the Captured Negroes.” *New York Morning Herald*, 9 Sep. 1839, *The Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition*, <https://glc.yale.edu/case-captured-negroes>. Accessed 18 Feb. 2018.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *Public Documents Printed by the Order of the Senate of the United States, During the Second Session of the Twenty-sixth Congress, Volume IV, Containing Documents from No. 151 to No. 235*. Blair and Rives, 1841. (Page 70)

with the view that the Mende were property, leading to him assigning the task of securing Ruiz and Montez's claims to the Department of Justice.²⁵

The reaction of the great powers of Europe was also divided. The two nations that lobbied the United States government in the case were the United Kingdom and Spain. Much like the American public, the two powers had radically different views on the case. In a letter to Secretary of State John Forsyth, Spanish Minister Chevalier de Argaiz outlined that Spain "claimed the captured slaves as property of Spanish subjects,"²⁶ and also sought the return of the Mende to Spain so "that they may be tried by competent courts."²⁷ The British government pressured the United States to do the exact opposite. Writing to Forsyth, British diplomat Henry Fox stated that her Majesty's Government urged President Van Buren to take "measures, in behalf of the aforesaid Africans,"²⁸ in order to secure "them the possessions of their liberty."²⁹ Ultimately, the Van Buren administration's decision to leave the case to the courts was a compromise between the opinions of the two conflicting powers. The United States would not immediately bow to the opinion of either power and would instead settle the conflict through the American court system.

The legal proceedings for the case *United States v. The Amistad* began in 1839.³⁰ Various minor issues such as the libel claims of Lieutenant Commander Gendry and the claims of various

²⁵ Miller, William L. *Arguing about Slavery: The Great Battle in the United States Congress*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1995. (Page 400)

²⁶ *Public Documents Printed by the Order of the Senate of the United States, During the Second Session of the Twenty-sixth Congress, Volume IV, Containing Documents from No. 151 to No. 235*. Blair and Rives, 1841. (Page 72)

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Public Documents Printed by the Order of the Senate of the United States, During the Second Session of the Twenty-sixth Congress, Volume IV, Containing Documents from No. 151 to No. 235*. Blair and Rives, 1841. (Page 88)

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Bollier, David. *Crusaders & Criminals, Victims & Visionaries: Historic Encounters Between Connecticut Citizens and the United States Supreme Court*. Office of Attorney General Joseph L. Lieberman, 1986. (Page 21).

Spanish men to the goods on the ship came before the court.³¹ Most important were the claims of Ruiz and Montez to be the rightful owners of the Mende, and the murder charges levied against the Mende by the Spanish government. The court faced the task of deciding if the Mende were property or free people. A team of primarily Yale-educated abolitionists represented the Mende.³² Chief among them was Roger Sherman Baldwin, one of the most accomplished lawyers in Connecticut and a future governor of the state.³³ The first ruling came from the circuit court in Hartford, which dismissed the murder charges and then reprimanded the other issues to the district court.³⁴ The district court judge who would rule in the case was Judge Andrew Judson, who had previously shut down Prudence Crandall's attempt to school African American girls.³⁵ In spite of that past work, Judson ruled in favor of the Mende, stating that they were not property and that the government should pay for their return to Africa.³⁶ The Department of Justice appealed this ruling to the circuit court in Hartford, which affirmed Judson's ruling, leading to another appeal to the Supreme Court.³⁷ Both sides had refused to compromise their beliefs, leading the case all the way to the highest level of the court system.

After two years of legal conflict in the lower courts, the case finally reached the Supreme Court in February, 1841. To strengthen their side, the abolitionists reached out to an incredibly prestigious lawyer to assist Baldwin before the Supreme Court; former President John Quincy Adams. Initially, Adams expressed reluctance, writing that he “endovered to excuse myself upon

³¹ Ibid.

³² Miller, William L. *Arguing about Slavery: The Great Battle in the United States Congress*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1995. (Page 400).

³³ Kilbourn, Dwight C. *The Bench and Bar of Litchfield County, Connecticut*. Dwight Kilbourn, 1909.

³⁴ Bollier, David. *Crusaders & Criminals, Victims & Visionaries: Historic Encounters Between Connecticut Citizens and the United States Supreme Court*. Office of Attorney General Joseph L. Lieberman, 1986. (Page 21).

³⁵ Bollier, David. *Crusaders & Criminals, Victims & Visionaries: Historic Encounters Between Connecticut Citizens and the United States Supreme Court*. Office of Attorney General Joseph L. Lieberman, 1986. (Page 22).

³⁶ *United States v. The Amistad.*, 40 U.S. 518 (1841).

³⁷ Ibid.

the plea of my age and inefficiency.”³⁸ He ultimately decided to take up the case after thirty years of absence from the legal profession due to the pleas of abolitionists, who convinced him the *Amistad* was “a case of life and death.”³⁹ Adams and Baldwin crafted their argument around the evidence that Ruiz and Montez’s actions in acquiring the Mende were illegal and an appeal to the idea that the Mende were entitled to liberty.^{40/41} For instance, Adams, in the closing portions of his argument pleaded that the justices consider the “ample evidence in the case that these negroes were free and had a right to assert their liberty.”⁴² On March 9, 1841, Justice Joseph Story would finally deliver the opinion of the court in *United States v. The Amistad*.⁴³ While the Supreme Court dismissed the ruling that the government should pay for the Mende’s return to Mendeland, they upheld every other part of the circuit court’s opinion, with only Justice Baldwin dissenting.⁴⁴ Writing that the case “must be decided upon the eternal principles of justice and international law,”⁴⁵ Story concluded that “there does not seem to us to be any ground for doubt that these negroes ought to be deemed free.”⁴⁶ The Supreme Court had issued its ruling and it presented a major victory for the abolitionists and the Mende, as their freedom had been successfully won after years of legal conflict.

³⁸ Adams, John Q. *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams: Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795 to 1848, Volume 10*, edited by Charles Francis Adams. J.B. Lippincott & Company, 1876. (Page 358).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Adams, John Q. *Argument of John Quincy Adams, before the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of the United States, appellants, vs. Cinque, and others, Africans of the Amistad*. S.W. Benedict, 1841.

⁴¹ Baldwin, Roger S. *Argument of Roger S. Baldwin, of New Haven, before the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of the United States, appellants, vs. Cinque, and others, Africans of the Amistad*. S.W. Benedict, 1841.

⁴² Adams, John Q. *Argument of John Quincy Adams, before the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of the United States, appellants, vs. Cinque, and others, Africans of the Amistad*. S.W. Benedict, 1841. (Page 134).

⁴³ McCain, Diana. *Free Men: The Amistad Revolt and the American Anti-slavery Movement*. Connecticut Humanities Council, 1989.

⁴⁴ *United States v. The Amistad.*, 40 U.S. 518 (1841).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

But after winning their freedom, actually returning to Mendeland would be a struggle for the Mende. The Mende were housed in Farmington, Connecticut beginning in March 1841, an excellent choice in location due to the town's abolitionist sympathies and low cost.⁴⁷ They remained there while abolitionists raised funds to pay for their return to Africa, with a few Mende such as Cinque also travelling throughout the Northeast to raise funds and sympathy for their cause.⁴⁸ The Mende would finally set sail for home in November, 1841, after nearly three years abroad and with only thirty-five of the original fifty-three captives remaining.⁴⁹

The story of the Amistad also continued in Congress, with the case remaining a sore spot in Spanish-American relations for many years. The Spanish government lobbied Congress to provide compensation to Ruiz and Montez for their lost property following the case, although their claims were not granted.⁵⁰ As late as 1858, Congress was still considering granting the Spanish claim, with President James Buchanan unsuccessfully endorsing the Spanish view.⁵¹ Spanish claims to compensation were not renounced until 1884, long after the Supreme Court's decision, and after the deaths of many of the key players on both sides.⁵²

Besides the tangible benefits for the Mende, the legacy of the case is also present in the legal implications of the Supreme Court's ruling. The Supreme Court ruled "that black men carried from their homes in Africa, as slaves had the right, when seeking their liberty, to kill any

⁴⁷ McCain, Diana. *Free Men: The Amistad Revolt and the American Anti-slavery Movement*. Connecticut Humanities Council, 1989.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Bollier, David. *Crusaders & Criminals, Victims & Visionaries: Historic Encounters Between Connecticut Citizens and the United States Supreme Court*. Office of Attorney General Joseph L. Lieberman, 1986. (Page 23)

⁵⁰ Spear, Walter A. *The American Slave Trade: An Account of Its Origin, Growth, and Suppression*. Corner House Historical Publication, 1998. (Page 193).

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Bollier, David. *Crusaders & Criminals, Victims & Visionaries: Historic Encounters Between Connecticut Citizens and the United States Supreme Court*. Office of Attorney General Joseph L. Lieberman, 1986. (Page 23)

who would deprive them of it.”⁵³ In analyzing the case, “The essential issue throughout the affair was a conflict between human rights and property rights,”⁵⁴ and the court opted to favor human rights. The ruling of the court was an affirmation of the principle of natural law that all people are born with inherent freedom and that no other person may deprive that freedom. This appeal to natural law and human rights would prove to be important for the cause of abolitionism in future years, making the results of the Amistad case an early example of that appeal succeeding within the context of the legal system.⁵⁵

The case also had far reaching consequences that stretched beyond the legal system. These far reaching consequences have led historians such as Samuel Eliot Morison to assert that “the most famous case involving slavery, until eclipsed by Dred Scott's, was that of the Amistad in 1839.”⁵⁶ The clearest example of the case’s impact is the effect it had on the abolitionist movement. The results of the case were an obvious triumph for the movement, as well as a validation of their struggle. As Robert Egleston, then director of the New Haven Colony Historical Society, told the New York Times in 1989, the case “had a lot to do with legitimizing the whole [abolitionist] movement.”⁵⁷ The Amistad case presented the abolitionist movement with a clear cause to rally around and a way to demonstrate the injustice of slavery, which they achieved given the results of the case.⁵⁸ This legitimization then strengthened the abolitionist

⁵³ Spear, Walter A. *The American Slave Trade: An Account of Its Origin, Growth, and Suppression*. Corner House Historical Publication, 1998. (Page 193)

⁵⁴ Jones, Howard. *Mutiny on the Amistad: The Saga of a Slave Revolt and Its Impact on American Abolition, Law, and Diplomacy*. Oxford University Press, 1997. (Introduction)

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Cornish, Dudley T. "Mutiny on the Amistad: The Saga of a Slave Revolt and Its Impact on American Abolition, Law, and Diplomacy (review)." *Civil War History*, vol. 34 no. 1, 1988, pp. 79-80. Project MUSE, doi:10.1353/cwh.1988.0011

⁵⁷ Bass, Sharon L. “The Amistad Revolt: ‘A Tale of Triumph’.” *The New York Times*. The New York Times Company, 22 Oct. 1989, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/10/22/nyregion/the-amistad-revolt-a-tale-of-triumph.html>. Accessed 16 Feb. 2018.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

movement, evidenced by examples such as Farmington, Connecticut. As a result of the case and Farmington's hosting of the Mende before they returned to Africa, there was breaking down of "local prejudice against people of color,"⁵⁹ and Farmington became a key stop along the Underground Railroad.⁶⁰ Another similar example of the impact of the case was the American Missionary Association, founded in 1846 by several abolitionists who had met through their defense of the Mende in the Amistad case.⁶¹ The Association would become a driving force in the education of freed slaves after the Civil War, and would help establish several predominantly African American institutions of higher education that still exist such as Howard University.⁶²

United States v. The Amistad is an excellent example of the court system coming down on the side of equality. The court's ruling is a triumph of the principle that all people possess inherent freedom. Similarly, the subsequent impact of the case bolstered the abolitionist cause devoted to securing more Americans that freedom. The conflict in the Amistad case is only one conflict in the struggle to fulfill that self-evident natural law that all people are equally deserving of freedom. Both the ruling in the case and the subsequent impact of the ruling show the case to be a clear victory in that struggle. In the generations of judges, activists, and politicians who fight for that freedom to this day, the shadow of the Amistad case is visible.

⁵⁹ Strother, Horatio T. *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut*. Wesleyan University Press, 1962. (Page 166)

⁶⁰ Strother, Horatio T. *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut*. Wesleyan University Press, 1962. (Page 167)

⁶¹ Sullivan, Lester. "American Missionary Association." *Amistad Research Center*. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012, <http://amistadresearchcenter.tulane.edu/archon/?p=creators/creator&id=27>. Accessed 16 Feb. 2018.

⁶² Ibid.

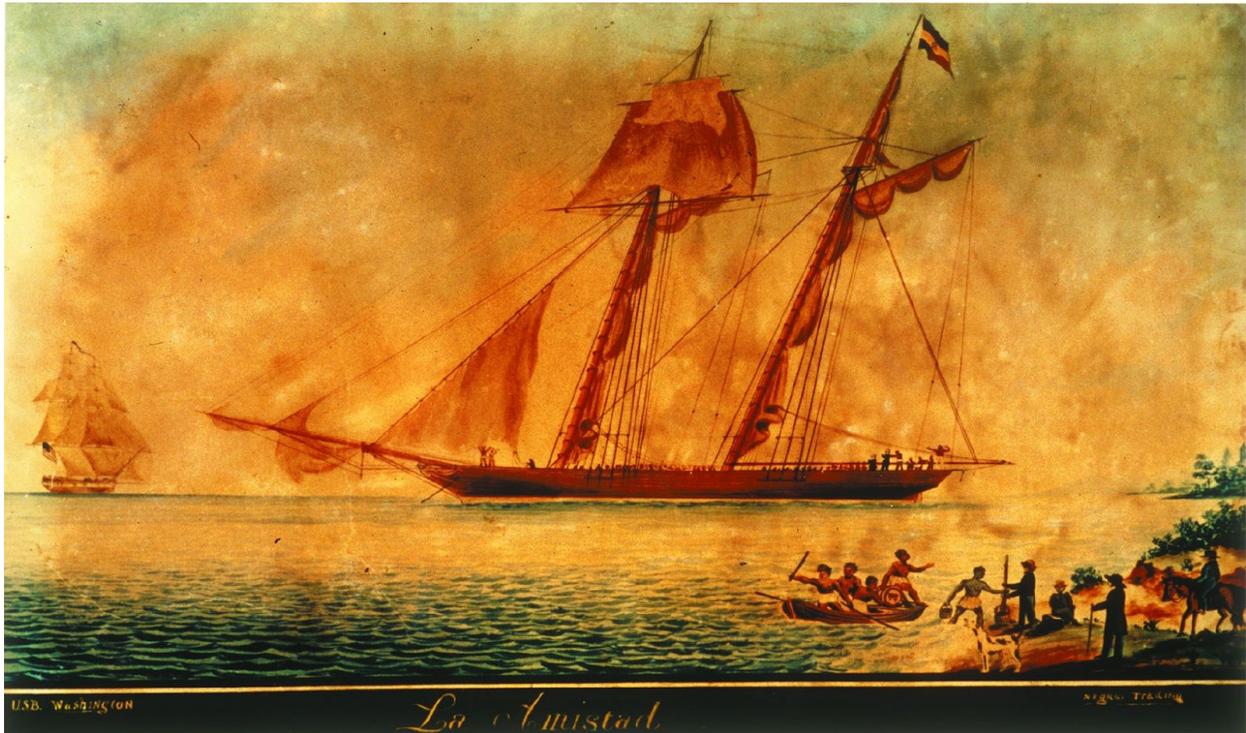
Appendix A



A portrait of the leader of the Mende revolt aboard the Amistad, Joseph Cinqué, also known as Sengbe Pieh. It was painted by Nathaniel Jocelyn in 1840 and is currently held by the New Haven Museum. Abolitionists often heaped praise upon Cinqué and portraits such as this one are key to remembering both him and the Amistad case in general.

Jocelyn, Nathaniel. *Portrait of Sengbe Pieh (Joseph Cinqué)*. 1840, painting, New Haven Museum, New Haven.

Appendix B



This is a 1839 oil painting of the Amistad by an unknown artist, currently held by the New Haven Museum. It depicts the capture of the Amistad, and the Mende on board, by the United States Navy. It provides another example of how the story of the Mende gripped many Americans, leading to paintings such as this one being made.

Unknown artist. *Contemporary painting of the sailing vessel La Amistad off Culloden Point, Long Island, New York, on 26 August 1839; on the left the USS Washington of the US Navy.*

1839, oil painting, New Haven Museum, New Haven.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

Adams, John Q. *Argument of John Quincy Adams, before the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of the United States, appellants, vs. Cinque, and others, Africans of the Amistad*. S.W. Benedict, 1841.

An 1841 published version of John Quincy Adams' defense of the Mende before the Supreme Court in the Amistad case, currently in the collection of the Lillian Goldman Law Library at Yale Law School. Similar to Roger Sherman Baldwin's argument, reading this argument was important in forming my understanding of how abolitionists defended the Mende, and was crucial to my writing about the events of the case when it came before the Supreme Court.

Adams, John Q. *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams: Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795 to 1848, Volume 10*, edited by Charles Francis Adams. J.B. Lippincott & Company, 1876.

A version of John Quincy Adams' memoirs published in 1876. As one of the most crucial players in the Amistad case, understanding Adams' view was key to understanding the case. This memoir helped considerably with that, as Adams mentions details of the case such as how he was recruited to argue of the behalf of the Mende before the Supreme Court.

Baldwin, Roger S. *Argument of Roger S. Baldwin, of New Haven, before the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of the United States, appellants, vs. Cinque, and others, Africans of the Amistad*. S.W. Benedict, 1841.

Roger Sherman Baldwin's argument on behalf of the Mende before the Supreme Court published in 1841, which can be found in the collection of the Lillian Goldman Law Library at Yale Law School. Reading Baldwin's argument was essential to my comprehension of how the abolitionist lawyers went about defending the Mende in the Amistad case. Thus I used Baldwin's argument in discussing the legal proceedings of the case.

“Declaration of Independence: A Transcription.” *National Archives*. The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 26 Jun. 2017, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>. Accessed 17 Feb. 2018.

A transcript of the Declaration of Independence found on the National Archives website. The famous lines about self-evident truths in the second paragraph served as an excellent opening quote for my paper.

“On Cinques.” *The Colored American*, 19 Oct. 1839, *The Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition*, <https://glc.yale.edu/cinques>. Accessed 18 Feb. 2018.

An article in the *Colored American* that portrays the Mende in a more positive light after their capture, a copy of which can be found on the website of the Gilder Lehrman Center. In particular, the article praises the noble appearance and heroism of Cinque, the leader of the revolt aboard the *Amistad*. In presenting the American reaction to the *Amistad* case, this article was crucial to my presentation of those that had a positive view of the Mende.

Public Documents Printed by the Order of the Senate of the United States, During the Second Session of the Twenty-sixth Congress, Volume IV, Containing Documents from No. 151 to No. 235. Blair and Rives, 1841.

This book published in 1841 includes an incredibly vast number of documents printed by the Senate during the twenty-sixth Congress. The important thing for my research was the fact that this book contains numerous correspondences between United States government officials, in particular Secretary of State John Forsyth, and officials of the Spanish and British government that were pressuring the United States in the *Amistad* case. Thus, it was key to writing a section of my paper devoted to the international pressure applied to the United States during the case.

“The Case of the Captured Negroes.” *New York Morning Herald*, 9 Sep. 1839, *The Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition*, <https://glc.yale.edu/case-captured-negroes>. Accessed 18 Feb. 2018.

A *New York Morning Herald* article portraying the Mende in a negative light after their arrival, which I found a copy of on the website of the Gilder Lehrman Center. In discussing the reaction of Americans to the arrival of the Mende aboard the *Amistad*, this article was key in presenting the opinions of those that viewed the Mende negatively and believed they were murderers.

The Parliamentary Debates From the Year 1803 to the Present Time. T.C. Hansard, 1818.

This book is a record of various parliamentary debates from 1803 to 1818, when the book was published. Its main use was the fact that it contained a copy of a treaty between Spain and the United Kingdom regarding the abolition of the slave trade. Accordingly, it was useful in explaining the context of the slave trade before the Amistad case and better understanding the position of the Spanish and British governments.

U.S. Constitution. Art. I, Sec. 9.

Article I, Section 9 of the Constitution outlines that the importation of slaves may not be prohibited by Congress prior to 1808. This helped to form the historical background of the slave trade in the United States that I discussed in my paper.

United States, Congress. Public Law 9-22. United States Statutes at Large, vol. 2, 1807, pp. 426-430. *Library of Congress*,
<https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/9th-congress/c9.pdf>.

This is the text of the original law that prohibited the importation of slaves to the United States beginning in 1808. Similar to the Article 1, Section 9 of the Constitution, reading the text of this law helped me understand the historical background of the slave trade in the United States.

United States, Senate. Treaty of Ghent. *Ourdocuments.gov*.
<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=20&page=transcript>. Treaty between the United States and the United Kingdom.

Article 10 of the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the War of 1812, outlines how both the United Kingdom and the United States will work towards the abolition of the slave trade. This document was a crucial piece of developing my understanding of the attitudes of the United Kingdom and the United States prior to the events of the Amistad case.

United States v. The Amistad., 40 U.S. 518 (1841).

The Supreme Court case *United States v. The Amistad* itself and the opinion of the court written by Justice Story in regards to the case. Obviously in discussing a Supreme Court case, reading the actual case before the Supreme Court was essential to the writing of my paper. In particular, the opinion of the court was the main source in my discussion of the results of the arguments before the Supreme Court.

Van Buren, Martin. "The Autobiography of Martin Van Buren." *Volume 2 of Annual report of the American Historical Association for the year 1918, American Historical Association Volume 14 of Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission*, edited by John Clement Fitzpatrick. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1920.

This is the full text of the Martin Van Buren's biography, published in an annual report by the American Historical Association and edited by John Clement Fitzpatrick.

Understanding Van Buren was key to my paper, as he was president during most of the Amistad case, and his autobiography was an excellent (albeit slightly biased in his favor) way to do that. In particular, this autobiography was an excellent source about Van Buren's views on slavery and the reason behind those views.

Secondary Sources

Bollier, David. *Crusaders & Criminals, Victims & Visionaries: Historic Encounters Between Connecticut Citizens and the United States Supreme Court*. Office of Attorney General Joseph L. Lieberman, 1986.

This book is a collection of summaries of various Supreme Court cases that involved Connecticut in some way. It provided various additional facts that supplemented my other secondary sources and helped me form a more full picture of the case.

Bass, Sharon L. "The Amistad Revolt: 'A Tale of Triumph'." *The New York Times*. The New York Times Company, 22 Oct. 1989, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/10/22/nyregion/the-amistad-revolt-a-tale-of-triumph.html>. Accessed 16 Feb. 2018.

An article in the New York Times discussing a 1989 exhibit about the Amistad story in the New Haven Colony Historical Society. This article included quotes from historians regarding the impact of the Amistad case on the abolitionist cause, and was therefore helpful in assessing the long term impact of the case in my paper.

Cornish, Dudley T. "*Mutiny on the Amistad: The Saga of a Slave Revolt and Its Impact on American Abolition, Law, and Diplomacy* (review)." *Civil War History*, vol. 34 no. 1, 1988, pp. 79-80. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/cwh.1988.0011

This is a review of Howard Jones' *Mutiny on the Amistad* written by Dudley Cornish. It included a quote from prominent historian Samuel Eliot Morison that I used when writing about the impact of the case

Jones, Howard. *Mutiny on the Amistad: The Saga of a Slave Revolt and Its Impact on American Abolition, Law, and Diplomacy*. Oxford University Press, 1997.

This is a book written entirely about the Amistad case by historian Howard Jones. It's main use was its descriptions of the legal implications of the case that proved useful for discussing the legal impact of the case.

Kilbourn, Dwight C. *The Bench and Bar of Litchfield County, Connecticut*. Dwight Kilbourn, 1909.

A book self published by Kilbourn that describes the careers of every notable member of the Litchfield County bar. It provided a description of Roger Sherman Baldwin's life that helped me write about him in my paper.

McCain, Diana. *Free Men: The Amistad Revolt and the American Anti-slavery Movement*. Connecticut Humanities Council, 1989.

A booklet on the Amistad case published to mark the opening of an exhibit about the Amistad at the New Haven Colony History Society. It describes the story of the Amistad case from the context of the brutality of the slave trade at the time, to the return of the Mende to their home, and therefore served as an excellent summary of all the events.

Miller, William L. *Arguing about Slavery: The Great Battle in the United States Congress*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.

A book about the history of the slavery debate in Congress, that includes a chapter on the Amistad that I used in my research. This book provided details on the abolitionists aside from Roger Sherman Baldwin and John Quincy Adams who worked on the case, and also had a useful description of how Adams was recruited to the abolitionist cause in the case, that added to the details I already had from Adams' memoir.

Sherwood, Marika. "Britain, slavery and the trade in enslaved Africans." *History in Focus*. Institute of Historical Research, 2007, <https://www.history.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/Slavery/articles/sherwood.html#20t>. Accessed 16 Feb. 2018.

This article by historian Marika Sherwood discusses the history of slavery, and in particular the slave trade, in Britain. It helped to form my understanding of the history of the slave trade in Britain, which was instrumental in describing the context of the Amistad case, as Britain became an actor in the case.

Spear, Walter A. *The American Slave Trade: An Account of Its Origin, Growth, and Suppression*. Corner House Historical Publication, 1998.

A book about the history of American involvement in the slave trade and so it includes a chapter about the Amistad case, as it is key to the understanding of the history of the American slave trade. It helped fill in a variety of details not discussed in other sources, as well as being the best source on the debate in Congress about an appropriation to return the Mende to Africa after the events of the case.

Strother, Horatio T. *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut*. Wesleyan University Press, 1962.

This book describes the history of Connecticut citizens being involved in the Underground Railroad, and includes a passage on the events of the Amistad case. The most useful information in the book was its descriptions of the impact of the case on the abolitionist movement in Farmington, which I used in my analysis of the long term impact of the case.

Sullivan, Lester. "American Missionary Association." *Amistad Research Center*. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012, <http://amistadresearchcenter.tulane.edu/archon/?p=creators/creator&id=27>. Accessed 16 Feb. 2018.

A description of the history of the American Missionary Association held in the archives of the Amistad Research Center. This source provided valuable information about the American Missionary Association, an organization whose formation is a clear example of the impact of the Amistad case. So this description was useful in writing about the long term impact of the Amistad case.

The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Martin Van Buren." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 2 Feb. 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Martin-Van-Buren>. Accessed 16 Feb. 2018.

An Encyclopædia Britannica article that serves as a brief biography of Martin Van Buren. This served as an auxiliary source to Martin Van Buren's autobiography to allow me to better understand one of the key players in the Amistad case.

"The House 'Gag Rule.'" *History, Art, & Archives, United States House of Representatives*. Office of the Historian. <http://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1800-1850/The-House-of-Representatives-instituted-the-%E2%80%9Cgag-rule%E2%80%9D/>. Accessed 14 Feb. 2018.

This article from the House of Representatives' website on their history outlines the history of the gag rule, a rule that automatically tabled all discussion of slavery in the House. This source was helpful in learning about the debate about slavery in general in the United States when the events of the Amistad case occurred.