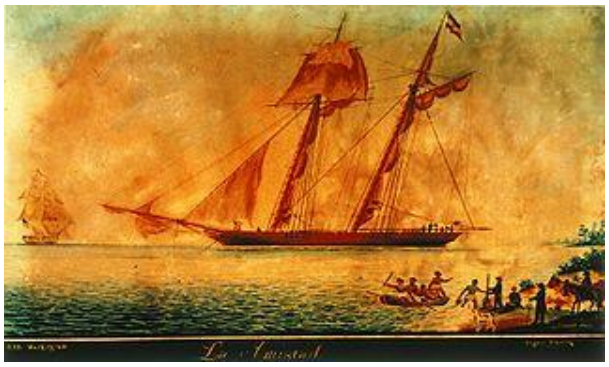
Amistad Incident



0. Amistad Incident - Story Preface

1. THE SLAVE TRADE

2. THE AMISTAD MUTINY

3. CAPTURED AGAIN

4. THE FIRST TRIAL

5. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS FOR THE DEFENSE

6. SET THEM FREE!

7. FREEDOM!

8. SENGBE GOES HOME

9. THE STORY LIVES ON

10. WHEN PEOPLE were CARGO

1839 painting depicting the two-masted sailing schooner La Amistad off the coast of Culloden Point, Long Island, New York. Image online, courtesy Wikipedia Commons. Public Domain.

I will call into the past -
Far back to the beginning of time -
And beg them
To come and help me

I will reach back
And draw them into me
And they
MUST come

For at this moment
I am
The whole reason
They have existed at all

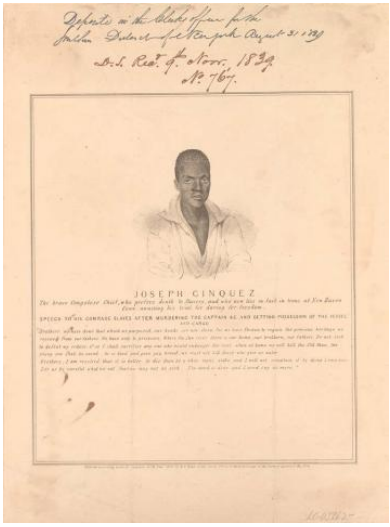
So says Sengbe Pieh (a 26-year-old illegally-captured Mendi from the country of Sierra Leone) to John Quincy Adams (his attorney), in Steven Spielberg's film version of the *Amistad* Incident.

The actual case, argued by Adams in the Supreme Court, helped push the United States to the brink of Civil War. At issue was whether Sengbe (also known as Joseph Cinque) and his fellow captives had the right to be free men (and return to their own country) or whether they could be sold (as property) to plantation owners or slave traders.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Amistad-Incident

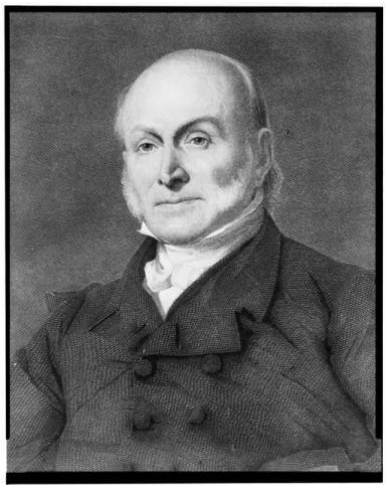
See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Amistad-Incident

Media Stream



Sengbe Pieh

Image online, courtesy U.S. Library of Congress.
Quote from the U.S. Library of Congress.
View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Sengbe-Pieh



John Quincy Adams

Image online, courtesy U.S. Library of Congress, Adventures of the American Mind Program.
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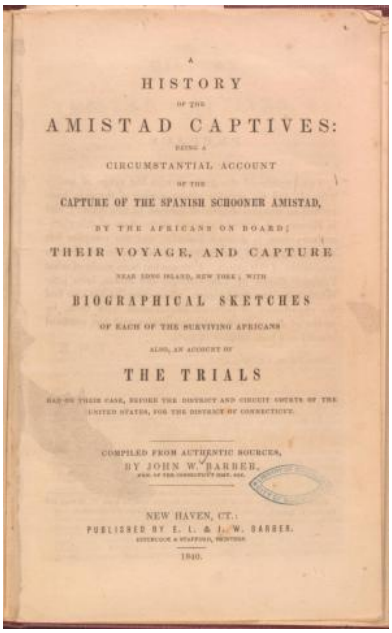
A
HISTORY
OF THE
AMISTAD CAPTIVES:
BEING A
CIRCUMSTANTIAL ACCOUNT
OF THE
CAPTURE OF THE SPANISH SCHOONER AMISTAD,
BY THE AFRICANS ON BOARD;
THEIR VOYAGE, AND CAPTURE
NEAR LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK; WITH
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES
OF EACH OF THE SURVIVING AFRICANS
ALSO, AN ACCOUNT OF
THE TRIALS
HAD ON THEIR CASE, BEFORE THE DISTRICT AND CIRCUIT COURTS OF THE UNITED STATES, FOR THE DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT.
COMPILED FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES,
BY JOHN W. BARBER,
NEW HAVEN, CT.:
PUBLISHED BY E. L. & J. W. BARBER.
1840.

Amistad Captives: The Story and the Trials

Image online, U.S. National Archives.
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Amistad Incident

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