

Sailing for Freedom

A new *Amistad* teaches about slavery.

Huddled into the dark, damp lower deck of the *Amistad*, Sengbe Pieh was desperate to find a way to escape. The year was 1839, and Pieh and 52 other Africans had been kidnapped and sold into slavery.

Using a loose nail, Pieh carefully undid his chains. Then he quietly unshackled the other captives. The Africans exploded onto the ship's deck. They seized the *Amistad* and set their sights on home—Africa.

The ship landed in the United States instead (see “A Long Struggle for Freedom”). After a dramatic court case, the Africans returned home to Freetown, Sierra Leone in 1842.

Recently, a new *Amistad* arrived in Freetown. A group is sailing a reproduction, or copy, of the original ship. The sailors are on a 14-month-long journey to honor Pieh and his fellow captives.

The voyage also marks a special anniversary. Two hundred years ago, a law went into effect that

forbade people to bring new slaves into the United States. Officials enacted the ban in 1808, hoping it would one day help end slavery. To enact is to make into law.

“We are a small ship that has a big story to tell,” says Dwayne Williams of Amistad America, the group that organized the trip. “We have a unique role to ... spread the legacy of the *Amistad*.”

Historic Voyage

The modern *Amistad* started its trip in New Haven, Conn. That's where the Africans ended up after their revolt. The ship also has stopped in Canada, England, and Portugal.

Freetown was one of the ship's most exciting stops yet. Many of the Africans on the original



A woman blesses the *Amistad* in New Haven, Conn.

Amistad came from that city. Hundreds of people gathered to welcome the ship. “There [was] a great celebration,” Williams told *WR News*.

Spreading the Word

The *Amistad* will return to the United States this spring. It will stop in Washington, D.C., New York, and other cities on its way back to New Haven.

The crew hopes the journey will help enlighten people about slavery, past and present. “We don't want to talk merely about the past,” Williams says. “It's about the present and all that we do.”

THINK CRITICALLY: Why is learning about the past important? How might that knowledge affect the decisions people make today?

The Amistad's Trip to Africa



A Long Struggle for Freedom

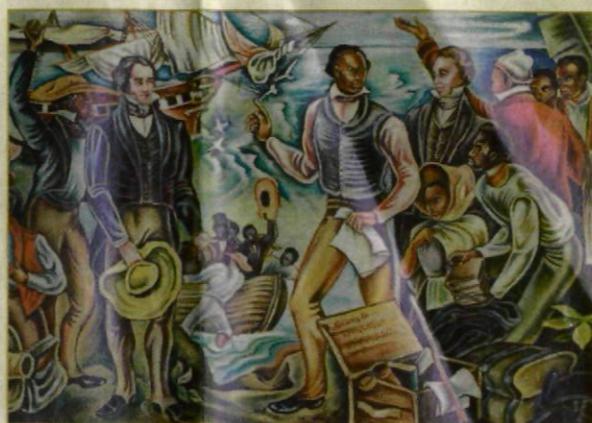
Sengbe Pieh led the rebellion. He ordered the *Amistad's* crew to sail to Africa. At night, however, the crew secretly steered the wrong way. Less than a month later, the U.S. Navy captured the ship near New York. The Africans were jailed in New Haven, Conn., and tried for murder and **mutiny**, or rebellion.

At the time, people in the United States were divided over slavery. Many people in the South believed in slavery. **Abolitionists** didn't agree. They wanted to end slavery.

The *Amistad* case ended up in the U.S. Supreme Court. Former President John Quincy Adams argued on the Africans' behalf. He said they had been

captured illegally. At that time, laws forbade people to bring new slaves into some countries and territories. That included Cuba, where the Africans had been sold.

The justices agreed with Adams. They found Pieh and the Africans innocent of all charges. The Africans finally returned home in 1842.



This mural shows the Africans leaving for Freetown after the trial.

Chocolate Power

Truck uses dessert to cross the desert.

Talk about a sweet idea. Two British environmentalists are driving from England to Africa in a chocolate-powered truck!

Andy Pag and John Grimshaw are making the 4,500-mile trip using a special fuel made by Ecotec Resources. The company recycles old, unusable chocolate into **ethanol**. Ethanol is a clean-burning fuel that can power cars.

The fuel is better for the environment than regular gasoline. Regular gasoline releases harmful gases into the air as it burns.

“I've organized a lot of expeditions in the past ... and I love the landscapes ... that we've explored on those trips, so I always felt a little uncomfortable about burning lots of diesel to get to see them,” Pag told *WR News*.

Chocolate fuel means Pag can enjoy the ride without feeling guilty. About 17 pounds of chocolate is needed to make 1 gallon of ethanol, but the process works. The chocolate is **inedible**, so it cannot be eaten anyway. The unusual fuel will carry the pair all the way across the Sahara, the world's largest desert. Their journey will end in Timbuktu, Mali.

The trek will also help people in the African nation. Pag and Grimshaw plan to deliver a fuel processor to a center that will help local women turn used cooking oil into fuel.



Fill 'er up! Well-wishers surround Andy Pag's eco-friendly truck with bowls of chocolate.



MYSTERY PHOTO

This civil rights leader had an inspiring vision for the future. Growing up in Atlanta, he often dreamed of a world in which all Americans had the same rights and lived together in peace. Who is the person?



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