



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

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[[image - Logo - THE AMISTAD RESEARCH CENTER]]

In 1839, 52 Africans revolted against the crew of a Cuban slave ship, La Amistad (meaning friendship in Spanish), killing all but two whom they kept alive to navigate. The Africans knew that returning to their homeland required sailing into the sun. At night, however, the Cubans steered northwest in the hope of reaching slave country in the U.S. For more than two months, La Amistad zig-zagged across the Atlantic Ocean, ending up at Montauk Point, Long Island. The Africans were taken into custody, transferred to New Haven, Conn., and charged with murder and piracy.

A series of court trials began with a group of white Easterners, who became known as Friends of The Amistad, underwriting and fighting for three years to secure freedom for the Africans.

By the time the Amistad Case reached the U.S. Supreme Court, Friends of The Amistad knew that to win against the formidable pressure of southern justices, they must have the nation's finest lawyer. They went to Boston and persuaded ex-President John Quincy Adams to take the case. He won "freedom now" for the Africans in the first civil rights case to reach the Court.

A year later Friends of The Amistad were able to repatriate the 39 living Africans to Sierra Leone and to start the Mendi Mission. In 1846, Friends of The Amistad merged with other small missionary societies to become The American Missionary Association (AMA).

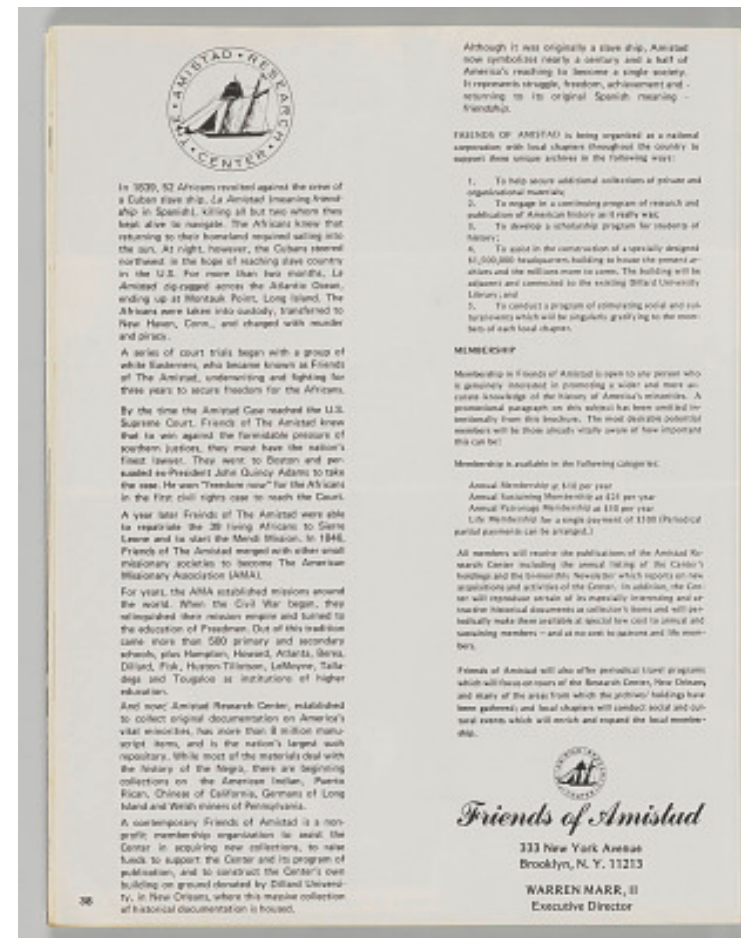
For years, the AMA established missions around the world. When the Civil War began, they relinquished their mission empire and turned to the education of Freedmen. Out of this tradition came more than 500 primary and secondary schools, plus Hampton, Howard, Atlanta, Berea, Dillard, Fisk, Huston-Tillotson, LeMoyne, Talladega and Tougaloo as institutions of higher education.

And now, Amistad Research Center, established to collect original documentation on America's vital minorities, has more than 8 million manuscript items, and is the nation's largest such repository. While most of the materials deal with the history of the Negro, there are beginning collections on the American Indian, Puerto Rican, Chinese of California, Germans of Long Island and Welsh miners of Pennsylvania.

A contemporary Friends of Amistad is a non-profit membership organization to assist the Center in acquiring new collections, to raise funds to support the Center and its program of publication, and to construct the Center's own building on ground donated by Dillard University, in New Orleans, where this massive collection of historical documentation is housed.

Although it was originally a slave ship, Amistad now symbolizes nearly a century and a half of America's reaching to become a single society. It represents struggle, freedom, achievement and returning to its original Spanish meaning - friendship.

FRIENDS OF AMISTAD is being organized as a national corporation with local chapters throughout the country to support these unique archives in the following ways;



1. To help secure additional collections of private and organizational materials;
2. To engage in a continuing program of research and publication of American history as it really was;
3. To develop a scholarship program for students of history;
4. To assist in the construction of a specially designed \$1,500,000 headquarters building to house the present archives and the millions more to come. The building will be adjacent and connected to the existing Dillard University Library; and
5. To conduct a program of stimulating social and cultural events which will be singularly gratifying to the members of each local chapter.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in Friends of Amistad is open to any person who is genuinely interested in promoting a wider and more accurate knowledge of the history of America's minorities. A promotional paragraph on this subject has been omitted intentionally from this brochure. The most desirable potential members will be those already vitally aware of how important this can be!

Membership is available in the following categories:

Annual Membership at \$10 per year
Annual Sustaining Membership at \$25 per year
Annual Patronage Membership at \$50 per year
Life Membership for a single payment of \$500 (Periodical partial payments can be arranged.)

All members will receive the publications of the Amistad Research Center including the annual listing of the Center's holdings and the bi-monthly Newsletter which reports on new acquisitions and activities of the Center. In addition, the Center will reproduce certain of its especially interesting and attractive historical documents as collector's items and will periodically make them available at special low cost to annual and sustaining members - and at no cost to patrons and life members.

Friends of Amistad will also offer periodical travel programs which will focus on tours of the Research Center, New Orleans, and many of the areas from which the archives' holdings have been gathered; and local chapters will conduct social and cultural events which will enrich and expand the local membership.

[[image - logo of THE AMISTAD RESEARCH CENTER]]
Friends of Amistad
333 New York Avenue
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213

WARREN MARR, II
Executive Director



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The mission of the Smithsonian is the increase and diffusion of knowledge - shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. Founded in 1846, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Become an active part of our mission through the Transcription Center. Together, we are discovering secrets hidden deep inside our collections that illuminate our history and our world.

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