

The Amistad Timeline

March 1839	Slave ship <i>Tecora</i> leaves Lomboko, West Africa.
June 1839	<i>Tecora</i> arrives in Havana. Jose Ruiz buys 49 adult males, paying \$450 for each. Pedro Montez buys four children, three girls and one boy.
June 26, 1839	<i>La Amistad</i> sets sail for the 3-day trip to Puerto Principe, at the other end of Cuba, with 53 African slaves, Ruiz Montez, and a crew of five.
July 2, 1839	Africans revolt and seize control of <i>La Amistad</i> .
July-August 1839	<i>La Amistad</i> sails east by day, northwest by night, up the U.S. coastline.
August 25, 1839	<i>La Amistad</i> anchors off Long Island, New York, and lands a shore party to obtain provisions.
August 26, 1839	<i>La Amistad</i> is seized by U.S.S. <i>Washington</i> , and brought to New London where the Africans are taken to New Haven jail.
August 29, 1839	Judge Judson holds court on board U.S.S. <i>Washington</i> . Releases Ruiz and Montez and orders that the Africans be tried for murder and piracy.
September 4, 1839	Connecticut and New York abolitionists form the Amistad Committee.
September 17, 1839	1st trial begins in the U.S. Circuit Court at Hartford, Judge Thompson presiding.
October 1839	Yale professor Josiah Gibbs finds Mende speaker on the docks of New York and takes him to New Haven to interview the Africans.
October 1839	Ruiz and Montez arrested in New York on charges of assault, kidnapping, and false imprisonment filed on behalf of the Amistad captives.
November 19, 1839	2nd trial begins in the U.S. District Court in Hartford, Judge Judson presiding.
January 8, 1840	Sengbe Pieh 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 <i>Gentleman</i> .
January 15, 1842	<i>Gentleman</i> arrives in Freetown, Sierra Leone