

History class



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Several enslaved Africans aboard the *La Amistad*, a Cuban schooner, voyaging on an eastward route from Havana toward a town harbor located in Cuba in 1839, took advantage of a steamy night and a small number of drowsy crew to stage a mutiny. Cinque, a young man, encouraged the revolt through murdering the cook and captain of the ship. A number of other crewmen suffered similar fate, even though the Cuban middlemen who had bought the enslaved Africans in Havana, were not killed to return the mutineers to Africa. Unfortunately, the shrewd Cubans navigated unresponsively to the East at morning and intently to the northwest at the evening, which caused dehydration among the mutineers after a week later. In the coast of Long Island, the U. S. Coast Guard saw the wrecked vessel and assaulted it and the mutineers, counting Cinque and some who had paddled ashore in search of water.

If Steven Spielberg and his colleagues from DreamWorks restricted their claims regarding the film *Amistad* to historical precision in the wide-ranging manner only, they could have encouraged a more openhanded reaction from knowledgeable historians. The movie was unsatisfactory in high cinematic art, yet the producers, as innovative creators, have the privilege to assume history and remold it into their desired story bound drama. However, Spielberg and the staff of Dream Works, prior to the December premiere of *Amistad*, declared their movie to be form of advanced history. They circulated learning brochures for classroom activities in which the film would function, as a motivator of higher critical thinking regarding the importance of history in the perspective of the long-disappeared chapter revived to American past in the movie. For instance, students became aware that the producers exerted immense care to make every feature of this historical

tragedy genuine and that both historical tragedy and historical research aspire to depict the reality regarding the past.

Most probably, the most interesting scene in the film portrays the slave trade. At the opening of the movie, Cinque, covered with grime and sweating profusely, murky hold of the Amistad uses fingered caked with blood to disentangle himself from his chains. He and his freethinking companions wreaked a box full of sugarcane knives, and then stormed their path to victory. In a violent fight with the captain, Cinque bursts into a primitive fury that permits him to overpower the captain by stabbing him in the chest with his own sword. The camera focused for a long time on a victorious Cinque, of frightening figure and build, lofty over the body. For the benefit of historical precision, Spielberg could have settled on the primary target of Cinque's fury, the mulatto cook of the Amistad, but his demise could have tossed over a distressing shade into a plainer discussion regarding race relations.

Amistad has unimportant to say about historical reconstruction in the near future. Apparently, Spielberg made this film to articulate the sentiments and sensibilities of a diversely cultural modern audience. It is a rule that historical accuracy could not be taken advantage of for cinematic exploitation and Amistad is clearly not an exception.