

Abolition movement

Law



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Before seizing control of the ship, the Africans, led by Single-Pi alias Cinque, killed the captain and the cook, while two crew members escaped on the ship's lifeboat. The remaining crew, however, tricked the escapees and sailed them to Long Island, New York (instead of Africa) where they were apprehended by the Coastal authorities.

What followed was a legal roller coaster which would greatly strengthen the American based National Abolition Movement, an organization that advocated against slavery. In the legal proceedings, which took place in New London, Ruiz and Montes requested that the schooner, its cargo, and the Africans be given to the Spanish consul. The Africans were then charged with murder and mutiny and transported to New Haven for jailing as they awaited trial. The abolitionists stood on the Africans' sides and offered to defend them, where they formed the Amistad committee comprised of several prominent abolitionists like Lewis Tappan, Reverend Joshua Leavitt, and Simeon S. Jocelyn. They further sought out interpreters for the Africans, composed a legal team for their defense and provided food and housing for them (Barnes et al 93).

Since it was the first-ever case of a cargo ship mutiny by slaves, it attracted extra media attention, which translated into extra support for the abolitionists and thus they received some extra funding. The heightened coverage of the case by the people enhanced refreshed awareness on the ill effects of slavery, which led to more support of the abolitionists and more members joining the movement. The Africans won the case and were released to return to their homeland in Africa. By the end of the proceedings, the American Abolitionist Movement was a much more powerful and influential force in the US society (Upchurch 64).

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