

BETWEEN THE COVERS RARE BOOKS

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MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM SCHOOLS

Curriculum -- Negro History

This outline for the Negro History section of the Freedom Schools curriculum has four major sections, or units. The units are made on a basis of content, not of what we think is a day's or a week's class work. Also included is an introductory unit on the Amistad Mutiny, as a sample of what can be done. The Amistad unit is divided into individual lessons. The general course outline was prepared by Barbara Jones, of New York SNCC, and the Amistad study was prepared by Beatrice Young, of the Amistad Society in Chicago.

The AMISTAD Case--a Curriculum study for the Mississippi Freedom Schools:

Proposed as a sample introductory unit; submitted by the Amistad Society, Chicago, Illinois.

I. Brief Synopsis of the Amistad Incident: The AMISTAD is the name of a slave ship on which the slaves revolted in 1839. (Ironically, "Amistad" means "friendship" in Spanish.) Joseph Cinques (Pronounced French, i.e. "sank"), the son of a Sierra Leone chief, was one of 53 Africans captured and taken to Havana, Cuba, where the ship picked up additional cargo and two Cuban planters. On the passage between Cuba and New York, Cinques exhorted his fellow slaves to break their chains and gain their freedom. The slaves were able to take over the ship and kill the pilot and captain, but they realized they must save someone to sail the ship back to Africa. With sugar cane knives at their backs, the two Cuban planters were directed to sail the Africans home.

By day the planters sailed the ship toward Africa, but by night they sailed toward New York. With this zig-zag course, they managed to land at a New York harbor, whereupon the duped slaves were again taken captive. A New York judge heard the case of the slaves and decreed that they be returned to their homes, but the President of the United States, Martin Van Buren, disturbed that this decision might encourage additional slave revolts, requested the Attorney General of the U.S. to appeal the case to the Supreme Court.

While awaiting the trial, many New England abolitionists organized the American Missionary Society, in order to raise funds for the slaves' eventual return to Africa.

Also, an ex-President of the U.S., John Quincy Adams, then 73 years old, and with a full career behind him, came forth to argue the case before the Supreme Court in behalf of the slaves. Adams argued eloquently for nearly five hours and gained freedom for the slaves. He states in his diary that this was the most important act of his life.

In the meantime, the American Missionary Society was able to procure a vast amount of money, part of which enabled the slaves to return home. Prior to leaving the U.S., Cinques and several of the slaves toured the country for the anti-slavery cause. When Cinques arrived home, he found his entire family and tribe had been enslaved, but after a few years he was made an African chief of another tribe.

The American Missionary Society used the remainder of its funds to found several Negro colleges, such as Hampton Institute, Berea College and, after the Civil War, Tougaloo College.

Mississippi Freedom Schools: Curriculum - Negro History

[Jackson, Mississippi: Council of Federated Organizations 1964]

Quarto. Nine stapled mimeographed leaves printed rectos only. Slight age-toning, else very near fine. A curriculum that outlines the teaching on slavery and servitude, resistance, the Reconstruction Era, and the 20th Century, with one unit on the Amistad Rebellion.

OCLC locates no copies. [BTC#392754]

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