



Entry in the American Anti-Slavery Almanac 1841

NAME: _____

Nine of the Africans have died. They have been in jail about a year. They have been instructed daily by benevolent persons. They have made some progress in reading and speaking the English language; and their conduct has been very exemplary. James Covey, a native Mendi, providentially brought to this country, acts as interpreter. They are cheerful, inoffensive, grateful, obedient, and are fast throwing off their pagan habits—but long for liberty and their homes.

President Van Buren, at the request of the Spanish minister, sent a U. S. ship to New-Haven last winter, to convey the Africans to Cuba, to be given up to the Spaniards, in case Judge Judson had not decided as he did.

Ye who love liberty, pray for Cinquez and his companions, and send your money to the committee appointed to protect them, that they may employ able counsel to defend them. S. S. Jocelyn, Joshua Leavitt, and Lewis Tappan, are the committee, and the donations can be sent to Lewis Tappan, Treasurer, No. 122 Pearl street, New-York.

DESCRIPTION OF CINQUEZ, GRAB-EAU, AND JAMES COVEY THE INTERPRETER.



SING-GEE, [Cingue,] (generally spelt Cinquez) was born in Ma-ni, in Dzho-poa, *i. e.*, in the open land, in the Mendi country. His mother is dead, and he lived with his father. He has a wife and three children, one son and two daughters. His king, Ka-lum-bo, lived at Kaw-men-di, a large town in the Men-di country. He is a planter of rice, and never owned or sold slaves. He was seized by four men, when traveling in the road, his right hand tied to his neck. Ma-ya-gi-la-lo sold him to Ba-ma-dzha, son of Shaka, king of Gen-du-ma, in the Vai country. Ba-ma-dzha carried him to Lomboko and sold him to a Spaniard. At Lomboko he was transferred to a slave-ship, and taken to Havana.

After the terrible "middle passage" [read between decks, when the space is less than three feet, they arrived at Havana. Here they were put into one of the large cells, or prison-rooms, called *hucenas*, and confined to each. In a few days Joseph Hays and Peter Martin bought them. Hays bought Cinquez and Martin bought the children, whose father, who they put them on board the schooner *Amistad*, a coaster, for Puerto Principe, Cuba, a few hundred miles from Havana. When they were two or three days out, they were beaten severely, threatened with death, &c. A quarrel took place. The cook and cabin were killed, and two sailors fed in a boat. Cinquez, the master spirit of the whole, assumed the command. He established a mild government over his comrades and compelled Hays and Martin to surrender the schooner for the thing was—their own native Africa. They did so by sea, but in the night they descended the Africans, and ran upwind the United States.

In the way they sailed on the American coast, and came to anchor off Cuddles Point, Long Island. Here some of them landed, made purchases, (paying for all they took), and stayed some, intending to proceed on their passage, but they were taken possession of by Lieutenant Galloway, of the U. S. Brig, Washington, and carried into New London, Conn. Judge Judson heard them over in the Circuit Court for trial on the charge of murder, &c.; but Judge Thompson decided that our courts have no cognizance of offences committed on board foreign vessels on the high seas. As, however, the vessel, cargo, and Africans had been seized by Galloway and others for salvage, it was determined that a trial must take place in the District Court. It was held in January 1840. Judge Judson decided that the prisoners were native Africans, had never been taken, legally, he dismissed the *hucenas* with costs, and showed that the Africans should be delivered to the president of the United States, to be sent back to Africa. But our government, on the demand of the Spanish minister, appealed to the Circuit Court. The court was held in April, 1840. Judge Thompson sustained the appeal, and in view partly of the other would appeal to a higher tribunal, whichever way he might decide, the case went up to the Supreme Court of the United States as a matter of form; there it will be decided January, 1841. Thus these wretched men are to be kept in an American jail eighteen months, and at last, perhaps, delivered by the tender mercies of the Spaniards!

One of the Africans here died. They have been in jail about a year. They have been instructed daily by benevolent persons. They have made some progress in reading and speaking the English language; and their conduct has been very exemplary. James Covey, a native Mendi, providentially brought to this country, acts as interpreter. They are cheerful, inoffensive, grateful, obedient, and are fast throwing off their pagan habits—but long for liberty and their homes.

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GRAB-EAU, [Grab-beu,] (often spelt as G) was born at Futa, in the Men-di country, two months journey into the interior. He was the next after Cinquez in command of the *Amistad*. He never saw death, one brother and one sister living. He is married, but no children; he is a planter of rice. He was caught on the road when going to Timbang, in the Senegal country, by Galloway. His master had bought to slave one of them this way, and he (Grab-beu) was taken for him. He was then sold to a Spaniard, who sold him to Laiga, a Spaniard, at Lomboko.

JAMES COVEY, the interpreter for the Africans, is generally about twenty years of age; was born in Bondu in the Men-di country. Covey was taken by these men, in the country house, he was carried to him from his country, and sold as a slave to the king of the Bondu. He was afterwards sold to a Portuguese, living near Madrid. After staying in this place about one month, Covey was not on board a Portuguese slave-ship, which was captured by a British armed vessel, and carried into Sierra Leone. Covey thus obtained his freedom, and remained in place free for six years, and was brought to sea and sent to the English language, and the school of the Christian Missionary Society. Covey's original name was Kow-mo-ny, which taken captive. In Nov. 1839, he entered as a sailor on board the British brig of war *Amistad*, commanded by Captain Fitzgerald. It was on board this vessel, when at New-York, in Oct. 1839, that Amistad was seized, and by the kindness of Capt. Fitzgerald his services as an interpreter were procured.

Source: American anti-slavery almanac, for 1841 New York: Published by S.W. Benedict, 1841 (i.e. 1840). <https://digital.librarycompany.org/islandora/object/Islandora%3A2771>