

For Immediate Release

October 14, 2008

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Sultana Projects Announces Freedom Schooner AMISTAD to Join Fleet for Downrigging Weekend



Chestertown, Maryland: Sultana Projects announced today that the freedom schooner AMISTAD based in New Haven, Connecticut, will be participating its annual Downrigging Weekend festival in Chestertown, Maryland on October 30 –

November 2. AMISTAD will join an already impressive fleet of Tall Ships and schooners, including the KALMAR NYCKEL, PRIDE OF BALTIMORE, II, VIRGINIA, LADY MARYLAND and SULTANA. AMISTAD is a full-scale recreation of LA AMISTAD, a Spanish vessel that became the site, in 1839, of a successful slave revolt that effectively reversed the Middle Passage. Led by a twenty-five-year old Mende rice farmer named Sengbe Pieh, also known as “Cinque,” a group of African captives seized control of the ship, killed the captain and cook, and ordered the crew to sail back to Africa. After 63 days at sea, LA AMISTAD was seized off Long Island and towed to New London harbor. The Africans were held in a New Haven jail, awaiting trial on charges of murder.

Abolitionists, both black and white, took up their cause and former President John Quincy Adams himself successfully argued before the United States Supreme Court that the captives had been illegally enslaved, and were thus justified in their efforts to free themselves. In 1841, the 35 surviving AMISTAD passengers returned home to Africa. The story of AMISTAD is a testimony to the enduring spirit of resistance that has defined the African experience in America.

Sultana Projects is currently working with Amistad America, Inc. to incorporate AMISTAD into the schedule of events for its annual Downrigging Weekend festival scheduled for October 30-November 2, 2008 in Chestertown. A free, public open house on AMISTAD has been scheduled for 2:00pm-5:30pm at the Cannon Street Pier in Chestertown.

For upcoming news about AMISTAD's visit to Chestertown and detailed information about *Downrigging Weekend* visit www.sultanaprojects.org and www.sultanaprojects.org/downrigging.htm.

For additional information about AMISTAD and Amistad America, Inc. please visit, www.amistadamerica.org.

About Sultana Projects: Each year more than 15,000 students of all ages take part in a unique educational experience with Sultana Projects. Whether sailing the Chesapeake on the decks of the 1768 reproduction schooner Sultana, exploring the world of the early Chesapeake through the Captain John Smith Four Hundred Project, learning about the life of an 18th century sailor in a classroom outreach program, burning an Indian dugout canoe at the Sultana Shipyard or studying the Bay's incredible history and environment through one of Sultana Projects' classroom curriculum units, students gain a greater appreciation for the national treasure that is the Chesapeake Bay