

by President Obama to be the 15th director of the Service. Three months later, as he was being sworn in, he reaffirmed his commitment to addressing the threat of climate change, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, limited water supplies, and the illicit trade of wildlife. Perhaps he put it best when he said, "as wild-life goes, so goes the nation."

Sam Hamilton was loved by all conservationists. He leaves behind his wife, Becky; two sons, Sam, Jr. and Clay; and grandson Davis. I am proud to have known Sam D. Hamilton, and to be able to help carry on his vision here in Congress. I ask my colleagues to stand and join me in celebrating his achievements and remembering his legacy as a person who embodied the very best of the American spirit.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF
COMMISSIONER DUPONT L. DAVIS

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2010

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of DuPont L. Davis who served the people of Hertford County, North Carolina for many years as County Commissioner and civic leader. Well known for his passion, deep caring and unapologetically speaking his mind, DuPont Davis helped make a difference in the lives of countless citizens.

Commissioner Davis was first elected to the Hertford County Board of Commissioners in November of 1988. Since that time he has often served as Chairman of the Board, been recognized as North Carolina Commissioner of the Year and served as President of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.

Commissioner Davis was a person of faith. He was an active member of Zion Grove Missionary Baptist Church of Aulander, North Carolina. He was also a member of Jerusalem Lodge No. 96 of Prince Hall Masons, Ahoskie, North Carolina and was past Master of the Lodge.

Commissioner Davis was my dear friend of many years and I am saddened by his loss. Without question, he was a devoted public servant with an unsurpassed drive and passion to improve the lives of people in his community. He was an irreplaceable asset to Hertford County and to the state of North Carolina.

Commissioner Davis is survived by his wife Earline Powell Davis, and sons Derrick Davis and Dexter Davis, and daughters, Donica Davis Thompson and Dedria Davis King.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing remorse at the passing of one of North Carolina's finest public servants, a man who was one of the State's most admired and respected elected officials. His passion, perseverance and dedication should serve as an inspiration to us all.

AMISTAD SAILS TO HAVANA
HARBOR

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2010

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, today is a proud day for the Mystic Seaport Museum and the city of New London, as our freedom schooner *Amistad* prepares to sail into Havana Harbor as a floating goodwill ambassador. The *Amistad's* visit to Cuba culminates its current Caribbean Heritage Tour to help commemorate the United Nations-designated date of March 25 as a Day of Remembrance for the victims of the Atlantic slave trade.

The 19th century *Amistad* Incident ultimately led to a profoundly important U.S. Supreme Court decision that arguably turned the tide against slavery itself. The ship serves as a global icon of racial tolerance and a platform for serious examination of shared history across Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and the United States. Today, the world is watching as the *Amistad* sails into Havana Harbor to set new milestones for diplomacy and remembrance. Today, from New London to the Caribbean, we honor our common heritage and wish the *Amistad* fair winds and following seas.

The following is a story from the New London Day:

AMISTAD IS SAILING BACK TO WHERE ITS
STORY BEGAN

(By Ted Mann Day)

HAVANA.—Over a breakfast of melon, eggs and thick, dark Cuban coffee, Quentin Snediker, Maureen Hennessy and William Pinkney seem barely able to stand the wait for the coasting schooner *Amistad* and its crew to arrive in Cuba.

It is a wait older than the ship itself, says Snediker, who was the project coordinator of the design and construction of the *Amistad* for Mystic Seaport.

"To complete the story, we always felt the vessel had to return here," he said on Sunday morning, as he and Pinkney, who was the first in command of the ship when it launched nearly 10 years ago, prepared for a press conference at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes to announce the *Amistad's* impending historic visit to Cuba.

"Here" means Havana, the Cuban capital and trading center, where the African captives who would make the *Amistad* famous were auctioned illegally in 1839 as slaves in violation of the Spanish and English treaties banning the international slave trade, and bound for the eastern agricultural districts that made Cuba a power in the sugar and coffee trade.

Brought to Havana on a slave ship after being taken captive in Sierra Leone, the 53 men and boys were transferred to the *Amistad*, a modest vessel that transported goods and freight along the Cuban coastline.

In an ornate, wood-paneled room at the Museo Nacional, Cuban historian Miguel Barnet, Pinkney and Snediker took turns reviewing the subsequent twists of the *Amistad* story for a crowd of about 45 journalists from the Cuban national press, American TV networks and the BBC.

Despite the 1807 passage of the Wilberforce Act—whose anniversary, now the United Nations' international day of commemoration for victims of the slave trade, the *Amistad* will mark with its formal arrival in Havana on Thursday—Cuba's booming sugar and cattle businesses precipitated a dependence on human slavery.

It was a case of "negocios sucios," or "dirty business," Barnet said, but one into which leaders in Cuba and in its colonial patron, Spain, felt driven by necessity. "Both the Spaniards and the Cubans needed fresh hands," he said.

The *Amistad* never reached its destination. The leader of the captives, known as Cinque to his Spanish-speaking handlers, led a revolt that would change not just the history of slavery in Cuba and the Spanish empire, but also in the United States.

Picking the locks of their shackles with a nail, the captives seized the ship and killed most of the crew, including Captain Ramon Ferrer, with machetes. The remaining crew members were ordered to steer the *Amistad* back to Africa—away from the setting sun.

But as those crew members tried to sabotage Cinque and the Africans, the *Amistad* zig-zagged up the east coast of the United States until it was captured off Montauk and towed into the Custom House in New London.

The captives, initially put on trial for the killings, would eventually be freed, after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that since they had been taken from Africa in contravention of international treaties banning the slave trade, they could not be property.

Instead, the court ruled, Cinque and his countrymen were necessarily men, with a right to defend themselves against those who kept them captive.

The *Amistad's* visit resonates not just with its historical legacy; it is also, Hennessy noted, a rare opportunity for open interchange between the Cuban and U.S. nations, at a time when their respective governments remain at uneasy odds. Hennessy, who, like Snediker, was taking time off from her work at the Mystic Seaport to meet the *Amistad* and its crew as they arrive in Matanzas today, said the group met over the weekend with officials from the Cuban Ministry of Culture.

The ministry plans to broadcast Steven Spielberg's 1997 film "Amistad" on one of the state-run television channels Tuesday night, in an attempt to drum up popular interest in the ship's visit.

As the press conference concluded Saturday morning, journalists descended on the *Amistad* representatives, particularly Pinkney, wanting to know if this combined diplomatic effort of the State Department, United Nations and Cuban officials represented a new thawing in mutual relations.

The visit comes months after the incoming Obama administration relaxed travel restrictions and other facets of the nearly 50-year U.S. embargo of Cuba, but significant tensions still persist. Billboards on the highway into Havana from Jose Marti International Airport depict the mug shots of Cuban prisoners held in the United States—without cause, according to the Cuban government. And U.S. commentators continue to raise questions about the Cuban government's policies, including its economic system and approach to dissidents.

But the *Amistad* represents shared strands of history, said Barnet, the Cuban historian and writer, and the American visitors agreed.

While interviewers continually asked him variations of the question "can this be a step" toward normalization, Pinkney said, this visit transcends the political considerations that have divided the two countries.

"Now they're completing the *Amistad* story by coming into Havana, where it all started," he said. "Here, we have nothing to express but the solidarity of humankind."