

November 13, 1995

Reverend Frederick G. Streets
Chaplain, Yale University
Bullell Chapel
New Haven, Connecticut 06520

Dear Reverend Streets:

As you know, upon the initiative of The Amistad Committee, the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut passed legislation this session establishing the Connecticut Freedom Trail. The legislation mandated the Connecticut Historic Commission, the Department of Economic Development-Tourist Division and The Amistad Committee to select and mark the sites, produce a brochure explaining and locating them for the visitor, residents and students in our schools, and create a national public relations campaign.

The thrust of the Trail is to identify sites of persons and institutions that have contributed to the struggle against slavery, for civil rights and justice in Connecticut. Adhering to the practice of the National Historic Registry, we have limited the choices to those prior to 1946, fifty years from the inauguration of the trail, Spring, 1996.

The Amistad story cannot be told without telling of the role of Yale faculty and students, especially, from the Yale Divinity School. There are many stories involving Yale in US history, but few had the significance of changing the very course of that history as did The Amistad campaign. You saw in the excellent video which our Committee commissioned **The AMISTAD REVOLT: "All We Want Is Make Us Free"** the repeated mention of Yale's role. We feel it would be historically weak to have a Freedom Trail in Connecticut without having Yale as one of the sites.

In Yale's Archives, there are original documents of great interest from the campaign. There have been several exhibits of these documents of a limited duration. We are requesting that a location be secured where copies of those documents plus an explanation can be permanently on display. People following the Trail should be able to see those, in reproduction of course: the

sketches, for example, of the captives, letters, etc. The site could have definite hours like all similar sites, everywhere. We would add it to the map which will be part of the brochure.

We write you, Reverend Streets, because we feel so strongly that the Site should be attached to the role of the Divinity School at Yale. It would be historically accurate. I learned only recently that the Divinity School is a repository of the archives of the Missionary Society, which came directly out of the Amistad Committee of 1842. The 150th Anniversary of the founding of the American Missionary Association will be commemorated in 1996, the exact year of the opening of the Trail.

This is a modest proposal, involving a display case, reproduction of copies, a sign or two, a location. The Trail, as history itself, will link Yale to all of the other sites that have contributed to the, unfortunately, continuing struggle in our country for racial equality and justice.

Our last meeting for site selection will be held on December 7th, 1995. We do so hope that Yale University will respond affirmatively.

Yours in Peace,

Alfred L. Marder
President



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

November 16, 1995

Reverend Frederick G. Streets
Chaplain, Yale University
Battel Chapel
New Haven, CT 06520

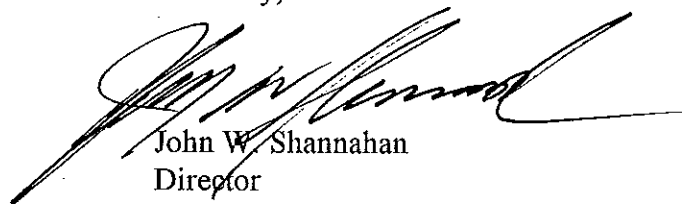
Dear Reverend Streets:

At a recent meeting we had with members of The Amistad Committee, discussion was held on what sites should be included on the Connecticut Freedom Trail that the State Legislature authorized at its last session. The Historical Commission is assisting in selecting the sites, developing wording for signage, and securing and installing plaques and signs where appropriate.

There is the hope on our part that Yale will agree to be a part of the Freedom Trail through some form of display of items it owns relating to the concept of freedom for African-Americans in Connecticut. Once the selection of sites has been made each will be contacted by letter to confirm that it will participate in this program and allow it to be listed in an accompanying brochure and to have mounted at an agreed upon location a plaque or sign to identify it as part of the trail.

We hope that you will look kindly on the request of The Amistad Committee, which is providing much of the information on sites in the New Haven area.

Sincerely,



John W. Shannahan
Director

DW/mc