NORTHBOUND FOR JUSTICE:
DWIGHT P. JANES AND LA AMISTAD

by

Maria T. Hileman

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Dr. Daniel Burt
Visiting Lecturer in
Liberal Studies
Wesleyan University
FOREWORD

My desire to write about New London's connections to the Amistad incident began when I first studied the details of the case in a class taught by Dr. Donald Rogers at Wesleyan University.

I took the course, which focused on issues of constitutional law, partly because the course description mentioned there would be study of the Amistad case. This was in the spring of 1997, shortly after Mystic Seaport announced it would build a replica of the schooner, but long before Stephen Spielberg announced he would do a major motion picture on the subject. Our class read Howard Jones's excellent and scholarly work Mutiny on the Amistad. I consider myself somewhat of an expert on local New London history, but I was amazed to learn in reading the book that a New London abolitionist, Dwight Plimpton Janes, played such a major role in the incident. Janes was one of the first to board the vessel, and was the first to recognize the blacks were not slaves but kidnapped Africans. He wrote a series of impassioned letters to abolitionists in New York and New Haven, who quickly reacted. His testimony Jan. 7, 1840 in the District Court trial in New Haven was important to the eventual decision to free the blacks.

I asked local historians, but no one had ever heard of Janes before. In Jones's book, it is clear that he is somewhat of a mystery to scholars. Aside from his signature on the key initial letters to Roger S. Baldwin and Joshua
Leavitt (which are in the files of the Amistad Research Center at Tulane University), he appears to have disappeared from history. Jones remarks that research at the Bieneke Library at Yale turned up no information about Janes. The letters were part of the collection of the American Missionary Association (AMA), the group which eventually took the blacks back to Sierra Leone and founded a mission there. The final letter from Janes in 1843 accompanied a donation to the mission, and was sent from Montreal.

Jones hypothesized in a footnote that Janes must have been in the revenue cutter service since he was able to get a spot on the reconnaissance vessel sent out to determine whether the Amistad was captured in international waters. Others, including author David Peschi, figured he must be a lawyer because he proposed legal arguments in his letters. My research demonstrated that he was neither:

In the summer of 1987, I began research in local archives to learn who Janes was, and, after amassing some information, I proposed that The Day, the local newspaper where I work, publish a series I would write about him.

I learned from land records that Janes sold property in 1838 to Charles Hobron in the name of the firm of Butler, Hurlbutt and Co., and was listed as a junior partner on the property deed. Further research identified the firm as a whaling mercantile business that operated in the late 1830s and 1840s in New London. I also learned that Janes owned a house on Alms Street (now Granite Street).
In the Connecticut State Library's genealogical records, I found his birth, marriage and death dates. His wife, Jane Winthrop Allyn Janes, was born in New London, which provided another clue.

Census records at New London Public Library were disappointing, showing that Janes and his wife did not live here in 1830 or 1840. This proved to be because they came in between 1832 and 1834 and left in early 1840.

I checked with various churches until the historian at the Second Congregational Church recognized the name. His wife, Betty Urban Morrison (since deceased) wrote a church history in 1985 that included a chapter on Janes's fight with the Reverend MacDonald over slavery. This proved to be the richest vein of local research.

The church records, reproduced from microfilm, contain the exact wording of the complaint Deacon Robert Coit filed against Janes, Janes's responses, and the minister's final statement before leaving the church. Dozens of other names were in the records, and I was able to identify these people through existing histories and genealogies, cemetery records and other sources.

The church records gave me other clues, like the name of the Ultimatum, an anti-slavery newspaper for which Janes was accused of writing, and the fact that the Janeses left New London in January, 1840 for the American Presbyterian Church in Montreal.
I found copies of the *Ultimatum* at the New London County Historical Society. The broadsheet listed Janes's name as one of the members of the New London Anti-Slavery Society. I found the article in the June, 1838 edition that raised Coit's ire. I also recognized a few other names that matched those in the Second Church records.

I was immediately convinced that there was a connection between the *Amistad* incident and Janes's suspension from the church because the timing of the two events nearly coincided.

By this point, I had nearly enough to write a local story. I hired a researcher from Montreal to search the American Presbyterian Church records, check municipal listings of property, and cemetery records.

Dale Plummer, a local historian and friend, happened to be vacationing in Montreal about that time, and was kind enough to look up Janes's obituary in *The Witness*, a religious newspaper of the time. The obituary described his decades of work with black fugitives, and dubbed him "the counsel to the Africans." Dale also found an article that described Janes's role as vice president of the Canadian Anti-Slavery Society, and details of a speech he gave in 1859 at a rally in Montreal after John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. In the speech, Janes mentioned the *Amistad* incident that had occurred 20 years earlier.

After writing the articles for *The Day*, which are attached, I realized that I had not only done primary research that resulted in new scholarship on a very timely subject, but I also had the makings for a novel.
I signed up for Dr. Daniel Burt's course in historical fiction in the spring of 1998 because I wanted to begin work on this novel as the project for my master's thesis.

Because he is such an obscure figure, it is almost impossible to say for certain what motivated Janes in his actions. We cannot know for sure why Coit bore such animosity toward him or why the Janes chose to leave New London. We can only guess that Janes was active in the Underground Railroad in Connecticut.

After the series was published, I continued researching the topic, finding letters Robert Coit wrote to his sister from Barbados, information about Savillion Haley's work to build homes for free blacks on Hempstead Street, and more information about New London's small band of radical abolitionists.

At Mystic Seaport, I found some account books of Butler, Hurlbutt and Co., though they date from after Janes's stint with the firm. I copied verbatim the accounts in the church records. I read Janes's and Haley's testimony before the District Court. Most of my later research, however, was less specific to the actual characters and more an effort to absorb myself in the period and gather color about what life in 1830s whaling era New London was like. I found details about Davie Lewis' slaughterhouse and William Bolles's bookstore, J.N. Harris's general store, the Mount Vernon House, Buttonwood Corner, and dozens of other details that figure in this book, which I hope add to its authenticity.
The only fictional characters in the book are the two blacks, Adam and Cudgoe. The possibility of Cudgoe's existence is suggested in Coit's letters to his sister, where he describes how he is settling into the easy life of Barbados ("this sweet isle"). Research into the colonial society of the island indicates that it was more common than not for whites there to have black mistresses. The existence of runaway slaves being harbored in New London is suggested in letters in the Hempstead Family Archives.

All the other characters in the book actually existed and were related to each other in the manner suggested, including the children and all the New Londoners who people the novel.

I have elected to write a novel instead of a thesis about Dwight Janes for several reasons. First, I thought that, in fairness, I had already done much of the work I would for a thesis for the articles in *The Day*.

More importantly, I think the story can best be told in this form because only the barest outlines of his unusual and important life are now available to us. I think it is interesting that, in addition to having such a dramatic impact on the blacks aboard the *Amistad*, the incident also seems to have altered the course of at least one white man's life.

Also, as projects editor at *The Day*, much of my regular work is very similar to the process of writing a thesis. I frequently work on one topic for months at the time, gathering material and writing multi-part series. Writing a novel, I felt, would be a new and broadening experience for me, and it has been.
Recent scholarship has paid close attention to the roles blacks played in gaining their own freedom, and the *Amistad* story is an excellent case in point. But here, also, is the untold story of a white man who defied all conventions, and who gave up a great deal because of his conviction that all men are created equal.

To finish this novel, I need to do research in St. Albans, Vt., where Janes was born and raised, and in Montreal, where he lived the last 40 years of his life. I suspect that research in Vermont will show that he grew up in a state that was a hotbed of abolition. The research in Canada will show that he was very active in helping American blacks who reached Canada, and that he remained committed to the cause of anti-slavery until the Civil War resolved the issue.

Much has been done; much remains to do.
Northbound for Justice:
Dwight P. Janes and La Amistad

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CHAPTER 1: Jan. 14, 1840

The snow swirled fiercely in the northeast wind, whipping across the street and settling like lacy ocean froth in the deep ruts left by the stagecoach as it pulled up to the Parade. Dwight Janes emerged from the vehicle, stretching his long legs and trying to gather his thoughts after napping in the jostling coach on the four-hour ride from New Haven to New London.

It was Tuesday evening Jan. 14, 1840, and Janes was home at last after a draining week-long stay in New Haven. He and his friend, Savillion Haley, had testified at the district court proceedings before Judge Andrew T. Judson about their roles in the affair of the schooner Amistad. Janes' mind, foggy with sleep and numb from cold, was still crowded with dreamlike images of the negroes he had seen in the New Haven jailhouse, the same faces he had studied the previous August aboard the Amistad when it arrived in New London. He was revolted by the spectacle in New Haven, of the crowds lining up to pay a nickel to ogle the dark-skinned strangers. The money, he knew, went to the cause of winning their freedom, but the price of their lost dignity seemed high. By what right were those men in jail? And, how could their kidnapping and misery during the passage from Africa be condoned?

The tall masts of brigs and schooners loomed along the river, ghostly in the falling snow. Janes picked up his valise, put his back to the ships, and
trudged up State and Main streets in the direction of home. His wife Jane would be waiting, he knew, along with his nieces, Nancy and Sarah, to welcome him. He had tucked under his arm a fancy parasol he had bought for Jane for $3 from a milliner in New Haven. It was an expensive gift, especially right after Christmas, but one he knew she would appreciate. The thought of his wife sent a sudden pang through him, for he knew the decision they had reached over the Christmas holiday would be weighing heavily on her now, as it was on him. He had asked her on Christmas Day to leave this city, which her family had helped to found and where their stillborn son lay buried beneath the gathering snow in the darkened Third Burial Ground. Near the infant lay the body of her beloved older sister, Rebecca, who had died two years ago in 1837 at the age of 36. The two girls, ages 13 and 14, were Rebecca's. The graveyard, opened in 1835, was new, but Janes was feeling old tonight.

He considered, again, the irony of his wife's position. Her illustrious ancestor, the Rev. Gurdon Saltonstall, had sunk the family's Puritan roots deep in this seacoast city in 1687. And now, she was married to a man who was at odds with the church over slavery, who had quarreled bitterly and publicly with the young minister, and been excommunicated.

Joseph Blackburn's portrait of Gurdon Saltonstall, stern and proper, his right hand tucked into the breast of his coat, hung in their parlor on Alms Street, and Janes had frequently pondered it during the past four tempestuous months. He recalled the story of how Saltonstall had censured a young couple
for sitting under a tree on the Sabbath. What would Saltonstall think of his
great-great-great granddaughter's choice of a husband?

A strict Puritan, Saltonstall was an intimate friend of Fitz-John Winthrop,
the son of John Winthrop Jr. The elder Winthrop had selected the site of New
London in 1646 because of its potential as a natural deep-water port, and
started the early settlement known as Nameaug. Winthrop served as the
state's first governor, and John Wait followed his father in that role.
Saltonstall, who ministered to the city's founders at the First Church of Christ
in the city, succeeded the Winthrop's and served for 17 years as governor.
Saltonstall proposed the "Saybrook Platform" in 1708, which for the next 111
years allowed the Congregational Church to remain the official state church in
Connecticut.

Saltonstall had spent much of his ministry struggling with the
Rogerenes, a dissident sect similar to the Quakers, who disrupted church
services on a regular basis. The Rogerenes objected to being taxed for the
salaries of ministers and teachers, refused to observe rules against working on
the Sabbath, and the organizational stricture of the church, although they
were faithful to the doctrines. And yet, 150 years later, Janes found himself
allied in his anti-slavery stance with John Rogers and William Bolles,
physical and spiritual descendents of the Rogerenes.

His wife's family had fallen upon hard times in the last generation due
to losses suffered when the British burned New London in 1781 in the
American Revolution. The city was just beginning to recover, when it was
blockaded during the War of 1812. The Saltonstalls, as well as the
Winthrops, had been suspected of having Tory sympathies during the war, and neither family held quite the prominence they did in the early years. Nonetheless, New London was their home, her home, and, he had hoped, his home.

The shops were still open now at 9 p.m., the doors closed against the gathering snowstorm. The windows, lit by oil lamps within, glittered merrily, like the eyes of a giggling child. As Janes passed the mercantile in which he was a partner, he glanced quickly into the shop. He saw one of his partners, Charles Butler Jr., hunched over an account book. Butler, who had spent several years at sea in 1820s and '30s as captain of the Wabash, often worked late hours. He, no doubt, was working overtime this week to make up for Janes' prolonged absence. Janes lowered his head and hurried on, not wanting to engage Butler in conversation at this late hour, especially about business.

At the City Hotel, an elegantly dressed couple stood framed in the doorway, waiting for their bags to be delivered from the steamboat landing. Suddenly, Janes heard his name called out from across the street. "Dwight, what word do you have on the proceedings in New Haven?" shouted William Bolles from the door of his bookstore. Janes crossed the street, gingerly sidestepping horse droppings and a squealing pig that was lying in the glow of the lighted shopfronts. Janes took off his overcoat and laid it near the stove in the corner, where it glittered with dampness. Bolles beckoned him to a chair at a corner table on which books were stacked, and sat down nearby.

"Did you testify?" Bolles asked anxiously. "Yes," Janes sighed. "Savillion and I both testified to the conversation I had in the ship's cabin with
the Spaniard Ruiz. Ruiz told me -- in English -- that only the cabin boy Antonio could speak Spanish, and the rest could not because they were 'just from Africa.' Those were the precise words -- 'Just from Africa.' Judge Judson said he was convinced by our statements, and the negro leader, Cinque, spoke most eloquently, through an interpreter. He is an impressive man, and the courtroom was still as death when he spoke. Yesterday, Judson ruled they are free men, but he ordered them returned to Africa by the government. I fear either a trick or an appeal."

Bolles offered Janes a glass of lemon soda. The local newspaper had carried some accounts of the trial, but they were general in nature. "You have done well, Brother Janes. I knew the outcome must be positive for our cause because the Grampus left the dock today." Janes looked puzzled, and Bolles explained that the USS Grampus, under the command of Lieutenant John S. Paine, had been tied up in New London for the past two days. "We are informed that Van Buren intended to whisk the negroes away to Cuba before an appeal could be filed, in the event Judson ruled for the government." Bolles reached for a copy of The Emancipator, and handed it to Janes. "You must be tired. Take this home. We will talk soon about an article you can write for The Ultimatum about the trial."

Janes shook his head. The snow had stopped falling outside, he noticed. He was eager to get home. He ran his hand over his balding forehead, still wet with snow, and brushed his fingers through his full, dark beard.

"No, Mr. Bolles. I won't be writing again, at least not here in New London. Jane and I have resolved to return to Montreal. We must seek out a
church where we are drawn to communion and fellowship instead of dissension."

As Bolles argued, Janes gathered up his packages, taking special care with the parasol. "It's no use, William. I have decided. Please tell no one until I have spoken with Charles and Samuel."

On the walk home, Janes pondered the events of the past four months that had been set in motion by the northward juggernaut of La Amistad. He, too, would soon be heading north. He hoped both he and the imprisoned Africans would eventually find their way to a place where finding serenity and peace of mind was not a daily challenge.
Chapter 2: Aug. 29, 1839

Janes averted his face to avoid the fetid stench of rum and foul breath that burst like a gale out of the sailor's mouth. The sailor leaned across the counter, eagerly and drunkenly recounting the events of the past few hours he'd spent in a dockside saloon. Janes listened in fascination to the man's description of the battered black sloop that was tied up at the Lawrence Wharf with its cargo of half-starved negroes. Janes carefully fitted the whaleman, whose feet smelled no better than his mouth, with a new pair of round-toed pegged shoes. The sailor was signed up to sail in three days time aboard the whaleship Chelsea, captained by Franklin Smith and owned by the firm of Havens and Smith. Janes' brother-in-law, Major General Thomas Williams, was a principal in the firm but was temporarily inactive because he was serving in the state legislature in Hartford.

Ordinarily, Janes would have pumped the sailor for details of the provisioning of the Chelsea and the plans for the whaling voyage to Desolation Island. But today, he was itching to close up the chandlery and make his way down to the waterfront to see for himself this "pirate ship" that had the local populace and press all astir. He'd read about it with intense interest in the morning's paper, but had been tied up most of the day on pressing business matters. His own fledgling whaling mercantile firm, Butler, Hurlbutt and Co., was barely a year old, and its success rested on the hard work and long hours put in by Janes and his partners.
Janes was a junior partner in the firm. He had moved to New London with his wife in 1832 from Montreal, and they had joined the newly-formed Second Congregational Church in August, 1835. By the end of the year, church membership had grown to 107.

A native of St. Albans, Vt., Janes was an ambitious man, and the rapid success of the mercantile business in which he was engaged held great promise for the future. The wooden pegged boots that were sold at the shop were immensely popular among the sailors, and few went to sea without a visit to the shop. A successful merchant in New London could quickly rise to the position of a whaling master, engaging in outfitting vessels, and eventually build his own warehouse, wharf, and whaling vessel.

As soon as the man had paid for his boots, Janes posted a sign on the doorway to the company offices and rushed out into the late August sunshine. He almost choked on the dust at the intersection of Bank and State streets, which was stirred up by the comings and goings of buggies, animals and people, the pulsing hub of this prosperous whaling port. La Amistad, the sailor had called her -- a Spanish vessel, no doubt, but she was no friend to the negroes aboard her, he thought pensively. As he rounded the corner onto Water Street, which ran along the piers, he wove his way through casks of sperm and whale oil, stacks of whale bone, and piles of produce waiting to be loaded onto ships, the Chelsea among them. He spotted the sailor he had just fitted with shoes, busy caulking her seams, as riggers worked with the hundreds of feet of rope lying in heaps on the shoreline. Janes imagined that his young friend, Henry Havens, was more than a little busy this day outfitting
Chelsea and her crew for the voyage. He yearned for the day when his own
firm would outfit a ship for a whaling voyage, instead of merely providing
provisions for such ventures.

After walking several blocks, Janes spotted the double masts and tattered
sails of what must be La Amistad alongside the dock behind the federal
Customs House. On the shore side of the Spanish vessel, and docked at the
same pier, was a federal revenue cutter, bristling with uniformed navy men.

"Merciful God," he thought, as he edged his way to the front of the
small crowd near the vessel. "How could this bashed up bucket of a ship have
mastered the mildest of ocean swells, let alone The Race, as decrepit as she
is?" La Amistad listed slightly to starboard, its rigging tangled and defeated,
the blue sky peeking threw gaps in the sagging sails. Suddenly, Janes felt a
tug at his left elbow.

"Are you still running that Anti-Slavery Library?" John Jay Hyde
shouted into Janes' ear. Hyde, a short, portly man and editor of The New
London Gazette and General Advertiser, was slightly hard of hearing and
frequently overcompensated for his shortcoming by blaring his words. He
was a difficult man to converse privately with. As if to emphasize his point, a
seagull shrieked overhead and dove to scavenge amid some vegetables left
rotting in the sun.

Janes nodded soberly, his attention still riveted on the ship. He didn't
trust Hyde or his motives, and deeply resented the fact that Hyde refused to
publish anti-slavery material in his newspaper. "Well, then," Hyde continued,
undeterred. "You might want to get a close-up look at the cargo on this particular ship. Come with me."

Despite misgivings, Janes hesitated only a second. Not believing his good fortune, he followed Hyde along the dock, where the newspaperman exchanged a few words with a customs officer stationed near La Amistad. As he climbed over the barnacle-encrusted stern of the vessel, Janes' foot brushed against a soft object. He glanced down, expecting to see a pile of linen, but recoiled in horror at the dead black face that gazed up at him, swollen, intense, and accusing. Hyde took the discovery in stride.

"Oh, that poor devil. I saw him yesterday and tried to give him some water, but he'd have none of it. Nine of 'ems died already, according to what I could get from their leader. They were drinking sea water. This one must've died during the night. I'll see they dispose of the body."

Janes stared at the man -- the gap-toothed mouth hanging open, the filthy fingers already frozen in rigor mortis. He was bare-chested and thin, but, incongruously, Janes noticed, he was wearing silk pantaloons of the finest Spanish design -- a bright purple fabric with gold stitching that glinted in the afternoon sunlight. Flies trundled leisurely across his thick brown lips and into and out of his wide nostrils. Janes thought morbidly that, at this rate, there would be little work left for the maggots.

"How many are there? I mean, how many are left?" Janes asked as he worked to regain his composure. "'Bout 30 or so, best I can figure," Hyde responded. "But don't expect much more conversation from them than you'll get from him. I tried for about 20 minutes yesterday to get some information, but they don't understand a word of English or Spanish. Doesn't that seem
odd -- black slaves from Cuba who don't speak either English or Spanish? Makes you wonder."

Janes had already heard this assessment of the language skills of the blacks aboard *La Amistad*, but he was surprised at the significance Hyde gave to the fact. Cocking his head to one side, Janes looked at Hyde with narrowed, gleaming eyes. "Mr. Hyde, I wouldn't have taken you for a man with such sympathies," he ventured.

Hyde inhaled sharply and fairly bellowed, panting like a bull. "Damn it, Janes. Don't start that foolishness. I'm just telling you what I heard and saw with my own eyes. I'm trained to do that. You know I don't have much truck with you, Rogers, Bolles and the rest of your band of radicals. Let's get moving."

As Janes started down the stairs to the cabin, Hyde glanced back at the crowd, which was no longer looking in their direction. His eye was caught by activity beyond the crowd on the rear steps of the grey stone Custom House. A small knot of official-looking gentlemen in suitcoats was heading for the pier.

"Too late!" Hyde exclaimed. "I have to get over to the *Washington* to hear how the Van Buren administration expects to get out of this mess! This is a little issue he doesn't need to blow up right after the financial panic two years ago! And that's just what's going to happen."

Abandoning the promised tour, Hyde hustled off *La Amistad* as fast as he could trundle, with Janes in tow. As the group approached the pier, Janes noticed that among them was Savillion Haley, a gregarious local merchant
and fellow abolitionist. Haley walked with a limp, and today he was leaning on a cane. Aboard the Washington, the revenue cutter that had captured La Amistad three days earlier off Montauk Point, Hyde and Janes introduced themselves quickly to Norris Willcox and Judge Andrew T. Judson. Willcox, the U.S. marshal in New Haven and Judson, the federal district judge for Connecticut, had left for New London the previous day, shortly after receiving a report from Lt. Thomas Gedney, commander of the Washington, about the capture. Judson took the two of them in calmly, with a clear indifference. He was obviously focused on the task at hand.

Janes was alarmed when he heard Judson's name, and Haley scurried over to confirm his suspicions. Judson was the same judge who six years earlier had managed to get a law passed by the the legislature prohibiting Canterbury schoolmistress Prudence Crandall from operating a school for blacks girls in that tiny village about two hours drive north of New London. "There couldn't be a worse choice for those poor souls," Haley murmured.

As the hearing unfolded in the cabin of the Washington, Janes grew more agitated. His suspicions had been heightened by Hyde's words and demeanor, but what he was witnessing stirred his passions. Two Spaniards, Don Jose Ruiz and Don Pedro Montes, emphatically stated that the blacks were their property, slaves who had mutinied aboard ship off the coast of Cuba about three months earlier. They claimed a cargo of between $30,000 and $40,000 and 53 slaves, of whom only 39 now survived. The crew included the master, two white men as deck hands, and two blacks, one a cook and one a cabin boy. The blacks were both slaves of the master. On
the third night out of Cuba, three of the slaves, including the large one they
called Cinque, murdered the master and the black cook. The two white
seamen escaped in a small boat.

After taking over the ship, the negroes forced the Spaniards to steer
toward the east, in the direction from which the sun rose. The Spaniards did
so during the day, but at night steered to the west, taking La Amistad on a
zigzag course toward the northwest.

Cinque, a handsome, powerfully-built young man with a regal bearing,
was brought in wearing manacles. The alleged leader of the slave revolt,
Cinque was wearing a red flannel shirt and duck pantaloons similar to those
Janes had noticed on the dead negro aboard La Amistad. Cinque stared
brazenly with undisguised hatred at the Spaniards, and indicated with hand
movements that he feared he would be hanged. Judson made no effort to
comfort him, a response that sent a cold shiver down Janes' back. He placed a
hand on Haley's knee to restrain his hot-headed friend from speaking out.
After studying the papers Ruiz handed him, Judson pronounced the
documents sound, and said they supported the Spaniards' story. La Amistad,
he said, was legally carrying 53 negroes, or "ladinos," as they were described
in the documents, from Havana to Puerto Principe, Cuba. The blacks had
mutinied, killing the owner of the vessel and pirating the ship.

Judson sweated profusely in the warm quarters of the cabin. His head
was bowed as he shuffled papers, and his reading glasses threatened to slip
off over the tip of his long nose. His efforts to engage Cinque in even
rudimentary conversation were unsuccessful. Janes took advantage of the lull
to strike up a conversation with Ruiz, who was squatting nearby. Ruiz was smiling broadly, clearly attempting to ingratiate himself with any of the Americans in the room. Gesturing toward Cinque, Janes asked if any of the other negroes could speak English. "A few words," Ruiz replied, in halting English. "Spanish?" Janes asked casually. "No, they were just from Africa," Ruiz responded.

Janes and Haley exchanged glances, and Ruiz, promptly sensing the mistake he had made, gestured nervously and started to move away. Janes stopped him, and asked for more details about the negroes. Ruiz mentioned a few general items, all material he had already told the authorities. Then he hurried away, resuming his squatting position near the front of the cabin where the federal officials were seated. Periodically, he glanced back at Janes and Haley.

"That is the same thing the cabin boy told Hyde," Haley whispered urgently to Janes when the two were together again. "Hyde told me himself." Haley went on to relate how Hyde had stopped him earlier in the day when he entered the newspaper office to place an advertisement for paint and varnish brushes. Hyde, he said, seemed agitated about the conversation he had had with Antonio, the 16-year-old negro cabin boy from _La Amistad_.

"I was trying to tell him how I had pope's head, common and fancy dusters for sale, and he kept interrupting me about this negro boy. He said the boy speaks Spanish and led him to believe the blacks are not slaves but were kidnapped from Africa. You can see, Dwight, that this is true. It would be the cruelest inhumanity to put them into slavery now. We must act,
Dwight, or all we have proclaimed in this city about the evil institution will be hypocrisy."

Janes sat with his eyes glazed through the rest of the hearing. He thought of approaching Hyde, but decided against it. That night, he tossed and turned, waking his wife, Jane, repeatedly. The next morning, he went to the office weighed down by the enormity of the deed ahead of him. Writing such a letter, he sensed, would change his life. He had taken risks before in anonymous articles about the evils of slavery for *The Ultimatum*, an underground paper that William Bolles published. He knew many of his fellow citizens already mistrusted him, thinking him a firebrand who would eventually ignite passions over the slavery issue.

His wife's family, in particular, wanted him to steer clear of these treacherous shoals. His brother-in-law, Capt. Francis Allyn, was mayor of New London, and would certainly advise against it. Such an act would move him beyond the ranks of those who agitated in the underground press for a room in the court house or church for anti-slavery advocates to pray and pontificate. It was another thing, entirely, to invite the attention of the national forces of abolition to his adopted city. Janes thought of how the new minister and his fellow congregants at the Second Congregational Church would react, and of the physical violence that been enacted against Garrison in Boston and the Tappan brothers in New York.

He sensed in Judson's words and actions the gathering storm of the U.S. government's plan to support the Spaniards' claim because of the international implications of the case. Also, he knew President Van Buren
was running for a second term and would not want to antagonize Southern voters. He tried to dismiss such thoughts as nonproductive and damaging to his resolve.

As he reached the lower end of State Street, he saw Haley leaning against the huge sycamore at Buttonwood Corner, a common meeting place. They spoke as they approached the chandlery about the letter Janes would write, of the points that must be made. Janes sent Haley off to meet with Bolles, Nathaniel Belden, Increase Wilson, and the other local abolitionists about raising funds for a court fight to free the blacks.

Judson had ordered the blacks held on charges of murder, mutiny and piracy. They were to be sent to New Haven to await a hearing, and the abolitionists knew they must act quickly.
Janes and Butler closed up the office early. Janes hesitated to say much to Charles about the incident on *La Amistad*. A profoundly religious man, Butler was the first to be selected as a deacon of the new church four years earlier. While his son served on the executive committee of the New London Anti-Slavery Society, the elder Butler felt that slavery should be encouraged to die a slow death, and that prayer was the most powerful weapon opponents should wield against it. He noted that slavery was being gradually outlawed in Connecticut, although several more years would pass before the last black man was legally free. Meanwhile, Butler discouraged talk of politics both in the shop and in the Sunday School. "We are selling shoes to sailors and saving souls for God," he told Janes in his plain, direct manner.

While Janes could muster feelings bordering on hatred for the likes of Hyde and even the new minister, the Rev. James M. MacDonald, and most certainly the pompous and hypocritical Robert Coit, Butler's intransigence only caused him mild irritation. Butler, he knew, was neither a blusterer nor a buffoon. He genuinely believed in the Lord's intervention in earthly causes. Janes knew in his heart that Butler's was a genuine and sainted state that he could barely contemplate, much less begin to strive for. Jesus did not overthrow Rome, Butler observed, but his words eventually led to its demise. He believed the same would hold true for the institution of slavery. Butler had
supported Janes's efforts in the church to offer prayers for slaves, although he stopped far short of militancy. He had discouraged Janes writing for the anti-slavery press.

Nonetheless, Butler had heard the open discussion in the streets during the nearly four days *La Amistad* had been in port. Hyde's paper had printed several stories, baldly editorializing that the blacks were not slaves and should not be treated as cargo. While much was left unstated between them, Butler liked Janes for his perseverance and dedication, both to the business and to the church. He had taken Janes on as a junior partner in Williams and Haven seven years earlier when he arrived with his wife from Montreal because he was beholden to Jane's brother-in-law, Major General Williams, for the gift of land Williams had pledged at the corner of Jay and Hempstead streets for the new church. When he and Hurlbut started their own firm in 1838, they invited Janes to join them. The church, started in 1835, was now finished, and Butler had grown fond of Janes over the years, despite his high-strung, impulsive nature and glaring lack of empathy for opposing points of view. Janes was a man who would argue a point long after the patience of his listeners was exhausted. In a town like New London, where men from all points of the globe mingled and colorful personalities abounded, Janes was far from the only eccentric who walked the streets.

When he and "old man Hurlbutt" started their own firm in 1838, they invited Janes to join them. Captain Hurlbutt was renowned in town for bringing back from a long-ago voyage to Santo Domingo a tiny Spanish abbess and a sweet-sounding bell that once sounded at a nunnery. The nun
soon left for warmer climes, with little explanation. The bell was purchased by the Episcopal Church, and was later given to the Baptist Church. Each time the bells pealed from the church towers, as they did when vessels arrived in port, Hurlbutt would chortle: "My little Spanish nun is singing!" The bells alerted New Londoners waiting for family and friends who were away on voyages to head for the waterfront. A community celebration would break out, as hundreds turned out to watch hundreds of barrels of oil being unloaded, hear of their exploits and cheer the heroes of the port on their return.

Butler had seen Janes talking with Haley that morning at Buttonwood Corner. Twenty years Janes' senior, Butler sensed that some pressing issue involving La Amistad was preoccupying the younger man through most of the day that he spent bent over the ledger books. "Will we see you at services this Sunday?" Butler asked as they parted near the Union Bank on State Street. "I don't know," Janes smiled wanly. "I have not found attendance uplifting of late. You know that listening to Reverend MacDonald's sermons makes me cringe. Ever since he rejected our appeal for prayer meetings about slavery, I have found it difficult to listen to his opinions."

Butler watched Janes walk away, his thin frame leaning forward determinedly with each step, as though willing his way home would get him there faster. "Am I wrong to discourage his activism?" Butler pondered, a pattern of thought forming that was familiar from his musings about his own
son, who was equally headstrong. "There must be allowances for agents of change, but how to hold the center in place?" He would, he vowed, pray on it.

Janes quickly covered the six blocks to his Alms Street home just north of the city's oldest burial ground. In this four-acre plot lay the city's founders, many related through blood and marriage to his wife. Though his thoughts frequently lingered on the people who lay beneath the weathering stones, and particularly on what they would think of modern-day events, today he was very much in the present. As he walked, he composed in his head the letter he would write to Roger S. Baldwin, a New Haven lawyer and abolitionist, whom he had met the previous spring at a meeting of the state Anti-Slavery Society in Hartford. He moved his lips as he walked, drawing curious glances from passers-by that did not register with him. At times he even spoke out loud, testing and discarding words with each step.

Bolting up the front stairs and entering the front room of the Greek revival-style house, Janes settled quickly at his desk, stared for a moment at the floral wallpaper, and began to write:

New London, Aug. 30th, 1839

Dear Sir:

I take the liberty to write you on a subject which I think should deeply
interest the benevolent. You have seen the account of the schooner brought in here with the negroes on board. The facts are these as far as we can gather from the story of the two Spaniards. They left Havana for Principi two or three months since, with a valuable cargo of assorted goods, worth thirty or forty thousand dollars, and fifty-three slaves. The crew consisted of master, two white men as foremost hands, two blacks, one as cook and one as cabin boy, both slaves of the master. The second or third night out, three of the slaves rose and murdered the master and cook. The two white seamen escaped in a small boat. The cabin boy and two Spaniards who were passengers were saved. The blacks took possession of the vessel and made signs to the old Spaniard to steer from the place were the sun rose. They did so in the day time, but at night he put her bow to the west, so that they lost about what they had gained. The prizemaster has made his claim for salvage in the vessel and cargo. The negroes by direction of the District Judge, are in the hands of the marshal and are to leave here for New Haven in a sloop chartered for the purpose as soon as the weather will permit. They are to be tried for murder before the Circuit Court on the 17th of next month. Nine of them have died in consequence of drinking salt water, etc. The schooner's name is *La Amistad* and her appearance is so rusty that we should think her the vessel that brought them from Africa, were it not that her papers show her to have cleared from Havana on several previous voyages this season. The Spaniard who owns the most of them told one person that he bought them from a slave ship and took them directly into the schooner. At any rate, they cannot have at Havana long enough to become subjects of Spain. None of them can speak anything but their native language, and as the slave trade is illegal by the Spanish laws, it seems clear that this schooner was engaged in an unlawful business, and that the blacks had a perfect right to get their liberty by killing the crew and taking possession of the vessel. (I mean a legal right.)

The abolitionists here have directed me to request that you will find some old Africans in your vicinity, who can speak the native languages so that you may learn the facts from them. At all events, that you get yourself authorized to act for them, and put in a claim for vessel and cargo as truly and legally their property. We will get all the information we can and write you
again. Please let me know by return mail whether you will undertake this
business and what you think of it. The Abolitionists here will cheerfully bear
their proportion of the expenses.

The person to whom the Spaniard said he took the slaves from a slave
ship is a Mr. Owen of the firm of Holt and Owen on Front near Fulton Street
of your city. He has formerly resided at Principe and is well acquainted with
them both. He was here to bury his mother, had an interview with the
Spaniards, and afterwards told several persons what was said to him. I went
to see him, but found he had left. You had better call on him at once and get
what information you can, especially on that point, as that will unquestionably
establish the charge of piracy against the schooner and perhaps against the 2
Spaniards. You had better use some little skill that he may not suspect your
object.

In haste and very truly yours,
Dwight P. Janes

As the ink bled slowly into the thirsty paper, Janes knew he was taking
an irrevocable step, but he felt suddenly empowered by the simple act of
writing from his heart. He could not write fast enough to keep up with his
thoughts. When he was finished, he copied the letter to send to the Reverend
Joshua Leavitt of New York, a Yale graduate, lawyer and editor of the
abolitionist newspaper *The Emancipator*.

As he was finishing, his niece Sarah ran into the room. At 13, Sarah
was a full of life and pranks as her older sister, Nancy, was sober and serious.
Sarah was his favorite, for her light-heartedness distracted and soothed him.
He and Jane had no children of their own, and these visits from his orphaned
nieces were much anticipated.
"Uncle Dwight," she chided him with a pout. "I didn't even know you were home so early. Aunt Jane is readying the biscuits for dinner, and I have been bored. I am supposed to check for more tomatoes in the garden. Come see how many there are."

Janes put his arm around her waist and kissed her forehead. "Let me finish up here, and we'll go for a walk before dinner," he said. He was feverish with the energy unleashed by the letter, and he needed a walk. Sometimes, walking was the only way he could let off steam. He stuck his head into the kitchen to tell his wife and Nancy of their plans. As he and Sarah walked arm in arm down Federal Street to look at the mansions under construction on Huntington Street, he told her about the hearing on *La Amistad*, describing for her Cinque's proud figure and the frightened cabin boy, Antonio. He told her, also, about the letter he had just written.

"They will not like that at the church," she said, matter-of-factly. As she spoke, she nodded down Huntington Street toward the church, built in the popular Greek Revival style, with two-story Corinthian columns gracing the entryway. Janes had been one of the first members of the church that was now growing rapidly as prosperous merchants and whalers left the overcrowded and rundown First Church on upper State Street to pour their money and souls into the new faith community.

For all their commonality of faith and desire for unity, the congregation of the new church was split badly on the issues of slavery, temperance, and,
most recently, women's rights. Four of the ten members of the New London County Anti-Slavery Society, including Janes and the younger Butler, were church members. But others, particularly the wealthy and influential whaling agents Robert Coit, Benjamin Brown and Thomas Williams, were adamant that the divisive issue be kept at bay, argued in the streets, if need be, but not in the new temple of peace.

"Mr. Coit has threatened to leave the congregation if you get them to raise the issue of slavery again," Sarah added. After a pause, she went on. "I say, let him go. He is a hateful man who would not fight to release others from bondage, men whose souls are a dear to the Lord's as his is." Janes smiled at her youthful outburst.

"Ah, but should slavery be suddenly ended, the cotton trade with the Southern ports would be hurt, and Mr. Coit might not be such a rich man. Isn't that true, my dear? What do the ladies in the Sewing Circle think of that?" Janes prompted.

"They don't talk of such things," Sarah sighed. "Except for Aunt Jane, sometimes, but she is not so bold as you. I would like to be in the meetings where the men discuss such issues. it would be much more interesting than making samplers."

Janes reached out to tousle her hair, but Sarah had spotted a lamb ambling aimlessly down the center of the street. She ran to the animal, and pulled it over to the gutter. Kneeling, she put her arms around the lamb's head
and drew it into a fierce embrace. "I should think, Uncle, that Mr. Coit is wrong and needs to be told so," she continued, running her small hands through the coarse wool of the sheep's back. "And I think you should tell him!"

She released the lamb and fell back into step with her uncle. As they neared the corner of Broad and Huntington streets, the lamb took off at a sudden trot toward the center of the street. Just then, a buggy careened around the corner. The horses managed to sidestep the lamb, but the creature was crushed across the midsection by the metal carriage wheels.

As Janes and Sarah watched, transfixed, the driver leaped down, stooped over the lamb to examine it, and quickly pulled a revolver from under the carriage seat. He shot the hapless animal in the head, and pulled it to the opposite side of the road before climbing back up to his seat. "These damn animals are a menace," he shouted angrily to Janes and several others who had gathered. "This city needs to get civilized and stop letting livestock roam free. This would never happen in New York or Boston or even in New Haven."

As the carriage rolled off toward Montville, Sarah, who had been too startled to react, burst into tears. Janes tried to comfort her, but his mind moved inexplicably to the staring face of the dead black man he had nearly trampled aboard La Amistad. Where, he wondered, had they buried the man in the purple pantaloons? And how could his soul rest in peace after such a tormented end?
Chapter 4: Aug. 31, 1839

A sorry state of affairs when she couldn't seem to find time to get flowers to her own mother's gravesite. Leaving the girls to the baking, Jane Winthrop Allyn Janes stepped into the backyard to gather some late blooming flowers to place at the new cemetery. She cut blue asters and sunflowers, plucked her second-best bonnet from the peg near the front door, and walked up Broad to Williams Street.

The city's Third Burying Ground was only a ten-minute walk. The spot had been dedicated only four years earlier, but already there were more than 80 graves here. Her mother, Rebecca Saltonstall Mumford Allyn, had died in 1811 at the family homestead in North Groton, when Jane was only eight, and had originally been laid to rest in the Saltonstall plot in the Second Burying Ground. The bodies, except for those who had died of the yellow fever, were being gradually disinterred and moved to the new cemetery.

Jane knelt before her mother's grave, divided the bouquet, and gently laid it on the ground. She closed her eyes, trying as she always did to recall her mother's face, but the image had faded with the years. Her best-preserved memory of her mother was how she would position each child against the door frame, and notch the spot to mark his height, carefully marking each child's initial beside the mark. The marks were still there in the old Mumford homestead in North Groton, with the initials of all the children, F.A., A.A.,

"Mama, I'm trying hard to help raise 'Becca's girls," she prayed. "When Lucius died so young of the pleurisy leaving her with those three toddlers, I thought God could never punish her more."

Tears streamed down Jane's face as she remembered her older sister, first as a shy bride with her head bowed in a half-run down the steps at St. James Episcopal in New London, and later as a joyful, but exceedingly tired young mother. Rebecca and Lucius Foote, an attorney, had lived in Portage, N.Y., but their brief marriage lasted less than four years before Lucius died. Rebecca moved the family to Cayuga, N.Y. to be nearer relatives, where they lived another ten years. Rebecca died in May 1837, of inflammatory rheumatism. In the end, Jane's beloved, 36-year-old older sister could not stand or get out of bed, and was frequently blind in one or both eyes. Jane and her other sister, Abigail, had spent months nursing Rebecca, to no avail. Her death brought back to Jane in detail the death of her own mother a generation before, and she had seen in the faces of her three young nieces that day the same fear and loneliness that she and her older sisters had shared.

The girls were being raised in Cayuga by Miss Lucina Foote, their father's favorite sister, but they all delighted in making long visits to their mother's relatives in New London and North Groton. With its daily parade of sailors and sea captains from the far reaches of the world, New London was far more cosmopolitan and interesting than rural upstate New York. Nearly every week brought the arrival or departure of a whaling vessel, along with the regular traffic of steamboats, sailboats and ferries.
The girls' official guardian was Captain Francis Allyn, Jane's older half-brother, but they usually stayed with Jane and Dwight when they came to Connecticut. The youngest, Sarah, was particularly attached to Uncle Dwight and Aunt Jane, while the eldest, Nancy, seemed to have attached to no one and to have aged prematurely after her mother's death. She was responsible to a fault, and uncompromising in her attitudes. When a neighbor boy developed a crush on Sarah and left her love notes under a rock in the front yard at Aunt Jane's, Nancy worried that her sister's morals were being compromised. At 14, she wore her hair pulled back in a severe bun and her near-sightedness gave her a look of frightening intensity.

Jane's oldest sister, Abigail, lived in Montreal with her husband, Lewis March Janes, Dwight's older brother. Jane had met Dwight in Montreal while living with them during the early years of their marriage. Jane and Dwight had moved back to New London in 1832 when the whaling boom was moving into full swing, bringing with it the promise of quick fortunes for industrious young men. Jane's brother, Francis, was a case in point. Captain Allyn had grown rich from shipping and was one of the most respected men in the community. He had been a master on trans-Atlantic voyages, and was an intimate friend of the Marquis de Lafayette, a story he delighted in telling at family gatherings. In 1824, Lafayette had spurned an invitation to sail on a U.S. government vessel in favor of traveling to America with Allyn on his ship, the Cadmus.
After 11 years of marriage, two miscarriages, and a stillborn son, Jane and Dwight had reconciled themselves to their childless state. They poured their energies into the service of church. The Ladies Sewing Circle met in Jane’s parlor on Tuesday afternoons, and the women and girls handstitched items that would be sent to the foreign missions on vessels bound out of New London. Jane was grateful that her husband’s sense of adventure, as trying as it could sometimes be, was of a more domestic and political nature. Dwight had never shown any desire to go whaling or sailing, despite his keen interest in the stories told by crusty whaling captains on their return. Dwight suffered violently from seasickness, a predisposition that made their twice monthly ferry trips up the usually placid Thames River to North Groton a tortuous experience for him. Dwight called himself a "Green Mountain Boy" in reference to his native Vermont, often remarking that he felt more at home in the woods than along the coastline.

"I would prefer a quiet ramble in the pasture lands of Waterford to a Nantucket sleighride," Dwight told the girls, referring to the phrase whalers used to describe the adventure of riding in a small boat attached by rope to a harpooned, wounded whale. The smell of whale oil being tried turned Janes’ stomach, and he would sometimes come home at noontime nauseated from the stench of dead fish and whale oil that wafted through the town from the docks.

Jane secretly thought her husband more suited by nature to the ministry than to either whaling or business. His older brother, Jonathan, was a Congregational minister. When they were first married, she had urged him in
that direction, but he had decided, instead, to follow Lewis into the mercantile trade. Dwight had a practical, down-to-earth streak and an impatience about getting things done that, she now understood, would war with the steady rhythms and slow pace of pastoral life.

On reaching the grave of her stillborn child, Jane was not surprised to find yellow touch-me-nots planted there, though she hadn't visited the spot in nearly a month. She knew Dwight wandered to the cemetery often, and would have chosen not to mention a recent visit out of concern for her feelings. Their stillborn son, Frederick, had been named for Jane's older brother, who drowned during the winter of 1805 at the age of five. Frederick had been taken out skating with his father and uncles on a pond near Gallup Hill. They had found the boy floating face down in a deep section, where the ice had cracked. Jane's father, Robert Allyn, had never forgiven himself for his carelessness with his eldest son. "I am to blame entirely," he'd told Rebecca on her deathbed.

Jane and Dwight's infant's tombstone was a tiny one, with only the initials, F.J., and the inscription "Reserved for the angels" carved on it. She often thought how the two boys, one the uncle of the other, were represented now only by these initials -- one on the door frame in North Groton and the other here in the burial ground. Frederick had been born in 1834, two years after they had settled in New London. During her pregnancy Jane was happier than ever in her life, believing that she was finally going to know the joys of wet kisses and sticky fingers. The days after Frederick's death that spring still seemed unreal to her -- as though she watched them through a window into
another world. She recalled the long, painful labor that oddly seemed somehow "right" to her, even though other women had described the process to her as horrific. She recalled her shuddering relief as the boy's wide shoulders were born, after great struggle. Then came the look of panic on Elizabeth Avery's face that was her first clue that something was amiss. Elizabeth worked to untangle the cord, grey and throbbing from around the child's tiny neck, but it was too late. He was a perfect child, yet one who would not breathe -- one whose flight to heaven began with her first birth pangs and ended before his sojourn on earth had even begun.

He had his father's high forehead and long fingers. She held him to her for nearly an hour before they insisted on breaking her grip. Not a day passed when she did not think of him lying in the earth and recall how his skin slowly cooled against her bosom.

As Jane walked down the steep granite steps leading from the cemetery, Jane noticed Charlotte Coit gesturing from the street. Charlotte and her husband, Robert, were leading members the Second Church. Coit was a deacon, like Charles Butler, but Coit and Dwight had clashed on more than one occasion, particularly over slavery. Coit was president of the New London County Temperance Society, and was as fervid about that cause as Dwight was about slavery. Jane knew a fresh fight was brewing over the arrival of *La Amistad*. The Coits, like Jane's own family, had an impeccable pedigree in New London. A family of shipbuilders, Coit had continued in the tradition, active in business ventures to the West Indies before settling into the ship chandlery business. He had spent a fair amount of time in the West
Indies as a young man on business for his uncle, and claimed a greater depth of understanding about slavery than most Northerners. Now he also sold lumber and coal and had prospered enough to build a large home for his wife and seven children on Jay Street, not far from the new church. Coit railed at church meetings against the bawdy and violent behavior of the sailors at the taverns near the docks that frequently spilled into the streets. Some whaling masters, like Thomas Williams, had prohibited the use of alcohol aboard his vessels, and Coit loudly praised those efforts.

Charlotte Coit loved to gossip, and her indiscretions were legion. "Aren't you just appalled at what's being said about the condition of those pitiful negroes?" she probed, after greeting Jane. "I heard Mr. Janes was on the vessel, and that he is getting involved. Well, I just knew he would have a soft spot for a situation like that -- what with them likely having been mistreated, and they just reacted the way any human being might."

Jane nodded, falling into step beside the older woman. Dwight had told her all the details, and she knew he was using the case to press his cause among his business associates. Abolition was being argued from the halls of Congress to the bedrooms of America, but Jane did not care to argue it with Charlotte Coit. It was a sensitive topic, and one the Second Church had voted on June 6 to avoid discussing, despite Dwight's impassioned pleas. The congregation had voted by a large majority "against a motion for the business meetings (for conversation and business to promote a better understanding of each other's view touching many moral and religious topics.)" Dwight's
motion that a prayer group for the abolition of slavery be established was not even considered.

"Charlotte, I left the girls with the dinner preparations, and I really must return," Jane said, excusing herself. Her mood, and the quieting solace she had found at the graveyard, were broken. She sensed that the arrival of this black schooner would spell the beginning of another period of turmoil in both the city and in her home.
Chapter 5: Sept. 2, 1839

Janes gripped the back of the tall wooden chair to control his rising temper, feeling the blood shoot above his tight collar and spread with a tingling sensation into his beard and the roots of his hair. The conversation with the Rev. James M. MacDonald about slavery wasn't going at all as he'd hoped. Once the letters to Baldwin and Leavitt were safely posted, Janes had felt as though some long-dammed current within his soul had been unleashed, and he had no choice but to ride the flood. The agitation that had preceded his decision to write the letters completely dissipated and was replaced by a sure confidence that had stayed with him for several days. He once again felt the passion and the certainty of his cause, just as he did when he read the anti-slavery treatises of William Lloyd Garrison and Samuel May.

But this conversation with the young clergyman was bringing him back to earth with a resounding thud. MacDonald had evaded his direct prodding at first, trying to change the subject. After describing what he'd seen on La Amistad, Janes told the minister about the groundswell of sentiment he sensed in the community about the issue. "We have got to do more than engage in idle chatter about this issue," he declared. "If the arrival of this schooner does not stir us to act here in New London, nothing will. Can you not see the hand of God in this? Do you think He did not select where this vessel would be pushed by the winds? Did He not dictate the port she would be brought into? We have been offered a glorious opportunity to do God's work on earth, to be true benefactors to the downtrodden, to make an example of how true
men should treat their fellow human beings with justice and honor. Are you going to turn your back to this?"

Janes barreled on, his confidence growing, mentioning leading figures in the community with whom he'd spoken. He described his talks with Haley, Increase Wilson and Nathan Belden, all members of the church community. He spoke of his visit to William Bolles and John Rogers Bolles, both of whom, he and others knew, had harbored blacks in flight from slavery in the South. Such actions were extremely secretive, but rumors were rampant about runaway blacks, who easily melted into the streets of New London because of the large population of blacks in the port city. Surely this event, Janes argued, would force a public statement on the evils of slavery, and where better to come from than the leading church in the city?

Pushed to the brink of his patience by Janes' incessant questions and innuendoes, MacDonald finally felt compelled to speak bluntly. He breathed out slowly and began, trying to match Janes' passion with a calm and respectful demeanor. "Abolition is creating an alienation of feeling between the brethren," MacDonald declared solemnly, "and while slavery is a practice I too abhor, I will not allow discussion of it to tear asunder this congregation. If we let you have your way, Mr. Coit, and perhaps others, will leave the congregation. I cannot allow your group to hold prayer meetings about slavery here or to raise it as a general topic of open discussion for the congregation. We decided all this in June, Mr. Janes, and the issue, I must say forcefully to you, is closed."

At 25, MacDonald was thirteen years younger than Janes, and he had focused the intense idealism of youth on making his church a
sanctuary of peace in this prosperous whaling port. He had been in New London for only two years, having been called to service first at the First Church in Berlin, Connecticut after his graduation from Yale Divinity School. MacDonald was a bright young man with a new wife and child, and he knew the fortunes of his wealthy congregants, and his own, rose and fell on the price of whale oil and the success of shipping. He saw the congregation caught in an awkward economic embrace with the cotton industry that was itself underpinned by the institution of slavery in the South.

On coming to the city, MacDonald had quickly caught the pulse of the community. He understood the insecurity that lay just beneath the surface of the apparent success. The city was still slowly rebuilding from the devastation of Sept. 6, 1781, when Benedict Arnold's forces had burned all the ships in port, dozens of warehouses, and nearly every private home and public building in the city. The day had represented the ultimate in treachery, since Arnold was virtually a hometown boy -- hailing from nearby Norwich. Older residents still spoke sorrowfully of the devastation, pointing out the sites of grander buildings that had graced the city in their youths. Old Joshua Comstock told children at the Union School in dramatic fashion of the explosion of gunpowder in the basement of the Episcopal Church on the Parade, and how the fire spread up and down State and Main streets, aided by the ready torches of the British regulars.

The abject defeat of the local militia at the Battle of Groton Heights, while now the stuff of legend, still left a painful blot on the community psyche. Colonel William Ledyard, who died by his own sword when he tried
to surrender it to the British commander, was eulogized annually on the anniversary of the battle on September 6.

A yellow fever epidemic had swept the city during the pitiless summer of 1798, slowing the pace of rebuilding. "From the 28th of July to the 1st of September, the heat was intense; the mercury in a northern exposure in the open air, stood at midday from 86 to 93 degrees, with the exception of five days, in which it stood at 82 degrees and one day at 78 degrees which was the greatest depression. There was only one thunder-shower during this period. The earth being parched under excessive drought, vegetation failed early in August, and many trees shed their leaves. It was noticed that the air was remarkably unelastic, especially in the part of the city where the desolating sickness prevailed. Scarcely a day occurred for seven weeks in which a person might not have carried a lighted candle through the streets. The nights, in gloomy succession, brought a deadly calm, attended with sultry heat," the Rev. Henry Channing wrote in a newspaper account.

Large quantities of fish had been spread over the docks and streets to dry, adding an overpowering putridness to the stench of the overflowing privies. People fled the northern section of Bank Street where most of those who were sick lived. Hundreds became ill, and 21 died. The graves of those who had died in the epidemic were still noted by visitors to the Second Burying Ground, and families were split over the health risks of moving deceased family members who had died of yellow fever.
The British blockade from 1812-1814 choked off the shipping and merchant businesses just as business was reviving. But, finally, with the stunning success of whaling, the old port was bustling and active again, as it hadn't been since before the Revolution. As many as 600 sailors swarmed through its streets by day and night -- Yankees, Portuguese, Hawaiians, Negroes, and Indians. The races blended as bonds formed on whaling trips were renewed at the hotels and saloons that dotted the three-mile crescent-shaped waterfront. As many as 500 vessels anchored in the harbor at one time. With this history of reversals within the memory of many living New Londoners, radical religious positions on issues like slavery were not popular, especially among those who were pouring their daily energies into the vital life of the port.

"We are overdue for good fortune," Deacon Coit had told MacDonald, meaningfully, when he was interviewed for the job. "We are looking for a minister who will devote himself to our spiritual needs and bring us together as a community of faith." Coit, son of Joshua Coit, was busy carrying on the family's merchant business. A wealthy merchant and one of the founders of the church, his words were not to be taken lightly, and MacDonald did not miss their significance.

The Second Congregational Church was a new one, founded four years earlier by wealthy whaling masters and merchants who felt the First Church, with its 200 years of tradition and history, had grown too large. As the city's wealth grew through the 1820s and '30s, its population swelled to nearly
5,000 souls, a level it had not reached since before the American Revolution when it was one of the busiest ports in the colonies.

The lot for the new church at the corner of Jay and Huntington streets was donated by Major General Thomas W. Williams, a firm temperance advocate who would not allow alcohol to be loaded on his ships when they set sail from New London harbor for voyages that lasted as long as two years. The sober Williams had led the city into this new wave of economic prominence, sending out the brig *Mary*, the first of the whalers, in 1819. While he was a strong temperance advocate, Williams was not an abolitionist.

Williams lived within a stone's throw of the church in a mansion at the top of State Street, and the Second Ecclesiastical Society had come into existence during a formal meeting at his house April 14, 1835. The society was separate from the church and controlled the buildings, the collection of income, the ordering of music, arrangements with ushers, and rental of pews or "slips," as they were termed in this nautical community. Williams was less involved in the church now, since he spent much of the year in Washington serving in the U.S. Congress. Williams was lobbying hard in favor of prohibition of alcohol in the nation and to bring the railroad to New London, but his local influence was far from diminished. Rail lines already ran from Stonington to Boston and were beginning to snake across much of the Northeast. But the deep channel of the Thames River between New London and Norwich posed an engineering problem that would not be solved for nearly two decades. As a result, New London had no train service, which was slowing her development.
Rev. MacDonald knew the weight that recent history brought to bear on the situation. While he did not doubt that Janes had found widespread sympathy for his views about the blacks on *La Amistad*, the minister knew those principles would not hold up when weighed against economic realities.

The two men stared at each other for several moments, and Janes finally turned away in disgust. "I see, sir, that I am wasting my breath trying to do the Lord's work in the Lord's house," he huffed, slamming his fist on the Bible resting on the table between them as he left the room.

Four days had passed since his first letters were mailed, and he still had not received a response from Baldwin about the situation of the blacks from *La Amistad*. The day after his first letter, Aug. 31, he had written a second letter to Baldwin informing him that the blacks were leaving New London for New Haven that day, Cinque in a revenue cutter and the others in a sloop. Janes was especially concerned about Antonio, the cabin boy, to whom he had briefly spoken. He thought of the boy often, of how singularly alone he seemed, not one of the captives, yet, surely, not one of the enslavers. He was far from home in a foreign port, and at risk of being sold into slavery again.

New London 31st Aug. 1839
R.S. Baldwin, Esq.

My Dear Sir:
I wrote you yesterday. I learn from the marshal that the prizemaster has made his claim on slaves as part of the cargo. The motion is returned before the Circuit Court at Hartford the 19th of next month. These facts you will learn more fully from the marshal, who will leave here in a day or two. The
blacks leave today, the leader in the cutter and the others in a sloop. Some say that the cabin boy, who is principal witness about the murder of the captain, can speak Spanish and African. When I saw him on board the schooner, as near as I could understand, he said he was brought to Havana when he was a very small boy. You must let them know that they are among friends or they will be unwilling to say much. This case is exciting a good deal of interest here and no one believes that the blacks ought to be delivered up to the Spanish authorities, or that they are legally guilty of murder, but that they ought to be set at liberty or sent back to Africa (and here, I think, is work for the colonization society, and the ONLY legitimate work, which has yet been offered them.) Respecting the claim for schooner and cargo on the part of the blacks -- if you make it for them as citizens of Africa, will it not throw the burden of proof on the prize master and the two Spaniards to show that they were brought to Havena before the slave trade was declared piracy? If this is not done, will it not slow that the schooner was engaged in an unlawful business and that the blacks had a right to take her inasmuch as they were deprived of their liberty? At any rate, this case should not be passed over without a thorough investigation, and everything done for the blacks which humanity and justice require.

In haste and very truly yours,

DPJ

Janes worried that Antonio was at great risk of being thrust immediately back into slavery, while the argument for freeing the other blacks was much clearer and stronger.

After his argument with MacDonald, Janes walked home in a driving rain to write yet another letter to Reverend Leavitt. His frustration was mounting, and even Sarah's teasing couldn't left his spirits. He sent her out of the room and began to write.
"We have not yet heard from Baldwin," he began. "Would it not be well for you to write urging him to take hold of this case? Can't you find some person in New York who can speak African and send him up to New Haven?"

As he finished the letter, Janes was swamped with self-doubt, born of his confrontation with MacDonald and the dashing of the high hopes he had nurtured for several days. "Perhaps I over-rate the importance of this affair, but I believe all the abolitionists here feel as I do," he pleaded.

Tucking the letter into his coat pocket, Janes ducked out into the rain and ran the four blocks to the Bolles brothers' print shop on State Street. Williams Bolles was more widely known in abolitionist circles, and Janes thought his personal addendum might add urgency to the appeal.

Bolles was happy to comply. He thought only a moment, stroking his beard and peering off into the muddy street. "The case of the slaves alluded to in the above letter of Mr. Janes I think will involve several important questions, & I hope will receive a thorough investigation. The discussions consequent on such a trial would be highly beneficial to the cause of freedom in the state. We want something to wake the people up as well as to get justice for the sufferers."

Bolles was as angry as Janes over the reaction of Reverend MacDonald, though he was not surprised. "You should consider leaving that church, Dwight," he counseled. "You are never going to convince those money-
grubbers to set their personal interests aside. It is all words with them, empty words."

Janes folded the letter carefully. It had stopped raining, and life was returning to the street. He suddenly felt very tired. A warm supper would help, he thought, and maybe Nancy and Sarah would sing afterwards. He needed to get his mind off this case, at least until he heard from Baldwin and Leavitt.
Chapter 6: Sept. 6, 1839

The letter Janes was awaiting finally arrived September 6. It came from New York with the welcome news from Lewis Tappan that the abolitionists had formed a committee to take up the cause of the blacks from *La Amistad*. Excited and relieved, Janes rushed over to Hempstead Street to share the letter with Haley, who promptly lit a celebratory cigar.

"I told you not to worry so much," Haley said. "There are many in the cause, and they are bold men. You need to smile more, you know. I don't believe I've seen you smile in weeks."

Janes grinned broadly. "Mr. Haley, you know I don't find much in this sinful world to smile about. But, you are right. And so, I will make no comment on that cigar!"

Haley and Janes stopped in at the home of Haley's neighbors, John Rogers Bolles and his wife, Mary, and Mary's sister Martha Hempstead, to share the news. John and Mary had been married in May, and Mary had just learned she was pregnant. The Hempstead sisters were members of the congregation at the Second Church, and, along with Haley, were among Janes' staunch supporters in the effort to get an open discussion of the issue of slavery going among the congregation.

Janes had tried to raise the issue of slavery in June at a church meeting by proposing that the congregation discuss it periodically during monthly lectures that preceded communion. Church members received communion the
first Sunday of each month. But most of the congregation, led by Reverend MacDonald, voted against allowing any discussion, for fear that the divisions already apparent over the issue would worsen.

Janes, himself, had not been going to church regularly for well over a year, and the June decision had hardened his stance. He had become increasingly embittered, and could not help but mention it now, despite the happy occasion.

"Reverend MacDonald told me he would not oppose my motion," Janes said of the June meeting. "How are we supposed to get people to look this issue in its face? Slavery is so obviously a violation of all the tenets the Lord has given us. Reverend MacDonald is our pastor, but I am of the belief that he is not a man to be trusted. In short, I think he's a liar. I will not return to church until he is gone."

"But, Mr. Janes, isn't that rather harsh?" Martha burst out. "Perhaps you misunderstood him. I will admit he has been a disappointment to me, as well, but I think he is a man of his word. You had best watch the way you talk about him. I know you are speaking like this all over town, and not just in friendly circles like this one."

Mary, who frequently played the role of peacemaker in their fiery discussions, intervened. "We will have to make another attempt at this," Mary told Janes in a sympathetic tone. "Martha and I will support you. Just be certain the women of the church are invited to the meeting, or no motion will have chance of passage."
The small group pored over Tappan's letter. Despite his worry, downstate abolitionists had evidently been busy over the days since Janes began his letter-writing campaign, enlisting the aid of Lewis and Arthur Tappan. The Tappan brothers and Janes had much in common. They were New York merchants and evangelical Christians who had established the *Journal of Commerce*, a publication devoted to the anti-slavery cause. Arthur had helped found and was president of the American Antislavery Society.

The Tappans had already paid heavily for their activities against slavery. Lewis' house had been broken into and his furniture burned in the street by a mob. Enemies had placed a price on the heads of both brothers of $100,000, but they refused to be intimidated. The Tappans condemned both those who practiced slavery and those who allowed it to continue by their silence.

The abolitionists set up the Amistad Committee and appointed to it Lewis Tappan, Joshua Leavitt and Simeon Jocelyn, and the group was tasked with raising funds for the case. The committee followed Janes' suggestion, and had already sent three Africans from New York City to try to communicate with the blacks in New Haven.

Lewis Tappan informed Janes of their plans in his letter, and Janes responded that very night with a letter describing *La Amistad* in more detail. Since the schooner was staying in New London, the committee had asked for a thorough description of any features that might identify her as a slaver.

"She is about 80 tons, was evidently built for a slaver, has ten sweeps, five on a side and a very large hatchway," Janes wrote. "But we cannot
discover anything that would identify her as at present engaged in the slave trade--as near as we can judge her cargo might have cost 7 to $8,000. The negroes left the hatches off in all weather and some of the goods are much damaged."

Janes pledged to continue to help raise money for the court battle among the abolitionists in eastern Connecticut, though he recommended that the funds be sent directly to the committee in New York.

Other New Londoners had also been choosing up sides in the debate over the fate of La Amistad. Jirah Isham, a former mayor of New London, had been hired to represent Gedney and Lt. Richard Meade before the Circuit Court.

Shortly after the letter from Tappan arrived, Janes received another, more disturbing, letter, this one from his brother Lewis in Montreal. Lewis wrote that he, Abby, and the girls were fine, and his grocery business was flourishing.

"But, my dear brother, it would grieve you to see the daily traffic of negroes into this city. I have joined a committee of the church bent on trying to find homes and work for some of them, for most arrive here exhausted, with only the clothes on their backs. It is clear to us that the steps you wrote to me that are being taken by the abolitionists in the United States to spirit many of them away to freedom are well underway. But, we are ill-equipped to help all of them, especially the women and children. They are, for the most part, unaccustomed to city life and lack the skills needed here.
Reverend Christmas, as you know, is committed to the cause of temperance, abolition and women's rights, and has been mightily engaged on their behalf. Three negroes, two men and a boy, have been living with us this past two weeks, having escaped from an apparently insufferable situation on a Kentucky plantation. One of the men is desperate to bring his wife north, but he does not believe the master would ever consent to her sale. So precarious is the situation that, for us to write with an offer, we are fearful might cause harm to his family. He paces the floor here, day and night, and is oppressed in spirit. I obtained work for him at the docks, but he soon quit and seems content to idle his time away.

Do you think you could send a letter to the address listed below, inquiring about the possibility of purchasing his wife. Her name is Chloe, and they have three children, all of them boys? Would such an act endanger your own efforts there?

Mindful as I am of the difficulties you are experiencing with abolition efforts in New London and your separation from the community on this issue, I am curious as to whether you and Jane might consent to remove yourselves from that unenlightened village and return to Montreal, where your aid and solace would be most useful, both to Abby and I, and to all involved in this effort. With our growing family, we are not in as propitious a position as you to offer time and energy to the educating and counseling of these strangers. Those arriving do not speak French, and their absorption into the community will be slow until they are schooled in the language and customs. At this task, Jane would be most expedient.
Janes read the letter in Lewis' familiar, spidery hand a second time. He knew Jane would not favor such a move. Her family was deeply rooted in New London, had been among the founding families of the city. Her mother's people, the Saltonstalls and Winthrops, had fallen onto hard times during the Revolution, and had suffered afterward because of community displeasure with their Tory leanings. But the success of whaling promised an economic boom.

And he had labored tirelessly these past six years to raise the capital to invest in a whaling venture; now, it seemed, with Butler's help he might succeed. No business in Montreal offered such opportunity for rapid advancement and wealth. His friend and mentor, Capt. Franklin Smith, had, in seven voyages to the South Atlantic, brought home 16,154 barrels of whale oil and 1,147 barrels of sperm oil, and was now a wealthy man. Smith had sailed in the employ of Noyes and William W. Billings aboard the Flora, the Julius Caesar, and five times aboard the Tuscarora. In 1838 alone, 53 vessels had brought a combined 25,523 barrels of whale oil and 3,426 barrels of sperm oil into the port of New London, second only to the enormous fleet whaling out of New Bedford. This oil was lighting lamps across the new nation. And now, Smith was about to embark aboard the Chelsea, sailing for the first time for his own firm, Haven and Smith. Like so many others in New London, Janes dreamed of owning his own wharf and warehouses and sending vessels to the far reaches of the globe.
Janes' partner, Butler, had sailed successfully as master of the *Wabash* in 1832 and 1836. Butler also had been bookkeeper and confidential clerk for several years in the house of Williams and Haven, now Haven and Smith. He knew the whaling business as well as any man. Janes felt the new firm was on solid footing and was on the threshold of enormous success, possibly as great as that experienced by the Williams firm. Time and hard work was all it would take.

Still, he was not unmoved by his brother's letter. He and Jane had courted in Montreal and were married in 1828 at the St. Gabriel Street Presbyterian Church there. His fondest memories were of their strolls through the narrow streets of the old city and of watching the city grow. But what affected him most profoundly was Lewis' appeal for help. Janes had been involved on several occasions, as were Haley, the Bolleses and the Hempsteads, with sheltering runaway slaves who needed safe houses to stay on their journey north. Janes had become familiar with Baldwin, Leavitt and other abolitionists through this network, which was carried on with such secrecy that he did not discuss it with any of his business associates or other church members, even though he knew some were sympathetic.

Jane was very supportive of his work, and her lack of timidity about housing negroes emboldened him. They had set up a bunk, chair and lamp in a root cellar that had a separate entrance from the other basement area of the house. On a half dozen different occasions they had been called upon to offer hospitality to those in flight. The blacks arrived by wagon under cover of darkness, and Janes met them near the Fog Plain Road in Waterford, and
transferred them to his own wagon, hiding them under blankets and among household goods that he hastily threw into the wagon before he left. One slave, Adam, had injured an ankle running and stayed with the Janeses for nearly two weeks while it mended. Adam was very courteous, but ever watchful, as if waiting for his former master to appear on the doorstep. Twice, late at night, Adam had ventured to the Bradley Street district, imbibing in alcohol at a tavern that he apparently bought with his small cache of savings. He had come back drunk one of the times, and Jane had patiently administered to him while he retched. Janes was scandalized by this behavior because he had informed the man that alcohol was not allowed in his house.

Adam replied that he had not brought alcohol into the house, but had purchased it elsewhere. "Mr. Janes," Adam replied after Janes threatened to order him to leave. "You are free to go about the town at your leisure, in the bright light of day, smelling the pies on the windowsills, seeing the trees arching over the streets, feeling a part of this place where friends stop you as you walk by."

Janes nodded silently as the man continued. "I have for three months been on the run, moving about only at night, sleeping in barns and cellars, never certain when there will be a mistake and a friendly house will not be open to me. Your kindness is much appreciated, but there are few places where I can go and feel accepted. The sailors do not ask questions. We all mix at the water's edge, and it is pleasant to me. Do you understand? Pleasant."
Janes lowered his head and sighed. "Do not bring it into this house," he finally said, and abruptly left the room.

The third time Adam went to Bradley Street, he did not return. By asking questions surreptitiously, Janes learned that Adam had found work on the crew of a bark that had left New London two days earlier, apparently convincing the captain that he was a free man. Janes wondered often if Adam would return to New London when the bark *North America* came back to port.

Few of the blacks the Janeses sheltered were as enterprising as Adam, and most moved on within a day or two, usually lying under bales of hay or market goods on carts headed for Boston or Hartford. When Janes received his brother's letter, he had been expecting another missive about a runaway that John Bolles had mentioned might be arriving in New London.

As he had expected, Jane was not receptive to the idea of moving to Montreal.

"My duty is here, Dwight, until these girls are older. And what of my teaching? And, how could I leave Father now?"

Jane had begun teaching young girls at the Black School that opened two years earlier. Her father had been in ill health since the failure of the New London Aqueduct Co., a business he'd helped found 25 years earlier to build water lines into the city.

But Janes knew her thoughts had immediately flitted to none of these things, but to the baby's grave. This would, as always, go unmentioned.
He wrote to Lewis a few days later, declining the offer, but sending his fervent best wishes to the entire community, and, in particular, his prayers for the effort to settle the blacks streaming, as they called it, toward the "North Star."

"The work you are undertaking is unparalleled in importance," he wrote. "You must stay with it, and I will stay with mine -- sending these children of God on the safe road to you."
CHAPTER 7: Sept. 12, 1839

The clock in the St. James Church tower was tolling 2 a.m. when Robert Coit awoke with a start. He wiped sweat from his forehead, even though the fire had died down long ago and the night was chilly.

He sighed and rested his head back against the pillows, gazing down at the top of his wife's nightcap and her tousled hair. Her form was solid and heavy beside him, having gained bulk with each of seven successive pregnancies. "Why," he thought, "why do these dreams still come?" It had been 20 years since he had last been in Barbados, and yet the place still laid claim to his unconscious mind. He rubbed his sideburns pensively. "Well, why not?" he mumbled, glancing at Charlotte. It was, after all, the finest time in his life, though he could never share that appraisal with anyone else.

He lay back and closed his eyes, feeling again the lethargy that possessed his limbs during those steamy afternoons in the islands. That was when Lenta would come to him, her black skin glistening with sweat, her lips moist and yielding. Lenta. Only 17 years old, yet already wise in the ways of the world. Her back and arms were strong, her legs supple. They would make love slowly, and she would croon to him softly in the melodic cadence of her people—"Obla sunta, obla sunta." So right, so right. "It was good?" she would ask afterwards. "Yes," he would respond. "Good, Lenta, good."

The languor would last for an hour afterward, as she rubbed his feet with coconut oil and fed him from the bowl of mangoes. They would giggle
over the antics of the plantation boys, who would run by the hut and grab briefly at the strands of grass hanging over the doorway, laughing raucously. Occasionally a breeze would find its way through the matted walls and doorway, cooling them slightly and stirring the palm fronds she had arranged artistically in a woven basket in the corner of the room. And then he would dress and leave the hut, returning to the main building on the sugar plantation and his routine record keeping, her scent still on his fingers.

On days when he did not call for her, Lenta would go out into the green fields, bending for hours in the blistering sun, bareheaded and half naked, weeding between the rows of cane plants that spread toward the horizon in every direction. John Chambers, who owned the plantation, was complacent about the arrangement. Indeed, Coit sometimes suspected his uncle's instructions included his tutoring on this subject that was never so much as mentioned back in New London.

In the spring of the next year, 1809, Lenta gave birth to a boy, a child with skin the color of coffee that had been generously laced with cream, and eyes as black as her own. Learning that he was leaving, she brought the child to Coit one day, asking for him to purchase both of them and take them to Connecticut. "Ko-not-ee-kot," she pronounced it. "Take us with you," she said, her hair tied up in a pretty scarf, her lips pouting. "It is good?"

Coit tried to contain his laughter, but could not. He gently but firmly sent her on her way, promising to see that the two of them were not sold off
separately. She had stared at him, perhaps not in disbelief, but certainly with obvious disappointment. He had meant to keep that promise, but it was an awkward subject to raise with Chambers, who was a business associate of his uncle's. Days slipped by and weeks passed. He never mentioned Lenta to Chambers, not then and not in the years since in the monthly correspondence the two kept up.

Coit last saw Lenta a few days before he boarded the *Experience* for the month-long journey back to Connecticut. In his pocket, he carried a letter of reproof from his sister, Lydia, in Norwich. She had postponed her wedding three times over the course of eight months, each time because he had written of his intentions to return the next month. Business had delayed him, or so he wrote to her. But he and Lydia had been close as children, and she still knew how to read him.

"Lemuel and I were married Saturday at the First Church," she wrote in her final letter. "We have been waiting longer than is reasonable for your arrival, dear brother. Having no way of predicting when you actually might set foot here, I could not in fairness put Lemuel off any longer. I have concluded the allure of the 'sweet isle' you have written to us about has overtaken you. You wrote of the need for us to help you shake off your slothful habits when you return. You may be certain that I shall be awaiting the opportunity to do that."
As Coit crossed the marketplace in Jamestown, he saw Lenta, the baby in her arms, standing in the sun at a market stall loaded with bananas she was minding for Chambers. She turned her black eyes to him, and they were as dense as mud puddles in her face, without the tiniest glint to recognition. She turned her face away and did not look back.

He passed on through the crowded square, giving orders to the two large blacks carrying his luggage on either side of him to take the trunks to the hotel. He stayed in Jamestown until the ship left the port two days later, but he never again ventured to that corner of the marketplace.

Coit's reveries about Lenta had been less satisfying of late. Instead of replaying the scenes in the hut, the image of his final discussion with her and the blank look she gave him in the marketplace had been recurring. Coit knew Dwight Janes and his constant harping about the evils of slavery had stirred his emotions in a most unhealthy fashion, despite his best efforts to defuse the arguments. Janes and his friends had been an annoyance to Coit for years, constantly trying to stir up trouble in the community and the church.

For the past year he and the Bolles brothers, among others, had been publishing a sort of underground newspaper called *The Ultimatum* that was riddled with anti-slavery propaganda. The publication, which they handed out free of charge down at the docks and on street corners, was little more than a nuisance until last March, when the authors -- and Coit was convinced that Janes was the principal author -- started to comment upon church affairs. That was where Coit drew the line. As a deacon, he expected issues within
the church to remain there, and not to become part of the public prattle, making a spectacle and a laughingstock out of many innocent members of the congregation, including himself.

"One of the committee of the second Congregational Church in this place, when asked by certain members of said church for the use of the Lecture Room to hold a prayer meeting once a month for the slaves, refused, saying, if we let you have it, Mr. C--- will leave the meeting."

Coit found the abbreviation especially galling, since few with any history in the community could fail at filling in the blanks. And none, of course, would move on without making the effort. "I seem to be like the prize offered up to the lucky guesser at a traveling show," he complained bitterly to his wife. He imagined for several days that people were staring at him wherever he went.

The notice followed an earlier article the previous July in which the agitators complained that a room in the court house -- one usually "open to every class of citizens...from orthodox theology to infidelity, atheism, picture shows, juggling and quack phrenology" had been denied as a meeting place for the New London County Anti-Slavery Society.

"I have been directed by influential gentlemen who wish their names kept private not to admit you," the paper quoted a county court judge as stating. The article further explained the group had been denied a meeting place at both the U.S. Custom House and several churches. The position of John Jay Hyde at The Gazette and Advertiser in refusing to publish articles
submitted by the anti-slavery men was also a source of ridicule in the broadsheet.

The group, headed by Francis Perkins and Increase Wilson, had started a lending library of anti-slavery materials and was meeting in private homes, including those of Janes and Haley.

Coit had ordered his young son into the streets to pick up as many copies of the newspaper with the reference to "Mr. C---" as he could find after they had been tossed aside, thus prohibiting others from reading the inflammatory words. The boy scoured the docks, too, for stray copies. Ten-year-old William, an impetuous and promising lad if ever there was one, had even dashed quickly into the Bolles' brothers State Street print shop, grabbing a neat stack of freshly printed copies nearest to the doorway. Unfortunately, it turned out the papers weren't copies of The Ultimatum at all but some other anti-slavery literature John Bolles was printing. Coit smiled at the thought of how Bolles must have puzzled over the missing papers.

"We shall warm ourselves tonight by the heat of dangerous words that will not escape to spread their message further," Coit declared to his family as he stuffed the papers into the fireplace that night, warmly praising his son and pressing an extra coin into the lad's hand. "But you must keep silent about this," he told them. "Especially at church. No bragging to your friends. It must be our secret."

The boy nodded solemnly and kept his word.
In early June, Janes had again asked the church to sponsor a discussion about holding a prayer meeting for the abolition of slavery. Despite some tepid support from Charles Butler, who never objected to praying about anything, the motion was soundly defeated. Coit was immensely satisfied with the vote, although he knew there was criticism that the women of the church had been excluded from the meeting. Women's rights was another cause that Janes espoused, to the antagonism of many male church members.

The summer months had been quiet, with Janes and nearly everyone else busy keeping up with the incredible parade of sail that daily lined the docks. Coit had grown to hope that the anti-slavery forces were broken, though he knew from past experience that this was unlikely. But the arrival of *La Amistad* two weeks ago had stirred up the trouble again, and the debate burst forth anew and with fresh ammunition in the form of the specifics of this case. Janes, it seemed, had boarded the vessel and talked to some of the principals in the case and had then written letters to other abolitionists to stir the pot. It seemed the man would stop at nothing. He had taken to holding forth with Haley on legal points of the case at all hours of the day and night at Buttonwood Corner, drawing passers-by into the talk. Once Coit thought he had noticed Janes gesturing toward him as he passed by on the other side of the street. And he knew from reports from the children that Janes was talking frequently about the Reverend MacDonald, and that the comments were undermining the young minister's standing in the church community.
Coit seethed at the thought of the sympathetic coverage Hyde had been giving the fate of the blacks in his paper. He suspected Janes and Haley were planning a trip to Hartford two days hence when the case opened before the District Court. The Coit family still had interests in the Caribbean, and Coit knew slavery had been abolished there the previous year, as it was throughout the British Empire. He had already seen a decline in business as plantation owners like Chambers found it difficult to pay for all the labor they needed. The same thing would happen, he knew, with much more devastating effects for his family shipping business out of the Carolinas, if slavery were abolished in the U.S.

And all for what? So that an inferior breed of people, who did not have the intelligence to function in normal society, could become an economic burden as well as a psychological one? Unlike many in New London, Coit had argued many times, he had seen the slave system in operation, and he admired its efficiencies. Though he had never owned slaves in Barbados or elsewhere, his father had owned several. That was before the slave trade was outlawed by the British government in 1808, the year he met Lenta. He felt a brief pang of what was, undeniably and illogically, guilt as he thought of her again. She was as well off as she could be, he reasoned. She and the boy must be free now. Chambers, he thought, had surely seen to the child's care and upbringing.

And then there was the matter of the Reverend MacDonald. The man
was impossible. Even Coit knew that. Always trying to assuage all the parties, while inevitably alienating them one by one. The preacher was in a snit over Janes' treatment of him and claimed his character was being defamed. And, while Coit privately believed the man was an unmitigated prig, he felt it might be possible to use the young man's intense sense of personal injury to his own advantage.

As he tossed and turned, Coit had a flash of what he later would consider pure brilliance. He knew instantly what he could do to destroy Janes and derail his involvement with *La Amistad* at the same time. He would see the minister first thing in the morning. Smiling smugly, he borrowed deeper under the covers, putting his arm over his wife's broad midsection. Her loud snort brought him up short. He rolled over and let his mind drift back. Back, back to the warm earth of Barbados as he dusted it slowly off Lenta's narrow, bare shoulders.
CHAPTER 8: Sept. 14-17, 1839

Jane gathered her skirts and ran up the five wooden stairs, throwing open the door to the house. The girls appeared, full of curiosity, from the kitchen, but she sent them back to their work making quince pies with an impatient wave of her hand. Peeling off her gloves, she called for her husband, who soon appeared, rubbing his eyes, from the parlor, where he had been reading by the window in the fading twilight.

"Dwight, you will not believe what Charlotte Coit has been telling the ladies! She says her husband has written up a complaint against you on behalf of the Reverend MacDonald, and you will be asked to answer the charges before the entire church on pain of suspension!"

She paused to catch her breath, passing her long fingers nervously through her hair and pushing back strands that had fallen from her bonnet. She was about to go on, describing the scene at the Williams' house where the women had been gathered for a Saturday night prayer meeting and sewing session. Little sewing, and even less prayer, had been accomplished, she sniffed.

Janes reached out and put his finger to her lips to stop the gush of words that he could see was about to resume. He looked tenderly at her, wishing he could spare her the humiliation she was enduring on his behalf.

"I know, Jane, I know. A copy of the complaint was delivered here about an hour ago by Reverend Hurlbutt. I have it here, and have been
studying it and thinking how best to respond. The whole thing is ridiculous, really, but I think I must answer it seriously. No other congregation will have me if I am under suspension from this one."

"What do you mean 'how to respond'? What is it they are saying, Dwight? Why has he done this?"

He brought her two sheets of paper written in the familiar, cramped hand of Robert Coit. As deacon of the church, Coit weekly signed the attendance book, witnessed marriages and baptisms, and his tight hand was well known to church members. The paper notified Janes that a meeting of the church was scheduled for three days hence, on September 17, to discuss the matter raised in the statement by Coit.

"To the Second Congregational Church in New London comes Robert Coit, a member of said church and represents --

That Dwight P. Janes, a brother in this church, has for more than a year past, without good cause, neglected and refused to unite with this church in celebrating the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, thus giving occasion for reproach, grieving his brethren and renouncing the fellowship of them with whom he has covenanted to walk together in the ordinances of the Lord.

That he has, on one or more occasions, explicitly charged the Pastor of this church with falsehood -- and has often virtually done the same, especially by representing that in private conversation with him, the said Janes, respecting the conduct pursued or to be pursued by him on the subject of anti-slavery, the pastor used language different from and inconsistent with that used by him publicly in the Pulpit -- and by contradicting in a disrespectful manner in a meeting of the church the statement the pastor made in a conversation between him and the said Janes, has thus, without reason,
impeached the character of the pastor for truth, and done that which tended

to diminish his usefulness as a minister of the Gospel of Christ.

And the undersigned further represents that the said Janes as author,
advisor or publisher of a certain anonymous article, called the Report of the
Executive Committee of the New London Anti-Slavery Society, published in
a paper called the Ultimatum, No. 2, dated July 1838 untruly charged some of
the churches in New London -- meaning the Society Committee of the Second
Congregational Society, all of them members of this church, with having
employed emissaries to make misrepresentations and misstatements and with
being activated and stimulated by improper and sinful motives and by this
sending forth to the world groundless accusations against Christian brethren --
especially the Society Committee, said Janes has violated his engagement to
walk as becomes the Gospel of Christ, and has given cause to others to speak
evil of it.

And the undersigned, having first by himself alone, and then with one
or two more, told his offending brother his fault and having failed to gain him,
now take it to the church that he may be dealt with according to the Gospel.

New London Sept. 14. 1839

(signed) Robt. Coit

She read the manuscript slowly, pausing to absorb and analyze each
sentence as she read. It took well over five minutes, and Janes retired to his
study while she read. When she finished, she approached his writing table,
where the oil lamp was now lit, and laid the document on it with an air of
finality.

"Well, it is clear that this is linked to your work on behalf of the
negroes," she said firmly. "Frankly, I'm relieved. The same charges, except
for this latest disagreement with the pastor, could have been made a year ago.
You must not let this lie. You must respond with conviction, for you have
done no wrong."
Her immediate and unequivocal support and apparent lack of qualms about the coming fight took him a little by surprise. While far from a timid woman, Jane had always been deeply committed to preserving her family heritage and reputation and her role in the community. Over the past two years, as she worked with others to start a school for black children, her commitment to abolition had come to mirror his own, but it was not until this moment that he realized how profoundly the convictions had affected her.

"You are with me, then?" he asked gleefully, removing his reading glasses and looking at her with a smile.

"Yes," she said steadily. "I have never yet seen a pot that was set to boil, but some scum ran out over the top!"

He chuckled at her animated response, and the two of them sat together for the next two hours, long after the girls had tiptoed in to say goodnight. They took apart Coit's arguments one by one, preparing a written rebuttal. Much of what she wanted to say, he rejected as too revealing or direct. She suggested several conciliatory sentences, but Janes rejected this approach as well.

"I am certain he selected the 17th as the response date to make it difficult for me to go up to Hartford on Thursday," Janes commented bitterly at one point. Nonetheless, he fully intended to make the trip to Hartford to witness the opening hearing of the case of *La Amistad* before the Circuit Court Thursday. He knew better than to request a delay from Coit and the Reverend. MacDonald. In fact, such a request would probably damage his
effort to get the complaint dropped. If he were to be permanently suspended from the church, Janes knew it would be nearly impossible for him to be admitted to another Congregational or Presbyterian congregation since a recommendation demonstrating good standing was required to join a church in another town.

After some discussion, Janes decided to keep his written remarks brief in hopes that most church members would recognize the unfair and arbitrary nature of the charges and vote against them. He knew there was significant support for his anti-slavery views, particularly among the women of the congregation. Dozens of church members failed to attend Sunday services and monthly communion, and Janes felt it would be evident to all of them that the first charge held little weight. He acknowledged in his statement that he had not gone to communion since May 1838, despite a church rule that members take communion the first Sunday of every month. He and Jane tried to describe his feelings, but concluded it would be more inflammatory to explore the reasons than to fail to answer the charge.

In the spring of 1838 he had attended several anti-slavery meetings in New York and Hartford that had deeply affected him. He had become more friendly with the Bolles and Hempsteads upon his return, and had gradually come to view the lack of engagement on the slavery issue in New London as a critical flaw in the church's spiritual mission. As he thought and read more extensively about the barbarity of slavery and met more blacks through his work with the Underground Railroad, he felt the actions of the church were in
direct conflict with the Gospel message to treat all men as brothers. Slavery, he believed, was the central issue for Christians of his era, more significant even than the temperance fight in which he and so many of his fellow church members were engaged. He had rationalized his absence from church on moral grounds, but had not yet reached the point of choosing to denounce his church membership or change congregations. He and Jane agreed it would be imprudent to divulge this line of thinking about his absence from communion, so he simply acknowledged it was true that he had failed to attend communion services for more than a year.

On the charge that he had called the pastor, in effect, a liar, Janes wrote simply that he had on several occasions heard Reverend MacDonald make statements that Janes felt the pastor knew were untrue. While deciding not to detail them, Janes reminded his wife of how he had understood from conversations with MacDonald when the minister first came to New London that he was willing to allow an open discussion on slavery in the monthly meetings of the congregation. When Janes actually raised the issue at a meeting, however, MacDonald failed to publicly back it -- and, in fact, spoke out against it. Janes felt betrayed.

On a separate occasion, Janes recalled, he had objected to giving a letter of recommendation for another church to William Clark because the man had been seen drinking in the Shapley Street bars. MacDonald told Janes he would bring the issue up at the next church meeting, but instead wrote the reference for Clark without consulting any other church members.
Janes also felt MacDonald, who described himself as an "abstinence man," was disingenuous because he drank wine at weddings and, occasionally, at dinner.

"I don't consider that abstinence," Janes huffed to members of the Temperance Society of the church, and others, most of whom tended to agree privately, but few of whom were as incensed on the point as was Janes.

On the complaint of authoring The Ultimatum newsletter, Janes acknowledged that he circulated the tabloid, but wrote that he did not write the article that referred to the Second Congregational Church.

The next day, Janes delivered a copy of his brief statement to the Reverend Hurlbutt. Reverend Hurlbutt lived in the Mount Vernon House at the corner of the Hartford Road and Huntington Street and taught at the Bartlett School. The house, with its white columns and grand facade, had been built by the Revolutionary War hero General Jedidiah Huntington, who had served on George Washington's staff. It was modeled after Washington's manor house in Virginia. A Presbyterian minister and Yale graduate, Reverend Hurlbutt had retired young due to ill health, and returned to his home town where he helped out when called upon at both the Congregational churches, there being no Presbyterian church in New London. Reverend Hurlbutt was widely respected for his work in setting up and getting funding for the town's first public grammar school in 1833 a few lots south of the Second Church.

The Reverend Hurlbutt met Janes at the door, shook his hand warmly and invited him inside. A man whose physical infirmities had fostered in him
an unusual capacity for compassion, even for a clergymen, the Reverend
Hurlbut felt Janes had been unfairly treated and had told him so when he
delivered the complaint. However, he had advised the younger man to
express heartfelt apology and abject humility in his response to the charges
and to get them dropped as soon as possible so his good name might be
restored. A cursory glance at the single page told him Janes had paid little
attention to his advice.

"I see from this that you intend to make a fight of it," Reverend
Hurlbut remarked dryly. "You are likely to regret that decision, Mr. Janes.
Mr. Coit is not a man to be trifled with."

Janes was caught off guard by the statement because Reverend
Hurlbut's manner was generally mild and non-confrontational. Buoyed by his
wife's support, Janes had been feeling confident about the noncommittal tone
of the statement.

"I am hoping that others will see the injustice of these charges," Janes
said. "I am afraid that the warmth of feeling I have on these issues does not
make it advisable for me to explore them as fully and honestly as I wish. I
would, I fear, make statements in anger in defense of my written explanations
I would truly live to regret."

Reverend Hurlbut nodded his understanding. "It is possible, Mr. Janes,
to be both upright and humble. But we will see how the community reacts."

Over the next two days Janes spoke to friends about the upcoming
church meeting and came to realize that others were faced with the same
scheduling conflict between his suspension hearing and the pending case of
La Amistad. Several of the staunchest abolitionists in the church, among them Haley, Wilson and Belden, were traveling together to Hartford for the Circuit Court hearing and would not be town for the church meeting. Hotel rooms in Hartford were booked by those committed to abolition as well as hundreds of curiosity seekers.

As he and Jane walked into the church the night of the 17th, Janes felt an oppressive sense of gloom that intensified as he entered the downstairs meeting room. Instead of a crowd, he saw only a dozen men, the members of the Ecclesiastical Society that was responsible for business matters affecting the church. While the overall church membership was comprised nearly two-thirds of women, Jane was the only female in the room. No one sympathetic to the anti-slavery cause was present.

As soon as the meeting was opened with a prayer by Reverend MacDonald, who was acting as moderator, Janes vociferously protested the absence of the general church membership.

"Where are the women of the church?" he asked imperiously. "By what right have you selected only a few members to reflect on a matter that affects us all?" Coit explained that the Ecclesiastical Society felt the fewer members involved, the less likely the matter would become heavily publicized and cause embarrassment.

"That is, unless we suddenly find another article in The Ultimatum about private church affairs," Coit remarked snidely. Janes moved menacingly toward Coit, but Butler detained him with a firm hand on the shoulder.
"Let's postpone action on this until we all have cooler heads," Butler suggested. "Surely this is no way for those who have pledged communion with each other to carry on."

Janes sat down and hurriedly scrawled a written protest that was entered into the record. "God has stamped upon the minds of both sexes intellectual and moral equality," he wrote. "The undersigned therefore believes it is the duty of every member to bear a part in the doings of the church and that no meeting can be properly organized for the transaction of business when the whole body have not been duly notified to come together."

Those present agreed to accept Janes' written responses, as presented by Reverend Hurlburt, as well as his protest, and the meeting was adjourned until September 23, the following Monday. However, no promises were forthcoming from Coit or the others about inviting a broader representation of church members.

As they left the church, Janes felt a weariness descend like a mantle of lead on his shoulders.

"I am beginning to wonder what the point of all this is," he said to Jane. "What do I gain if I'm reinstated here? The people who are on the rise in this community, by and large, disagree with my views on slavery and, more and more, I've been branded a troublemaker."

They walked in silence through the quiet streets, his words echoing between them. For the first time, it occurred to Jane that they might not spend the rest of their lives in New London. Over the past year she had sensed the deepening intensity of his unhappiness, but the reservoir of his
determination to convert others to his political views had, until now, seemed bottomless. She had felt his restlessness more linked to the unpopularity of his cause than to any particular place. Now she recognized that in a larger city, like New York or Montreal, he would find comfort and camaraderie in a larger pool of believers as committed to anti-slavery efforts as he was.

"I am tired, too, Dwight," she finally said, her words so faint and breathy he thought at first that he had imagined them. Viewed in a certain light, the years in New London had been disappointing for both of them. They had arrived here as newlyweds, full of hopes and dreams, and had gradually come to an acceptance of their childlessness here. And, while Janes' business prospects seemed promising at the moment, his spirit was not in total sympathy with the greasy work and rowdy mood of the port. While he was sometimes momentarily caught up in the passion of the business enterprise, financial gain was not as much a driving force for him as it was for other men.

He was disturbed by the business methods of the "land sharks," who earned a commission by beguiling innocent young men of all races to sign on as crewmen for whaling trips. Seamen often returned from two-year voyages to receive only $100 in pay, after paying off indebtedness to the ship's master for an outfit of sea-clothes (with interest), the commission for the "shark," and charges for extra clothes purchased aboard ship. Within a few days of landing, many "greenies" had squandered all their profits on drink, gambling and loose women, all of which were also made available by the "sharks."
He put his arm around Jane's waist as they turned the corner into Alms Street. One by one, the oil lamps in the houses were being extinguished, and the stars were strewn like white ink splatters across the sky above them. She was the one good thing New London had brought him, he thought. He must not, for her sake, forget how much this place meant to her.
CHAPTER 9: Mid-October 1839

The day's business was winding down all along the waterfront by the time Janes finished his affairs at the Charles D. Boss. Co. He had spent most of the afternoon sitting with the officious Boss, figuring how many barrels of biscuits and crackers were needed to provision the *Julius Caesar* for a two year's voyage that would take the vessel around Cape Horn to whaling grounds off Patagonia near Japan. By the time they finished their estimates and bartering, Janes was ready to stretch his legs. He was satisfied that he had negotiated a fair price, one that would please Butler and old man Hurlbutts. Sam Hurlbutts was nearing 70, but he still had a sharp business sense and a barbed tongue when he felt his junior partner was shirking his responsibilities.

Emerging from the dim recesses of the warehouse, Janes blinked in the bright fall sunlight that turned the river into a multi-hued patchwork of blue and gold. He glanced toward the Lawrence Wharf where *La Amistad* had been tied up for nearly two months, but could barely make out the double masts of the vessel in the distance because it was obscured by the masts and yardarms of a half dozen other ships. The cargo had long since been offloaded, but no repairs had been made to the black hull that looked to be riding ever more dangerously low in the water. Until the courts decided the fate of the vessel, it was unlikely the federal government would invest any money in her repair.
The case before Associate Justice Smith Thompson of the U.S. Circuit Court, had been delayed for two days, giving Janes ample time to get to Hartford for the September 17 opening. The blacks' lawyers, Theodore Sedgwick and Roger S. Baldwin and Seth Staples, had argued passionately that the Circuit Court lacked jurisdiction in a case where natural law was the guiding principle and that there were no grounds to try the blacks for murder or piracy. They sought a writ of habeas corpus to free the blacks on grounds that they were kidnapped Africans and not slaves.

The Spaniards' attorneys, William Hungerford and Ralph Ingersoll, argued that Pinckney's Treaty of 1795 between the U.S. and Spain required the return of *La Amistad*, its cargo, and the slaves because they were taken by an act of piracy from their rightful owners.

The arguments had been spirited and riveting, the courtroom crowded to capacity for five days. On September 23 Thompson had ruled that the Connecticut court lacked jurisdiction on the piracy charge, because the event had taken place on the high seas. But he refused to free the blacks from prison, and turned the case over to the federal District Court in New Haven.

The judge had directed representatives of the two sides to make a trip to Montauk Point to determine the exact place where *La Amistad* had been seized. Janes had already arranged to be aboard the cutter operated by Capt. Matthew the following week when court officials and lawyers sailed out of New London harbor to the spot where the vessel was captured.
But right now he needed to get back to the Butler, Hurlbutt and Co.
wharf near Winthrop's Neck to record the biscuit numbers while they were
fresh in his mind. He walked quickly north, along the half mile stretch of the
waterfront, past 10 piers that stretched out into the rippling Thames River,
long the coursing lifeblood of the city. The sidewheel steamer *Angelina*,
which regularly plied the waters between New London and Norwich, her city
sister to the north, was docked at the Steamboat Wharf, near the cross river
ferry service run by Captain Cogshell.

As he was passing Sam Hobron's lumber yard and approaching Davie
Lewis' slaughter house, Janes saw Adam, the escaped slave he had sheltered
the previous year, working with another negro slopping the hogs. The two
were standing back, buckets in hand, to allow the mud-encrusted animals to
rush past them for the troughs.

Before he reached them, Adam recognized Janes and leaped over the
fence, wiping his hands on his trousers. Janes noticed his injured ankle
seemed completely healed. Adam gestured to the other man to follow him.

"Mr. Janes, we was a fixin' to come visit y'all tonight. My friend,
Cudgoe, has a story that will you will find interestin'."

Janes couldn't help smiling at Adam's enthusiasm, despite his residual
irritation. He assumed the other man was a runaway slave who was in need
of immediate protection.

"What possessed you to just take off like that, Adam?" he asked, not
willing to let go of the past so easily. "You are taking a risk even now. You
are still a fugitive. It would have been safer of you to go on to Canada. You may be safe aboard ship, but in port..."

"I's only here a spell," Adam explained. "I been workin' fo' Mr. Lewis a few days befo' I be shippin' out on the *Mentor*. By the time I done paid off the slop closet, I was lef' wid no pay. But no one asks no questions here. They need hands bad. The captain even went down New Yoke way to try to find us some. He don't care if we's darkies or Injuns or Frenchman. Just so's we kin do th' work."

Each whaling ship carried between 30 and 60 crew members, and they were charged for clothing they bought aboard ship. Adam's clothing had been in poor shape when he disappeared. Janes thought it unconscionable for crewmen to return from two-to three-year voyages owing money to the whaling firm. But he had to admit the whaling life seemed to suit Adam. He looked healthy enough, certainly better than when he had first arrived in New London.

Janes eyed the other negro, who was standing patiently at Adam's side. "So, who's your friend?" he finally asked.

Adam introduced the muscular young mulatto, who appeared to be about 30 years old, as a new arrival from the West Indies.

"We just met up yest' day," Adam explained. "He came here to fin' his father, and we was hopin' you could hep' him. We been afeared to ask anyone else."

Janes looked quizzically at Cudgoe. "Who are you looking for?"

"My father's name is Robert Coit, Robert Coit of New London. He is an important man," the young man said in flawless, well-rehearsed English,
pronouncing the name carefully and scanning Janes' face for a sign of recognition.

Janes stared dumbly at the man for a few seconds and then burst into gales of laughter.

"You're joking, man," he choked out. "Who told you to say that? That is impossible."

Cudgoe stiffened and a look of pure indignation and defiance shot into his eyes. He raised his chin haughtily and turned to walk away, but Janes reached out and grabbed his arm.

"Wait a minute. I'm sorry," he said. "But you must be mistaken. Robert Coit is a white man and a leading merchant and banker in this city. Surely you have the wrong name."

Cudgoe stood with his hands on his hips and glared at Janes. "I make no mistake. I was raised on a sugar cane plantation in Barbados," he said. "My white master taught me to read, and my mother told me many times who my father was. I saw his name written on lots of papers. Conditions in our country are very bad. The slaves have been freed, but the wages are very poor. I have come to ask my rich white father for a job."

As swiftly as he had doubted, Janes knew the man was telling the truth. The entire community knew of Coit's trips as a young man to the West Indies for the family business. There's was something about the man's bearing that reminded him of Coit, the squared shoulders, sturdy frame, and the eyes. Yes, the eyes. They held that expression of tentative surprise that he had seen so
often on Coit's face. As incredible, as scandalous, as sinful as it seemed, it was all true. Janes flushed at the knowledge, at the power he now possessed over Coit's reputation. He knew this knowledge could change everything for both of them.

The irony of the reversal of their positions -- as yet unknown to Coit -- hit him like a wall of water, like one of the hurricanes Coit had described as so dramatically rearranging the landscape in Barbados. He arranged for the two men to come to his house that night and gave them a few shillings for dinner. Cudgoe nodded solemnly as he moved off.

Passing the Gordon shipbuilding ways and Robert Coit's chandlery and lumber yard, Janes thought of the father and son, one dressed in a waistcoat in the Savings Bank of New London and the other in torn and mismatched clothing in a pigpen. He pondered how he should handle the situation. The first thing, he realized, was discretion. He must not, under any circumstances, say anything to Butler or anyone else, as sorely tempted as he might be. He must approach Coit privately.

By the time he reached the Hurlbutt wharf, Butler was gone for the day. Relieved, Janes sat down to enter the numbers for the biscuit order in the ledger, but found himself utterly distracted by the information he now possessed. All thoughts of *La Amistad* had fled, along with his interest in ship provisions. He pictured Coit as a young man, setting sail for the spice islands. He imagined the girl who was Cudgoe's mother. For long moments he was lost in contemplation. Finally, he gave up and walked home.
The triumph in his heart faded as he walked through piles of fallen leaves up Shapley Street, past the taverns and, eventually, the almshouse. A simmering anger at the man, at the system, at the injustice of it all, gripped him. He knew this anger well from the stirring days at the anti-slavery rallies, when speakers described cases of cruelty and family separations in the American South. He had stoked this same fire often through his reading, and he knew it had the power to consume him. How could Coit do this? How could he leave the woman behind to raise his son? He thought of Coit's own sons in New London, the three of them, their religious and secular educations so carefully plotted out, their physical needs so lovingly and thoroughly met. For all his flaws, Coit was a doting father to his brood of seven, and all of New London knew that devotion was genuine.

Did he actually believe the woman had no soul? That she could be used and discarded like a worn out tool? He recalled a statement Coit had made at the June church meeting at which Janes had broached the idea of discussing slavery.

"We are, none of us, in a position to judge the customs of a different culture. What is wrong in New London may be right in a different setting. I have seen slavery up close as few of you have, and it is, in all the cases I have seen, a benign institution that benefits both the master and the slave. The negroes live happily; all their needs are met. They have not a worry in the world."
Benign, indeed, Janes thought bitterly. A benign system that makes whores of women and bastards of children, all for economic gain and sexual pleasure.

By the time Adam and Cudgoe arrived that night, he was ready with a dozen questions. Cudgoe answered the questions patiently, telling the story of Coit and Lenta, as best he could. Cudgoe had been raised on Chambers' plantation, but his mother had been sold soon after Coit left to a neighboring plantation owner who loaned her out to white and black men for sexual services. She had been promoted after Coit left from the second work gang, which was comprised of teenagers, to the first gang. The teenage gang weeded the fields and sometimes planted food crops. The first gang, or adult gang, cut the cane, carried it to and operated the mills and made sugar. Promotion to the adult gang meant the women were available for sex.

Cudgoe saw her on holidays, and she had made a point of telling him about his father, who she said was the only man she had ever loved. Slavery had been abolished in Barbados in June 1834, replaced by a system of indenture under which the former slaves became paid apprentices, gradually saving up enough money to purchase their freedom. They were expected to pay rent for the huts they lived in, and some plantation owners tricked the negroes into working from dawn to dusk, well beyond the authorized 45 hours per week set up under law. Since they were no longer cared for by their masters, the former slaves needed to plant and tend their own crops. They
often had little time for such pursuits after finishing a day in the fields, and
hunger was rampant.

Cudgoe had been favored by his master, had been taught to read, and
trained as a cooper. Because he was a tradesman, he commanded respect in
the plantation's pecking order. But his mother was forced into prostitution in
Bridgetown, and his brother was jailed in the town hall prison there, where he
was beaten and made to tread the mill for stealing food from the master's
house. Conditions were harsh, and the negroes were defiant.

Fearing an insurrection by the former slaves, colonial authorities in
Barbados dismantled the indenture system long before they had originally
planned, freeing the slaves with no conditions on Aug. 1, 1838.

Able-bodied blacks soon began leaving the island, as the planters had
feared, precipitating a labor shortage and forcing the former owners to
grudgingly raise wages, but they worked the remaining field hands very hard.

Cudgoe had stayed several months, but finally decided to strike out on
his own, signing up on the John & Elizabeth, a brig bound for New London.
He did not enjoy life at sea, he said, and wanted to establish himself in the
cooper's trade in New London, with his father's help.

His mother had given him a small gold clasp in the shape of a goat that
Coit had given her. It was the only gift he ever gave her, and she told him to
show it to Coit as proof of their kinship. He held out the pin to Janes, who
studied it, the dull metal glinting in the firelight.
"Show him this," Cudgoe said earnestly. "I do not expect him to embrace me as a son, but he must help me with money. My mother, sisters and brothers are starving, and I must send them money.

Janes assured him that he would speak to Coit as soon as possible, but he wanted to hear any more details Cudgoe knew about his parents' time together. He agreed to allow Cudgoe and Adam to stay in the root cellar as soon as they received their week's wages from Lewis.

Cudgoe resumed his story, his facial expressions shifting between homesickness and anger in the flickering light. He described in detail the large plantation near Bridgetown where he was born, the slave huts and tiny gardens, the sugar mills, the curing houses, and the cane fields.

From his earliest days, his mother told him about the handsome white man who had seduced her with stories of a faraway city with the elm and chestnut-lined streets and houses that gave way to rolling hills, meadows and forests. Much of the wood used for buildings on Barbados came from New England, and Coit described for her the land where the cyprus and cedar forests were deep and pungent. He described the beautiful ships in the harbor, their sails billowing like the wings of angels as they set off across the seas.

Her mother's master, Mr. Chambers, encouraged their meetings because the slave trade with Africa had been abolished in 1807 and the only way to ensure a steady crew of field hands was to encourage the young girls to begin sexual relations early and to continue regularly. Fully half the slaves
on Barbados were creoles. While she was aware of the rigidity of the class structure, Lenta had foolishly believed young Coit was of a different quality. He was not from the island, and treated her in an almost courtly fashion. She had grown to love him and believed he would take her and his child with him when he left the island.

"But he did not even consider it," Cudgoe said blackly. "He never held me after I was born and cast her aside like a pile of dried cane leaves. And he broke the only promise he ever made her -- that he would see that we were not separated."

At the age of six Cudgoe joined the "meat pickers" gang, a group of children ages six to twelve whose daily tasks included collecting grass and fodder for the livestock. He spent the evening with his mother and siblings in the two room wattle-and-daub house in the slave village near the mill house. Often, after supper, white men would come to visit his mother and she would wearily rise and go with them into the other room, ordering the children outside.

When he was eight years old, Mr. Chambers sold Lenta and several of the other children to a neighboring plantation owner. Every year more children joined them, and the children were raised by Lenta and several other women. Cudgoe remembered crying at night for his mother. After that he saw her infrequently, on holidays and some Sundays.

Finally, unwilling or unable to go on, Cudgoe fell silent. "I am not much of a seaman," he finally confessed. "I have a trade and I am strong. If
my father does not help me, I will not go back to Barbados. This is the place my mother described. It will be my home.
CHAPTER 10: November 1839

For two days Coit had looked forward with keen anticipation to his meeting with Janes. Janes had sent a letter by courier Tuesday at the bank, asking for a private session with him at the church Thursday night. Coit was happy to oblige. Janes, he knew, must be wrestling with the terms of his suspension, trying to figure out how to word his apology in a way that would sway the committee to forgiveness and cause it to rescind its decision without forcing him to grovel too much. He would be seeking Coit's counsel, as he had Reverend MacDonald's the previous week. It was all deeply gratifying, and Coit was savoring the moment, intending to allow Janes to twist in the wind for as long as possible.

Watching this man squirm was just the antidote he needed for the heartburn that had been plaguing him. He was having difficulty with his digestion and seemed unable to settle on a satisfactory diet. His timber business with the West Indies had been faltering lately, due to labor unrest there following the freeing of the slaves, and the stress had affected his health. Charlotte's cooking didn't help, he thought wryly, recalling the half-cooked dumplings he'd had for dinner the previous evening.

It would be such a pleasure to see the self-righteous rabble rouser Janes on the defensive for once. Surely, he wasn't calling the pastor a liar or penning any inflammatory treatises these days! It was probably inevitable, Coit conceded, that Janes would eventually be allowed back into the church, perhaps as early as next summer, but he doubted that even a man like Janes
would dare raise the slavery issue again after the public humiliation he had been through. Coit's coalition was tenuous at best, and built more on Janes' unrepentant demeanor in October than on Coit's complaint, warm feelings about the minister, or strong pro-slavery sentiments.

In fact, there had been an independent effort the previous fall to ask for Reverend MacDonald's resignation, but Coit and the other deacons had managed to turn it back. Surprisingly, Janes was in New York on business and had not been involved with the effort.

Suspension was a rare occurrence in the Congregational Church, and even rarer if the communicant appealed to the generosity of spirit of the members, which Janes seemed bound to do. The man had supporters, too, though few were on the Ecclesiastical Society or in a position to help him in his present difficulties.

Coit met Janes outside the church, which was two houses away from Coit's home, and the two walked together to the meeting room. Janes was struck by how chilly it was here, the whitewashed walls frigid and the windows letting in only the tiniest glimmer of light. He studied the samplers the women and girls had stitched that were displayed on the walls, while Coit busied himself with the oil lamps.

Jane had stitched the outline of the church building four years earlier for its dedication, with an Old Testament verse highlighted against the white linen:
"I have sanctified this house, which Thou has built, to put my name there forever, and my eyes and my heart shall be there always."

3 Kings: Chap. 9, Verse 3

Janes closed his eyes and silently prayed for the right words with which to address Coit. Words that wouldn't seem sanctimonious or judgmental, as he knew was so often his manner.

"So, what is it?" Coit interrupted him abruptly, seating himself comfortably and folding his arms. "Have you thought about making a more honest admission about the piece in The Ultimatum? That might help your cause."

There was a long pause.

"I'm not here about the suspension," Janes said quietly. "I'm here about this."

Reaching into his vest pocket, he removed the clasp Cudgoe had given him and handed it to Coit.

At first Coit did not recognize the pin. He had bought it on a passing whim in the marketplace, a passing idle, and given it to Lenta that same afternoon. He hadn't thought of it again in more than 30 years. But as he looked at the piece and turned it over, something stirred in the recesses of his memory, like some wounded, giant animal struggling to rise to its feet. He felt the blood rush with fearful force into his face at the thought of her.

"Where did you get this?" he demanded, his heart pounding. He hoped he sounded unconcerned, though he knew he did not. Janes looked directly
into Coit's face. Their eyes met briefly, but Coit couldn't hold his gaze.

"From your son," Janes whispered, reaching out to grasp Coit's arm as the man swayed slightly.

Coit wrested his arm free and leaped to his feet. "You are lying!" he bellowed. "You are trying to destroy me in this city!"

Janes sat quietly, his head bowed. He thought of mentioning that Coit's complaint was doing that very thing to him, but something made him hold his tongue. "I am only a messenger," he responded. "A young man has arrived here from Barbados and is seeking your help. He asked me to speak with you."

Coit suddenly felt violently ill. How unusual for Janes to speak so mildly and with such humility! This was unfamiliar territory, and he felt his usual composure abandon him. His stomach was pitching dangerously. "I need a glass of water," he said, rushing into the adjoining room where a wooden icebox held a few provisions used for Sabbath School meetings and receptions. It was nearly dark in the pantry and he fumbled loudly through the contents of the icebox.

Janes collected his own thoughts. Perhaps he could have been less direct and more subtle, but Coit was not the kind of man to sit through any long-winded speeches. If it weren't for what Cudgoe had told him of his mother in Barbados, Janes would have felt sorry at that moment for Coit. Perhaps Coit would do right by the woman after all, though Janes doubted it.
When he re-entered the room, Coit's face was ashen, but he was on the offensive again.

"What are you going to do with this information? Who have you told? Do all your hand-wringing, verse-spewing friends at Buttonwood Corner know about this?"

"No one knows," Janes said quickly, fighting back the cresting wave of anger. "And no one will, if you help him. His name is Cudgoe and..."

"I don't want details! I want to know how to be rid of him!" Coit shouted. "How much money does he want? How much do you want? Can you get him to go away?"

Janes was genuinely shocked, both at Coit's reaction, and at the next statement he found coming out of his own mouth. He had sworn to Jane that he would not use a former slave as a bartering chip, though he had been inwardly wrestling with the issue since the day he met Cudgoe.

"He wants a job, and money to send to his mother in Barbados, Mr. Coit. And I want that suspension rescinded immediately -- and not six months from now."

Coit calmed down then, immense relief showing in his face. These were the kinds of terms he could consider and act on. He had never known Janes to be so reasonable. Like a deal for a sloop load of white oak timber for a shipyard or a bank loan to build a new tavern, the man wanted something tangible. Coit did this kind of business every day. He knew he was out of the dark. He pulled on his sideburns thoughtfully.
"What kind of job?" he asked.

"In a cooperage," Janes replied. "I think that and some cash for his family and a horse would be enough. That is, unless you were to...

"No, no, no, that will have to be enough," Coit said. "I'll get the money and horse to you, Mr. Janes, and I'll send word about a job for him. You will have to be his reference, though. My name cannot be connected with him. And there is not to be a word. You must promise me that."

He paused. "This is like trusting the devil himself for me, you know," he muttered.

Janes smiled for the first time. "The Lord works in mysterious ways, Deacon Coit," he remarked as they stood up. Coit practically spat as the bile rose in his throat. But, as they parted, he said, "I'll call a church meeting in December to deal with the other issue, as long as you are silent about this. Prepare a written response. I'll talk with the pastor, and you should too."

For the first time in weeks, Janes felt carefree and light-hearted, as though he were ten years younger. While he disliked Coit intensely, he knew the man would be as good as his word in a business deal.

Attorney Roger Baldwin had written from New Haven to both Janes and Haley over the past week, asking for their cooperation in testifying before the District Court in January. Baldwin wanted both men to tell Judge Judson about the conversation Janes had had with the Spaniard Ruiz aboard La
Amistad in August. Janes had written to Baldwin about the conversation shortly after the schooner arrived in New London. While Janes thoroughly intended to follow his conscience in the matter, he knew there would be heavy publicity about the trial, and it would complicate matters for him at home.

"What a relief!" Jane exclaimed when he described the arrangement to her. "Even if the church members disagree with your involvement in the case, Coit's support will help you win the day! God has intervened, and justice will prevail in both cases."

Despite her cheerful words, he saw at that moment a faint flicker of something that resembled doubt pass over her face, but it wasn't until several days later when he recognized its source. She, as usual, understood him better than he understood himself.

Cudgoe also seemed pleased with the terms, and thanked Janes profusely. Janes could sense the man's disappointment that Coit was not interested in meeting him, but he knew Cudgoe was realistic about the matter. Cudgoe settled in to live with the Janes until he could afford to rent a room. After Adam went to sea on the Mentor, Cudgoe moved into an upstairs bedroom, an unusual domestic arrangement for the family. All the other blacks who had lived with them had been runaway slaves and had stayed in the root cellar and moved about under cover of darkness. But Cudgoe had manumission papers from Barbados, of which he was quite proud, so was
free to come and go as he pleased. He was happy to run errands and do household chores.

Coit acted quickly, and within two days Cudgoe was working at the Frink whaling firm as a cooper, making hogsheads, casks and staves and, occasionally, planing lumber. He soon came to recognize Mr. Coit as he strode along the waterfront and wharves, but always kept a respectful distance. He eventually found a room he could afford near the cooperage.

Reverend MacDonald proved more of a problem. He was angry and incredulous when Coit told him of his intention to bring Janes' suspension up for a vote of recission. Coit agreed to wait until at least after Thanksgiving, explaining to Janes that it was a compromise he must accept in order to give the minister time to adjust. Meanwhile, Coit suggested, Janes should call on the minister and try to discuss their differences. Regardless of the outcome, he pledged to support the reinstatement.

The weather turned sharply colder in late November, with blasts of near-freezing air sweeping up the narrow streets from the river. New Londoners pulled their winter woolens and quilts out of chests and drawers. The early evening air rang with the sound of hammers on awls, and piles of firewood grew steadily by every doorstep and along the hedgerows.

Janes met with Reverend MacDonald on two occasions, both times at the church in the company of Dr. Isaac Porter, a physician and deacon in the church. Under Porter's gentle prodding, Janes recognized that what he had mistaken for the stirrings of abolitionist sentiment in the young man was
merely an intense desire to appease him and his colleagues and prevent them from forcing the issue of abolition in the congregation. Appeasement, in the guise of geniality, had been the young man's tactic. For Janes, compromise had never came easily, and black and white distinctions were easier and cleaner than the many shades of gray he was lately encountering. Following hard on the heels of his deal with Coit, he felt keenly the double-edged sword of his personal choice. While he took pleasure in the hard-driven bargain, he mourned the dilution of his purest instincts in this cauldron of complacency and convenience.

The two discussed Mr. Clark's departure, with Janes insisting the man's drinking problem should have been discussed with a wider group before he was given a referral to another congregation. Reverend MacDonald, while acknowledging the point, insisted he had not misled Janes about his intentions.

"There are simply some matters best left to the discretion of a pastor," he said. "You did not know the state of the man's soul as I did."

As the days passed and the town hunkered down for another New England winter, Janes felt an unfamiliar sense of distancing and dissociation overtake him, a slow shriveling of the spirit. Without voicing it, he began to consider his years in New London in a philosophical vein, pondering how the seven-year period had changed and broadened him, and, most of all, how it had reduced him. It was almost as though he was considering someone else's
life. A thin blanket of snow lay over the port on November 23, two days before Thanksgiving, and Janes felt himself numb and somnolent beneath it. The people and events that a few weeks earlier seemed so vibrant and essential to his existence mattered little.

Janes noticed his withdrawal, for it extended to her. She understood that change was coming, and there was much unsaid between them. It was disturbing, with all the world pulling up the quilts and hovering near the hearths, to feel her domestic life so unsettled. It struck her as ironic to feel such agitation when his business demands were lightening and the quiet season for the port was just beginning. She made several trips to the graveyard, fervently praying for guidance.

Janes knew, as certainly as he knew anything in this uncertain time, that his period of active involvement with the Second Church was over. Something had snapped during his conversation with the Reverend MacDonald, some invisible thread of concern and sympathy that connected him with the church community he had helped to build. The thread had been there through his trial, his anger and pain, throbbing and intensifying at each new betrayal and injustice. As he came to understand the other man's position, he saw the intractability of the situation. He had gloried, at first, in the compromise he'd reached with Coit -- praising God for sending Cudgoe as an emissary of justice.

As the days passed, however, he was increasingly struck by the senselessness of it all. While he saw clearly the futility of making an open
demand for Coit to acknowledge his own son, both because of his promise to Coit and the sensibilities of the community, he knew there was a time when, even now, at this late point, he would have done it. There was also a time when he would not have bargained Cudgoe's future to his own benefit, regardless of how perfectly the two goals meshed and how much easier it would make his own life.

In his soul, he felt he had done a great wrong. But he also knew he would not move to reverse his actions. It was the kind of ambiguity he used to rail against in others. He now recognized the same mix of good intentions, ego, and thinly disguised greed in himself.

While the urgency of the cause of abolition burned hotter in his soul than ever, his hopes for effecting change in this community had dimmed. The minds that he once saw as fertile soil for his message now seemed closed and unavailable, as though a field of stumps had replaced a field of pliant, brown loam. Had it always been thus, and he had failed to see it? A few men, and even more women, offered promise, and occasionally, inspiration. Beyond that, nothing. Nothing but the gray November skies, and the promise of ice and snow.

If the blacks from *La Amistad* were allowed to go free, if their obvious humanity were somehow recognized, what benefit would there be beyond the 39 souls who would be freed by the courts? Such a decision would not budge the legal standing of slavery in the U.S. one iota, as long as men like Robert
Coit commanded the power they now did. As long as the Constitution counted blacks as three-fifths of a man.

If he were now readmitted to "communion" in the church, what benefit would it afford his spiritual development? It would be a chance to fight the anti-slavery fight once more, and only that. There was no one in the church to whom he felt drawn by respect or admiration. He now saw most of the community leaders, who with him had built the church, as men of shifting principles whose true interest was economic advancement and personal gain through the evil triangle of rum, molasses and slaves. That they did this while going to church was the ultimate hypocrisy. And his principal joy -- his work with escaped slaves -- had slowed to a trickle with the onslaught of cold weather.

At 38, Janes came to understand, also, that he was no longer a young man, nor one who could fight endlessly for causes in the idealistic belief that change was around the corner. He had seen enough of life to realize that change, while coming, was very slow and far from inevitable. Daily compromise with slavery was inevitable, were they to stay here. The sort of deal he had made with Coit and was trying to forge with the pastor would become commonplace.

Where could he be of most value to the cause? The answer, while far from clear, no longer rang back: New London.

In this frame of mind, he sat down to write another response to Coit's charges. As he wrote, he was striving not for readmission to New London's
congregation, but for a ticket to a congregation elsewhere, a place where he could grow in his Christian commitment and feel at home. As he wrote, he exercised his newfound gifts of diplomacy and compromise with enormous literary skill. A younger Janes would have termed it artifice.

"To the Second Congregational Church in New London. I, Dwight P. Janes, a member of said church, against whom a complaint has been preferred by Robt. Coit, also a member of said church, respond:

To the first charge of having neglected and refused for more than a year to unite with this church in celebrating the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, I reply that I have absented myself from Communion for reasons which at the time appeared to me valid and satisfactory; those reasons it is -- neither necessary nor would it be expedient for me to state. I find them insufficient to justify the course which I have pursued. I have erred in judgment, have done wrong and desire to return to the communion and fellowship of the church. As my conduct has brought reproach upon the cause of religion, I regret the course I have pursued.

Of the second charge of saying what was untrue about the pastor and contradicting him in a disrespectful manner in a church meeting respecting the conversation about Mr. Clark, I would say that there are three particulars in which I stated that I believe Mr. Macdonald said that which was not true: in relation to his sentiments on the subject of abolition, in relation to the subject of total abstinence, and in relation to granting a letter to Mr. Clark.

Mr. MacDonal observed that when he came to New London he found the subject of abolition interesting many of the members of the church, and creating an alienation of feeling between the brethren. His object was to heal this breach. He had frequent conversations with both parties and went with each as far as he could without doing violence to his own opinions, and sometimes listened in silence to opinions and statements from me which were
repugnant to his own feelings, rather than drive me further off, and that he could easily conceive how a person of my sanguine temperament might have taken more than he intended I should. If he erred at all it was in this -- it was from the best of motives. In these conversations I understood from Mr. MacDonald that he was willing that addresses on the subject of slavery should be made in the monthly concerts. In accordance with this belief, I brought the subject into one of these meetings but from remarks then made by the pastor, it was obvious that a misunderstanding on this point existed between us -- and in this way I may have taken more from his previous conversations than he intended I should as respects his views on this whole subject.

Temperance and total abstinence were subjects which deeply interested the church when Mr. MacDonald was installed over it. I have explained my views on this topic earlier, namely that I believe abstinence to mean a complete refraining, while he views it differently.

In relation to Mr Clark, a member of this church who applied for dismissal: Mr. MacDonald was notified in writing that I objected to granting a letter of certificate to Mr. Clark that he was in good and regular standing. The letter was placed by me on grounds which I considered good and Scriptural. A letter from Mr. Clark explaining facts was shown to me by the pastor to induce me to withdraw my opposition. My objections remained in full force. Mr. MacDonald said he would lay the issue before the full church. (Mr. MacDonald said he said he should probably lay it before the church). The letter was issued to Mr. Clark without first presenting the question to the church. I am charged with contradicting Mr. MacDonald in a disrespectful way. I should have treated him with Christian courtesy. In reference to the harsh expression imputed to accuse him of intentional falsehood, I freely confess I've done wrong.

On the matter of The Ultimatum, I have said and repeat I am not the author. Finding an interest in the general news maintained in it, I circulated the first and also subsequent numbers. I suggested modifications in language to make it more mild, but my suggestion was not adopted.
In urging these sentiments on abolition on this congregation, it is probable I have never lacked zeal -- you will bear me witness that there has been no lack of interest manifested by those who did not view the subject in the same light with myself. In the excitement of the moment and when met by zealous opponents, or when condemning acts which I thought were wrong, I may have been influenced by personal feeling -- may have said things which were harsh. I think I have shown an unchristian spirit. If such has been the case, I acknowledge it was wrong -- I hope brethren and sisters will forgive it and earnestly pray that I may be kept from every thing wrong in manner and spirit in future.

New London
Signed Dwight P. Janes
CHAPTER 11: November, December 1839

For Jane, too, November was a month of deepening, and sometimes bitter, introspection. The bare arms of the trees seemed to preach sterility and stasis to the barren landscape. Smoke curled from the chimneys, and she busied herself about the kitchen, but her mind was elsewhere.

Her brother, Captain Francis Allyn, who was mayor of New London and the official guardian of their three nieces, had arranged to take over their care. The girls moved into his substantial house the first week of December. She still saw them on a daily basis and Sarah, in particular, often chose to spend her free time with them. While she knew her brother was more financially able to care for the girls and that the Foote relatives in Cayuga were also eager to help, Jane could not help but feel saddened at the sudden emptiness in the house.

Plans were underway to send Nancy and, eventually, the other girls within a few years to Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in South Hadley, Massachusetts. The school had just opened two years earlier, and the stagecoach line that connected Hartford to Brattleboro stopped at South Hadley, offering ease of access from New London. The family was thrilled with the prospect of sending Nancy, a serious and excellent student, to the first such academy for women in the nation to be trained as a missionary and teacher, and the other girls might follow in their turn.

Jane was an ardent admirer of Mary Lyon's plans "to elevate the intellectual and religious character of the future mothers of New England,"
though her heart was heavy at the thought of having the girls so far away. Her sister, Rebecca, had organized the local chapter of the Women's Missionary Society, and operated the meeting for several years out of the parlor of the very house on Alms Street where Dwight and Jane now lived. Rebecca's girlhood friend, Sarah Huntington, was married to the Reverend Dr. Eli Smith, one of the first missionaries to Syria, and her sister's interest in the foreign missions had grown through frequent correspondence with her. Jane knew Rebecca would be overjoyed at the new prospects for her daughters.

As propitious as all these events seemed for the girls, it felt to Jane that, once again, she was being left behind, childless and bereft. Dwight's initial euphoria about Coit's change of heart seemed to have passed as quickly as it came, and he was sullen and distracted. Jane's thoughts increasingly turned to her sister, Abby, in Montreal and their eight children.

Abby wrote to Jane sporadically, but her days and nights were full with household tasks. The children ranged in age from 17-year-old Thomas Mumford to one-year-old Henry Dwight. Jane had missed them tremendously during the seven years since she and Dwight had returned to New London. She had a special fondness for 10-year-old Mary, who was their godchild, and whom Abby declared in letters was the "spitting image" of her Aunt Jane.

Lewis' work was taking him more frequently to Ohio, where he had extensive mercantile connections, and Abby often was left alone for months at a time to manage the household. Thinking about the children in Montreal,
Jane made a trip to the fancy new general store that had opened near the Parade.

"How much is this one?" Jane asked the clerk, picking up a wooden doll with hair made of straw-colored yarn she spotted on the shelf at the J.N. Harris grocery. For the first time, Harris was carrying a supply of toys for Christmas. Giving in to the impulse, Jane purchased several toys, including two other dolls, and carted them home to mail to Montreal.

She knew the $10 dollar bill was an extravagance they could ill afford, more than the round-trip fare by stage to Hartford, but it seemed little enough to renew the bond with her sister's family.

The second week in December, Janes received notice from the church that a meeting on his petition for reinstatement was scheduled for Tuesday, December 17. He dutifully prepared several copies of his written statement, which Jane read and pronounced "much more suitable."

The statement was read aloud by Reverend Daniel Huntington, who was principal of the New London Female Academy where both Nancy and Sarah were students. Major Thomas Perkins asked Janes if he intended to substitute the new statement for the old, particularly in regard to Coit's complaint about his role in publishing *The Ultimatum*. Janes replied that he wished to withdrew his earlier statement in its entirety.

The response was immediate and positive, with Coit declaring himself "completely satisfied with the spirit of Brother Janes' statement." Others, however, requested a few days to consider their decision and were amazed at Coit's rejoinder.
"In the spirit of the Christmas season now upon us, I would urge all of you to act in good faith upon this matter," Coit urged. "Clearly, Brother Janes has approached us in an attitude of genuine sincerity and regret. Shall we enter into this season of peace with such disharmony?"

Dr. Porter moved "that the answers of Brother Janes, as read to this meeting, be regarded as satisfactory." After a brief discussion, the meeting was adjourned to Thursday, December 19.

On December 19, the group voted unanimously that "the vote passed October 15 suspending Janes from communion be rescinded and he be restored to all privileges of membership."

What happened next took not only Janes, but the entire church community by surprise.

Reverend MacDonald, who had sat by quietly through both meetings after relinquishing his usual role as moderator, rose to speak. "I am pleased with the unanimity of the meeting so far as it manifested unity in the church," he remarked. "Nonetheless, I view the acceptance of Brother Janes' statements as implying the possibility that I have been guilty of falsehood, as charged by Brother Janes."

Butler, Coit and several others animatedly disagreed with his assessment. A motion was quickly passed to reassure the pastor that their feeling was that "Brother Janes misunderstood our pastor" in the conversations described in the complaint.
The following Monday, a special meeting was called at the church by
the Rev. Abel McEwen, pastor of the First Church. Reverend MacDonald
was not present, but Janes and almost the entire congregation were.

Rev. McEwen read the following statement from the pastor:

"Respected Brethren and Friends:

Never have I undertaken a more unpleasant duty than that which is
now before me. The present exigency is, however, one I have long
anticipated and dreaded and would gladly have avoided --and yet I don't find,
now it is arrived, that like some other anticipated evils, it has been
exaggerated from being viewed at a distance. The hesitation with which I
have been drawn to my present purpose few can imagine, and it is only by the
settled conviction that I am on the path of duty which moves me forward.
When I assumed the pastorate of the church, I think I could with sincerity
adopt the language of the Apostle: "Ye are in my heart to die and live with
you." 2 Cor. 7:3. It was my desire and hope that here I should be permitted
to labor, so long as the Master saw fit to continue me in the vineyard.

But the sanguine expectations with which I commenced my labors here
I was early led to apprehend might be disappointed. And now my worst fears
are realized. I have encountered trial upon trial, and with what fortitude I
could summon, have endeavored to bear up, encouraged with the hope of a
happy issue, in due season, out of all of them. --- Fallacious hope!

I make no pretensions to infallibility as to the manner in which I have
discharged my duties. I am conscious of many faults, probably more than you
have even discerned. When I commenced my work here, I was not, by any
means, fully aware of the true state of things in the church; and I remained in
this ignorance several months. It was at length discovered that the church had
been agitated by exciting topics, prior to my assuming the pastoral charge,
and that there was less harmony than had been supposed to exist among these
individuals of high standing and influence. A sermon which was preached
June 10, 1838 and which was greatly misunderstood, and by some, I fear,
misrepresented, produced at the time considerable sensation and manifestly increased the number of the disaffected. From that period, with but brief intermissions, I have been compelled to struggle against a determined opposition. In the meantime, the state of religion in the church was been extremely low.

After I returned from a journey in autumn 1838, I learned that movement had been made for my dismissal, with which leading persons were at first inclined to coincide. What occurred to arrest this movement I never ascertained.

I have struggled along to the present time against coldness, obloquy and the misrepresentation of my motives on the part of some.

The following are my reasons for leaving the church: my continuance here is not expedient or profitable for the Glory of God. I have found such opposition that I cannot pursue my duties. The decision regarding Brother Janes places me in a disagreeable attitude I feel it is very different from what I had a right to expect. I have some reason to think my removal will be overruled to promote harmony. The affect upon my health and spirits has admonished me of the necessity of seeking dismissal.

Rev. James M. MacDonald

A dead silence hung over the congregation as Reverend McEwen concluded. As he stepped out of the pulpit, Butler moved swiftly into it, his eyes alive with anger and his hands shaking.

"I move that the church has the fullest confidence in the integrity and piety of our pastor -- that we are much pained by his feeling, and that the vote on Janes did not reflect on the charter of the pastor and would not have been taken if we had felt so."
Janes stood up and walked to the back of the church. As the congregation voted to support Butler’s motion, Janes walked out the door and down the stairs. He would never enter the Second Church building again.
CHAPTER 12: January, 1840

"Hold my seat," Janes whispered hoarsely to Savillion Haley. "I've got to get some air." Rushing up the center aisle past the crowded courtroom benches, Janes wove his way through the shoulder-to-shoulder crowd standing in the back of the room, necks craned and ears cupped to catch the words of the black man, James Covey, as he testified.

Janes barely made it to the back hallway before he coughed explosively, a loud guffawing sound bursting from his mouth and echoing down the marble-floored corridor. He had caught a terrible cold in the drafty hotel room in New Haven, and it was making his effort to pay close attention to the trial a misery. His nose ran, and his head and eyes ached. Stepping outside the building, he inhaled deeply and walked down the steps to the public courtyard, where he pumped water from the well and drank deeply. The cool water soothed his dry throat, though he shivered in the cool air, having left his scarf and gloves on the bench beside Haley.

New Haven was so much more advanced and progressive than New London, he thought, taking in the wrought iron street lamps and brick sidewalks. The city shared the honor with Hartford of serving as the state's twin capitals. The streets were alive with people, many of whom had come from the countryside in hopes of witnessing the trial of the blacks from La Amistad. But most of them had been disappointed, unable to get seats or even a space to stand. Janes and Haley were fortunate because they had been
called as witnesses and were guaranteed spots near the front of the room when the trial opened.

The long delay between the close of the case in Hartford in November and its reopening in New Haven in January was due to the illness of the black interpreter, James Covey. Covey lived in New York City, and had been too ill to travel to Hartford in the late fall.

Janes and Haley were the first to testify that morning, January 7. Defense lawyers Baldwin, Staples and Sedgwick, repeated the arguments from the November session, reiterating their position before the black-robed Judge Judson that the blacks were human beings with natural rights, and should not be considered as property.

The clerk read the libel for Lieutenant Thomas R. Gedney of the U.S. Surveying Navy, which listed the cargo aboard La Amistad when she was captured: 1 box with 4 fowling pieces, 1 crate and 11 boxes of crockery, 1 can of sugar, 25 bags of beans, 25 boxes of raisins, 50 sets of horse equipment, 10 dozen Moroccan skins, 5 dozen calf skins, 5 saddles, 20 sides sole leather, iron drums, 3 iron kettles, 4 packages Holland linen, 4 dozen parasols, 40 pieces of muslin, 200 boxes of vermacella, 1 dozen shawls, fans, gloves, shirts, dress patterns, buttons, ribbons, blankets, hardware, coarse linen, books, olive oil, jerked beef, ladies hose, silks, linens, $250 in coin, and 54 slaves. Gedney estimated the value of the cargo at $40,000.

The slaves, 51 males and three young females, were valued at $25,000, and the rest of the cargo -- now warehoused in New London -- at $15,000.
The goods, according to U.S. Marshal Norris Willcox, were in the charge of the Collector of the Port, who charged 50 cents a day for its storage.

General Jirah Isham, the New London attorney who was representing Gedney and Lieutenant Richard W. Meade's salvage claims, next called Janes to testify about the October 23 trip with Capt. Matthew on the revenue cutter USS Washington to assess whether the schooner was in international waters when she was taken. Janes had wrangled a spot on the cutter through the auspices of Deacon Porter, whose son, Midshipman D.D. Porter, was assigned to the Washington and had led the party of six men assigned to row a boat up to investigate the schooner on August 26, the day she was discovered off Culloden Point. Deacon Porter was not an abolitionist, but he had anti-slavery sympathies that he did not advertise, and had helped Janes get attached to the reconnaissance party.

"Lieutenant. Meade anchored the cutter where he said La Amistad was seized," Janes related to the hushed courtroom. "Then we went on shore. She lay in two-and-one-half fathoms, sounded to two fathoms. There was little indentation to the shoreline."

Janes's testimony, in essence, supported the claims of the military officers, who contended La Amistad had been at least a half mile from the shore of Long Island when she was captured. This placed the ship on the high seas in international waters. That determination undercut arguments of the abolitionist lawyers that the case should be removed from Connecticut jurisdiction and tried in New York, where antislavery feeling ran higher. But
Janes knew what he had seen, and he would not lie under oath, even for such a cause.

It appeared to some observers that Janes was going to be a witness friendly to the Spaniards' claims, and the courtroom was suddenly abuzz with whispers that Janes, a known abolitionist, was damaging the blacks' cause.

Such speculation was short-lived. Baldwin next called Haley, who limped slowly to the witness box, his thumbs thrust under his waistcoat and behind his suspenders, as though to help him balance as he walked. He had abandoned his walking stick on the bench beside Janes, determined not to appear weak as he addressed the court. Janes fingered the carved horse head that formed the handle of the cane as Haley testified.

Baldwin asked Haley to recall the events of Aug. 29, when he and Janes attended the federal inquiry aboard the Washington in New London harbor. Haley began to describe the conversation between Janes and the Spaniard Ruiz, but was suddenly interrupted by District Attorney William S. Holabird. Holabird announced he was appearing on behalf of the Van Buren administration and had merged its claims with those of the Spaniards, Ruiz and Montes. He argued that the Spaniards, who at that point were without counsel, must be represented.

Judson quickly ruled that he would allow the court to later hear the claims of Ruiz and Montes that the blacks were their property and not free men. Another New Londoner, attorney William P. Cleveland, was also in the courtroom, and Janes eyed him with suspicion as he sat at the defense table.
Cleveland was a late entrant, representing two other Spaniards who were laying claim to some of the schooner's cargo.

Finally allowed to speak freely, Haley continued his testimony. "I stood by and heard Mr. Janes ask Ruiz questions," Haley said. "In reply to a question about whether the blacks could speak Spanish, Ruiz said none could speak Spanish except Antonio because they were just from Africa," he said.

To clarify, Haley said Janes had asked first if any of the blacks could speak English, and then if they could speak Spanish. He said no one but himself was present with Janes to hear Ruiz's statement at the rear of the brig's cabin.

"Mr. Ruiz said one black could speak a few words of English that he probably acquired on the coast of Africa," Haley said.

Did Ruiz say then that he owned the blacks, Baldwin asked.

"He did not say in my hearing that he owned them," Haley replied. "But there were a number of gentlemen in the cabin who may have heard such a thing."

The lawyers had tried to call the newspaper editor, John Jay Hype, to testify, but he had ignored the subpoena, claiming his position as an editor precluded him from being involved in the trial.

Baldwin next recalled Janes to the stand. Wiping his nose with his handkerchief, Janes came forward, red-eyed and achy, and swore the oath.

He described for Baldwin how he had followed Ruiz to the back of the cabin. "I inquired of him if any could speak English. His answer was, 'None
but one, and he a few words.' And then I inquired if they could speak Spanish. He said, 'No, they were just from Africa.'"

Janes said he told Ruiz he wished to know "all their circumstances." "He then said that 48 or 49 belonged to him and 4 to Montes. He said the captain and cook were killed, the cabin boy saved. The cook and the cabin boy were slaves of the captain of the schooner."

Holabird strode forward to cross-examine Janes, who looked ashen and was coughing sporadically. Holabird asked if Ruiz told him where he got the slaves. "I do not recollect that he told me where he got them," Janes responded. "The crew consisted of five, he told me, and there were two passengers. He said they had been at sea three or four days when the incident occurred."

His testimony was powerful and blessedly brief. Shortly after returning to his seat, he had been seized by the violent urge to cough that forced him to leave the room. Feeling somewhat refreshed, he hastened back to hear Covey's testimony, settling onto the bench with a sigh.

Tappan and Baldwin had followed Janes' earliest advice to find an interpreter to speak to the negroes in their own language. They had been unable to find the man Janes alluded to in his first letter, but had persevered, nonetheless. Covey, like Cinque and most of the other negroes, was a native of Mende. He had learned to speak English in Sierra Leone. Nearly eight years earlier, in 1831, he had been kidnapped in a manner similar to that described by the negroes aboard La Amistad. He also had been enslaved in the frightful prison at Lomboko and placed aboard a slaver bound for Cuba.
In Covey's case, however, he never reached Cuba. The slave ship was captured by a British ship, and Covey was freed. He later enlisted on the British man-of-war Buzzard, whose captain had agreed to allow him to testify in the case of La Amistad.

Covey said his conversations with Cinque and the other captives indicated all but three were from Mende. All had Mende names and they all recognized the names of Mende rivers that Covey mentioned.

Another black man, Charles Pratt, who also had spoken with the captives, confirmed Covey's assessment. Pratt, who had been born in Sierra Leone, was the captain's cook on the Buzzard, and learned the Mende language while engaged in trade on the African coast.

Janes and Haley were pleased with the events of the day. Despite his lingering cough and exhaustion, Janes made an effort to enjoy dinner at the Red Lion Inn with his friend. Haley had a proposal to make.

"Dwight, I am inspired by the possibilities this trial offers that at least a handful of negroes may ultimately be freed," he said. "I have a plan that will go a long way toward helping stabilize the negro community in New London, and may even serve these very people if they are ever freed by the court. I would like to build some houses near my own place on Hempstead Street, and sell them at a reduced price to free negroes like your friend Cudgoe."

He paused in obvious anticipation of Janes's approval. "Imagine what a scandal I will again cause!" he chuckled, beaming with delight at the scheme.
"What do you say? Why not become a partner with me in engendering the amalgamation of blacks and whites and instigating an insurrection of slaves in the South? What do you have to lose now, Dwight, with all that has happened?"

Haley grinned. He had made a joking reference to the stated opinion of Judge Judson in the 1833 case of Canterbury schoolteacher Prudence Crandall. Miss Crandall had opened a school for black girls about 30 miles north of New London that soon raised the ire of her neighbors, including Judson, who argued the school would result in the importation to the rural hamlet of more than its rightful share of blacks. This, of course, would lower the value of property.

Judson, who ever since the infamous case in his hometown had a reputation as pro-slavery and anti-negro, had declared that the true motive of the abolitionists in supporting black education was to foment a black slave revolt.

Baldwin, Tappan, Janes and the other abolitionists were distressed when Judson was assigned to the case and worried that his opposition to equal education for blacks hinted at a likely negative ruling to the attempt to free the blacks from *La Amistad*. They were, nonetheless, giving the case their all because the publicity and public sympathy for the imprisoned negroes was advancing their cause, regardless of its outcome.

Before Janes could answer, Haley explained that he had hired 18-year-old William Hempstead, who had recently returned from a year in Canada.
and was planning to marry his cousin, Elizabeth Hempstead. Elizabeth was a younger sister of Martha and Mary, Janes's friends from the church.

In addition to working in the paint store, Haley hoped Hempstead would help him build the houses for the negroes.

Janes moved a basket of bread aside and placed his hand over Haley's. "My friend, I have the deepest respect for your motives, and I would help you if I could. But Jane and I have resolved to leave New London for Montreal as soon as we return from the trial. I was planning to tell you during the ride home. Your plan sorely tempts me, but the unpleasantness in the church has broken my spirit. I am feeling the need to get away, and Jane has graciously agreed to the decision."

While not surprised, for he had sensed a weightiness in Janes' mood that ran deeper than mere ill health, Haley was clearly deeply disappointed. "So, you will leave us behind to carry on the fight alone?" he muttered, shaking his head and scowling into his glass.

"I will continue fighting against slavery wherever I am until it is abolished from the face of the earth," Janes replied with intensity. "And I can still be a help to you, the Bolleses, the Hempsteads and the others. As you shelter fleeing slaves and send them north, I will be waiting to help. I will be the North Star that you aim them toward."

The morning stage brought bittersweet news from New London. Jane wrote that on Jan. 7, at the very hour when Janes and Haley were testifying,
the Council of Pastors of the Congregational churches in New London, Ledyard, East Lyme, Stonington and Groton had voted to allow the dismissal of Rev. McDonald and "to dissolve his relation with the Second Church."

"The pastors said he was too much affected by opposition within his church," Jane reported solemnly.

The January 8 morning testimony started out unpromisingly, as Professor Josiah W. Gibbs of Yale College tried to explain why the terms used by the Spaniards to describe the status of blacks -- bozales and lados -- carried important distinctions that were important to understand in this case.

Judson suddenly added unexpected drama when he interrupted Gibbs to say he didn't really think such specificity of language was necessary. "I am fully convinced that the men were recently from Africa, and it is idle to deny it," Judson declared, ending in one brief sentence the argument over whether the blacks were slaves or free men, and setting the tone for his ultimate decision to free them.

Janes and Haley stayed in New Haven until the trial ended January 14, returning to New London as a nor-easter blew snow up the coastline, making the long trip even more treacherous.

As he jostled back and forth in the stagecoach while it bounced over the frozen ruts, banging shoulders frequently with Haley, Janes closed his eyes and thought about home. He pictured Jane, surrounded by barrels of household goods, waiting for him. As when they were first married 11 years earlier, they would be setting out on a new life. He sighed deeply. There was
so much to do, he thought as he nodded off. But the slate of his soul would be wiped clean of compromises. He was ready to write a new chapter.
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