July 23, 1840

By Mr Dunham one of the Teachers of the Africans a la Amistad

A. M. A. ARCHIVES
NO. F1-4737

New Haven July 23rd 1840

Lewis Tappan Esqr

Dear Sir

I have recieved your favor of the 21st in answer to James Covey & in reply to your enquiries would say that I had been conversing with Mr Griswold a few days since on the subject about which you enquire & had about concluded in my own mind that it would be best not to keep James here under present circumstances. I found Mr Griswold not so decided in the matter altho he was not clear that it was necessary to keep him. I talked some about his leaving last Spring directly after the close of the trial - but the poor Africans who were much cast down with the news of the long continuance of their case begged me with much earnestness that he might remain, as he was so necessary to them as a medium of communication to make known their wants, & to gain information. One of them with much feeling & sorrow said to me "I dont know how long I live, may be I die in America - I die I no want go to hell - me want to go heaven - Jim Covey go home you no talk Mendi - I no talk America - me sick nobody talk to me". On account of their importunities I gave up the idea of parting with James at that time. He has been generally very attentive & has rendered valuable aſsistance, more particularly in conveying religious instruction

While we could do it, we employed him in teaching them to read both while the teachers were using him as a medium of communication & when they were absent.

But he & Pendleton could not agree & he was excluded except when the teachers were with him. So that now half of his time is unoccupied except as he goes to the rooms in college sometimes & is instructed by some of his friends there.

Communication can now be had pretty freely with the Africans without the intervention of the Interpreter, except in the more abstract subjects of religious truth. But even in this matter, Mr Magill, the present instructor, thinks that but little inconvenience would arise from James' absence; as the Africans can converse very intelligently in english & several of them can read in the Bible with a good degree of fluency, & understandingly.

As to "whether it is for James' good that he should remain?" I do not know as it is. I think that he has been benefitted & improved by his residence here. His attendance on Sabbath School, & public worship - the instructions of the young men in college & his own attempts at instructing the Africans, & interpreting, & aſsisting the teachers has been of essential benefit to him. But as so much of his time is now unemployed I should think on the whole in view of the expence of keeping him here that he had better leave. After recieving your letter I called to day to see Mr Baldwin, but did not ~~see~~ find him & do not yet know whether he considers James' presence no longer necessary for the trial. I presume however that he will not as it is supposed that no more testimony will be used before the Supreme Court. & from the fact that the Africans can now so well express themselves in english & so well understand the enquiries made of them.

I shall however see Mr Baldwin tomorrow & ascertain & will write you again as I understand that Mr Dunham who has been an instructor of the Africans is going to New York in the morning by whom I shall send this. He can give you a better description of the present state of these injured men than I can by letter & to him I refer you for any information you may wish to obtain. On receiving your reply to this, I will send James down to you, unless you Mr Baldwin should think his presence here necessary.

The Africans are now removed out to Westville about two miles out from the city, in consequence of the demolishing of the Old Prison for the purpose of erecting a new one on its site.

Truly Yours

Amos Townsend Junr

Z. A. M. A. ARCHIVES
NO.

I have seen & conversed with Mr Griswold again this evening & he concurs in the opinion that Jas need not remain.

A. Townsend Jr
July 23/40
Africans.

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Cloths for [illegible]
Soap
Saws 6

To be ans.d any [illegible]
returns. wrote so to him
27 July

Lewis Tappan Esq
Pearl Street
New York

Mr. Dunham.

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& authority.

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See Bro.s Atty.

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J. W. Tappan