

# African-American Passages: Black Lives in the 19th Century

## Episode 2: The Long Journey of Omar Ibn Said

[0:00:00]

From the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

[Singing]:

Do lord, do lord, do remember me, do lord, do lord, do remember me, oh  
do lord, do lord, do remember, oh do lord remember me, oh when my  
blood runs chilly and cold, do remember me, oh...

Adam Rothman:

Greetings from the Library of Congress and welcome to *African-American Passages: Black Lives in the 19th Century*. This is a podcast that draws from the Library of Congress's manuscript collections to explore African American history in the era of slavery, the Civil War, and emancipation. My name is Adam Rothman. I teach history at Georgetown University, and I'm currently a Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the Kluge Center at the Library of Congress.

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In this episode of *African-American Passages*, we will be tracing the long journey of a remarkable man named Omar Ibn Said. Omar's autobiography, written in Arabic, was recently acquired by the Library of Congress as part of a unique and important collection of documents. Omar was born in West Africa in 1770. At the age of thirty-seven, he was captured in war, sold to slave traders, and shipped across the Atlantic ocean to Charleston, South Carolina. He lived the rest of his long life enslaved in the United States and never saw freedom again. Yet despite this ordeal, Omar managed to leave his mark on history by writing an autobiography and other letters as well. He made an impression in his own time and now again in ours.

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To talk about the long journey of Omar Ibn Said, I'm joined by two distinguished guests. The first is Mary-Jane Deeb, who is the chief of the African and Middle Eastern division of the Library of Congress. Mary-Jane has been responsible the acquisition, preservation, and processing of

Omar Ibn Said's autobiography and related materials here at the Library. And joining us by phone from New York is the eminent historian Dr. Sylviane Diouf. Sylviane has written many books on Africans in the Atlantic world, including *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*, which was published in 1998, and is now considered a classic in the history of slavery. She was the first director of the Lapidus Center for the Historical Analysis of Transatlantic Slavery at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library. These are two real experts who can teach us a lot and Omar and his world, and I'm excited to have them here today.

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Let me turn to Mary-Jane Deeb first and ask her about this extraordinary collection that now resides at the Library of Congress. Mary-Jane, what are these materials?

*Mary-Jane Deeb:* Well, there are 42 items, and those 42 items are clustered around the autobiography of Omar Ibn Said. So Omar Ibn Said is the man who is the piece de resistance, if you want, of the collection. It is his biography written in Arabic, and it is unique in the sense that it is the only known existent biography in Arabic from by a slave.

*Adam Rothman:* Wow.

*Mary-Jane Deeb:* And I know that Sylviane is going to talk more about it.

*Adam Rothman:* Yeah, well let me interrupt you there. I'm so excited. I'm going to be interrupting everybody all the time because I have so many questions.

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I can't hold myself back. So let's just focus on this autobiography. How long is it? When was it written?

*Mary-Jane Deeb:* Okay, it's not very long. It's 15 pages, and it begins with a prayer. It begins with a verse from the Quran. The interesting thing is what verse it begins with, and it's called Sūrat al-Mulk. Sūrat al-Mulk – Mulk means dominion or ownership, and it's interesting that he would start his biography quoting a verse of the Quran that deals with ownership, and in Islam, ownership is only God. Everything belongs to God, nothing really belongs to man. So it's a way if you want of pointing to the slave owners that really they have no right to own slaves. He never says it. He just puts this verse of the Quran in it.

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And in and of itself is very symbolic. It is only 15 pages long. It speaks highly of his present owner. Of his current owner then, but also it tells a little bit about his own background, and I know that Dr. Sylviane Diouf will talk more about it. But he does speak about inter-tribal warfare in the area between Senegal and Gambia, and he talks about coming to America at the age of 37, which if you think about it at the turn of the 19th century was quite an older age for a man to be captured and brought in.

*Adam Rothman:* Fascinating. We'll get into his biography in a minute. He lived quite an extraordinary life to get to the point where he could write an autobiography in Arabic as an enslaved person in North Carolina. And I think the year of the autobiography is 1831. So let me ask you one more question about this manuscript.

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What condition is it in? Is it written on paper?

*Mary-Jane Deeb:* Yes.

*Adam Rothman:* How has it managed to survive 180 years?

*Mary-Jane Deeb:* Yes, it is written on paper. It is very brittle, very fragile. The paper is not of particularly good quality. It was what he had available then. What is interesting is that it was kept, it was preserved from owner to owner. I think that people realize the importance of this manuscript and kept it and preserved it. And of course by the time it came to the library, the first thing we did was to send it to preservation. Because we wanted to make sure that it would be – it would reach a stable condition. It would be fit for people to look at, and the preservation has already taken place. We're also scanning it so that people will be able to have access to it digitally from any place around the country and around the world.

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And scanning of course and digitizing and making it accessible is a way of continuing the preservation. But each page has been treated. Every page has been studied in terms of the paper, the ink, the condition in which it is in. It has been repaired, and it's a labor of love.

*Adam Rothman:* Wow, that's pretty remarkable. It's remarkable that it's survived to this day, and I think it's also extraordinary the steps the library is taking will guarantee that 180 years from now, people will still be able to read and

learn from it. A question for Sylviane. This is not an unknown document, right? This is something that has been known to scholars of the history of slavery for some time. Is that correct?

*Sylviane Diouf:* Yes, first of all, I mean this – the manuscript itself reappeared around I think it was in 1996 or '97. I remember that it was at the time actually I was writing my book, *Servants of Allah*, and I went to the auction, hoping that I could buy it, and it was much too expensive for me. But so it was known – I mean we knew it was there since then, but even before that, it had been written about in the 19th century by a number of people, and it has been translated. I think it was in 1848.

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So there were records of this autobiography from really kind of the start. As you mentioned, it was written in 1831, but it was sent in 1836 to another African Muslim, and so that was recorded as well, and then it was sent to somebody else. And again, there were writings about these documents. So it's been known for many, many years.

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*Adam Rothman:* It sounds like the autobiography, the afterlife of the autobiography is almost as interesting as the life of its author, Omar Ibn Said. I think that's one of the remarkable things about some of these archival collections and manuscripts. They have a history of their own above and beyond the history of their initial production.

*Sylviane Diouf:* Yes. Absolutely. And this is – you know, this is one manuscript, and it's a very, very important one, but I just want to stress that it's – and it's the only autobiography written as we know, written by an enslaved African Muslim that is still extant. But there are many other manuscripts written by African Muslims who were enslaved in different parts of the Americas that are still extant.

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*Adam Rothman:* So it's really part of a transatlantic and pan-American story of enslaved African Muslims in the Americas. Is that right?

*Sylviane Diouf:* Absolutely.

*Adam Rothman:* Interesting. Well I want to get into Omar Ibn Said's life because his biography is revealing and it's interesting, and it takes us into the experience of captivity and the middle passage and the shock of adjustment to life as an enslaved person in America, and I think it might

help for our listeners to just hear at least in translation some of the literal words that Ibn Said wrote about his life. So I'm going to quote a passage, and Sylviane, maybe ask you to give us some context. So after the –

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Transcription of the passage from the Quran, Omar Ibn Said gets into his own biography, and it starts this way. First of all, he apologizes. He says, "You asked me to write my life. I'm not able to do this because I've much forgotten my own as well as the Arabic language, neither can I write very grammatically or according to the true idiom." So he starts with a caveat that gives you a sense of maybe what has been lost linguistically in his middle passage. But then he writes, "My name is Omar Ibn Said. My birthplace was Fut Tûr between the two rivers." Sylviane, where is that?

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*Sylviane Diouf:* So Omar was born in 1770 in Futa Toro. That's what you know, that's the real name. Futa Toro, which is in Northern Senegal, which is right on the river Senegal. And it's a region that has been kind of the cradle of Islam in the region. It's now started to spread in Futa Toro in the – I mean it started really in the eighth and ninth century, but it really spread around the year 1,000. So Futa Toro is really considered really the cradle of Islam in that part of West Africa.

*Adam Rothman:* And when he says between the two rivers, he means the Senegal and Gambia Rivers. Correct?

*Sylviane Diouf:* Certainly, yes.

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*Adam Rothman:* So he goes on to talk a little bit about his youth and early life in that country, and he writes that he basically was in school for 25 years, which seems like a long time. Must have come out with a PhD I think. And that certainly was where he must have learned to read and write in his studies, but what was it about West African society in the late 18th century that might have allowed Ibn Said to become a scholar, to become literate?

*Sylviane Diouf:* Well first of all, you know, it's said that he started school at six, and that's the age where boys and girls go to school and start to learn to recite and write the Quran. So he had kind of a normal – sorry, I need to rephrase that. So he has – it's the way that he learned and the length of time is – was kind of the normal thing –

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When you went into higher Islamic studies. That took a long time, and one of the things also he write about is he actually traveled to acquire that learning. Because he said that he studied for 25 years, and then he came back to Futa. So he came back to Futa around 1801 when he was 31, and yes, you know, that's kind of the normal way of studying when you go into Islamic higher studies.

*Adam Rothman:* You have actually written about Futa in that period, the late 18th and early 19th century. It seemed to be quite a remarkable place where the kingdom of Futa was in a sense a kind of anti-slavery –

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Kingdom for Muslims. I wonder if you could talk a little bit more about that milieu.

*Sylviane Diouf:* Yes, so there was a revolution really in the 1770s in Futa, and it becomes a Muslim theocracy, and it was opposed to the transatlantic slave trade, and so for a number of time, the leader Abdul Kader Khan forbade the slave trade through Futa Toro, and he actually –

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Also of course he also forbade the trade in Muslims because Islam forbids the enslavement of free Muslims. So there was really a fight between the French who were – and the British who were organizing the slave trade from the east to the coast, and Futa Toro was absolutely opposed to that.

*Adam Rothman:* I'm really fascinated by the revolutionary quality and anti-slavery quality of Futa Toro. When we think about – for the most part, when scholars of Atlantic history talk about the revolutionary Atlantic, they're talking about or writing about the United States and France and Haiti, but normally people aren't writing about West Africa. But to think about West Africa as having a revolutionary moment as well as the rest of the Atlantic world is quite striking, and to think about Omar Ibn Said as traversing these different Atlantic revolutions that end –

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That end up with him enslaved in Carolina, it's really – it really makes you think about the patterns of revolution transnationally. So then we come to this pivotal moment in Omar Ibn Said's life, and this is how he describes it at least in translation in his autobiography. He writes, "Then there came to our place a large army who killed many men and took me and brought me to the great sea and sold me into the hands of the

Christians who bound me and sent me on board a great ship and we sailed upon the great sea a month and a half when we came to a place called Charleston in the Christian language.” And that is how – that’s all that Omar Ibn Said says about his experience of being captured in war –

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Enslaved, sold, transported across the ocean, and sold again in Carolina. It seems so compressed. It seems like there’s so much he’s not saying in that sentence, but what is he telling us there about his experience of becoming enslaved?

*Sylviane Diouf:*

Well actually, you know, it’s very succinct, but we know exactly what he’s writing about. In 1807, there was a war between the Muslim theocracy of Futa Toro and Kaarta, which was a non-Muslim Bambara kingdom in the east. And Kaarta made of - as Omar wrote - made of infidels invaded part of Futa.

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The leader Abdul Kader Khan was killed, and that’s war that Omar refers to, and that’s when he was made a prisoner. And he writes that he was marched to the sea, which we know that Kader Khan was killed in April, which is the – during the dry season, and Omar was marched to the coast because it was the dry season, and ships could not come up the Senegal River. So we know exactly when he was taken prisoner, and what is also very interesting is that 1807 was the last year of the legal slave trade.

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Which was – which was abolished and the end was to take effect on January 1, 1807, and there were three ships that left St. Louis in Senegal. One is in September, one in October, one in November, and so Omar would have been on one of those three ships that arrived in Charleston. And so he was one of the last Africans brought through the legal slave trade, and there were about 385 people who arrived from Senegal on those three ships.

*Adam Rothman:*

It’s hard to – it’s remarkable that you can actually pinpoint his arrival to one of three slaving vessels. I wish we knew exactly which one, but I guess we’ll have to settle for that.

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So when he arrives in Charleston, his initial arrival is quite interesting as he explains it in his autobiography. He says that initially, he is purchased

by a bad man. He calls him a complete infidel, a man named Johnson who put him to work, put him to hard labor, which Omar Ibn Said being kind of a scholar I guess was not accustomed to, so he rebelled against it and he actually ran away from his first owner. He wanders around for several weeks until he's finally basically taken up, arrested, in Fayetteville, North Carolina, where he's put in jail.

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And then according to at least one account while he's sort of languishing in jail in Fayetteville, he finds some charcoal in the jail and starts writing in Arabic on the walls of his cell, and speaking a language that nobody can really understand. But finally, somehow, that – those communication barriers break down, and he is eventually taken out of the jail by a man named James Owen or Jim Owen from a fairly prominent North Carolina family. His brother, John Owen, goes on to become governor of North Carolina.

So they take him out of jail, and he basically becomes the property of Jim Owen. Now there's a very poignant – and I guess on some level Omar Ibn Said – he seems to be grateful to Owen for rescuing him from this jail.

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But before he's really rescued, there's a possibility that he is going to be returned to Charleston. Omar Ibn Said says in his autobiography before, maybe after, I came into the hand of General Owen, a man by the name of Mitchell came to buy me. He asked me if I were willing to go to Charleston City, and then we get one of the most poignant moments in the whole autobiography where Omar Ibn Said writes I said no, no, no, no, no, no. I'm not willing to go to Charleston. And at that moment, he makes the choice to stay with – choice such as it is, to stay with Jim Owen. You get the sense from that that he really dreaded Charleston.

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Charleston was this pit of evil. He uses the word infidelity of unreligion, and I think that's a really crucial moment in Omar Ibn Said's life, and from then on, for the next 50 years, he stays with the Owen family until his death. You just think about the kind of adjustment that Omar Ibn Said had to make from his existence from his life in Futa Toro to being an enslaved African alone, not speaking English in North Carolina. And I guess that raises the question of what would it have been like for somebody like him to end up as a stranger in a strange land like North Carolina.



Sylviane, you've written about the experience of enslaved African Muslims in United States.

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Are there any common patterns to their ability to survive, to get along in this place?

*Sylviane Diouf:*

Yes, it kind of all just depends on a number of factors. First of all, if there were several of them, you know, at this – in the same place, or if they were isolated. But one of the things that they all went through is that they found themselves in a Christian country as Omar Said. It's also a country that adds kind of a negative view of Islam and Muslims, and as that for a very long time.

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There was also another thing that kind of put them, you know, on a different level than a lot of other people. Many of them like Omar could read and write and some could read and write very well. Some wrote Quran as well as manuscripts of one of his \_\_\_\_\_. There were – they had been intellectuals in the – in the previous life. They found themselves unable to continue, of course. And some were able to organize themselves in, you know, like in Brazil, in Trinidad, in Jamaica, in Peru to organize themselves to kind of form communities and share –

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As much of their previous life as they could, fasting for Ramadan, for example, praying, writing. But for probably most of them, it was a very, very difficult time of course. And there were also the attitude of the owners, which was terrible - two different attitudes. Some owners who knew that the Muslims were Muslims and could read and write sometimes took advantage of that and put them in position as drivers, for example, which is to actually be in charge of the other people and slaves. But others were actually kind of very worried about the fact that they had people who could read and write. As you know, this religion that they saw as opposed to their own.

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*Mary-Jane Deeb:*

I'd like to add to this that at that time also, there was a lot of ignorance about Islam, and the fact was brought home to Theodore Dwight who was the founder or one of the founders of the American Ethnographic Society. And who begins collecting the writings of Omar Ibn Said and of others. And wants to have them translated. And the reason is that Theodore

Dwight, as many others on the east coast in the United States, were against slavery.

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They also wanted to educate the American public about Islam and about West Africa. And this is the reason why the collection that we have acquired here at the library is not only the autobiography of Omar Ibn Said, but it's an entire collection of 42 documents, most of which were put together by Theodore Dwight in his attempt to educate Americans at that time, and to let them know that Africa had a long civilization, and a long tradition of written culture that went, as you pointed out, Sylviane, over 1,000 years. And so he brings together these materials that are in Arabic about Muslims and goes to some Arabists from the Middle East, but they really are Americans who served in the region. And whose knowledge of Arabic enables them to translate, to make these materials not only that of Omar Ibn Said, but others like Mohammed Dekr available to Americans in an attempt to let them understand what Islam is about and also the level of sophistication and education of Africans. Not only in West Africa, but in other parts of Africa as well.

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*Adam Rothman:* Mary-Jane, that's a great point. Theodore Dwight writes an essay in 1864 in a journal called *The Methodist Review* where he writes about some of these different literate African Muslims that he had encountered and corresponded with and received manuscripts from, and in that article, Dwight writes "among the victims of the slave trade among us have been men of learning and pure and exalted characters who had been treated like beasts of the field by those who claimed a pure religion." So you're absolutely right. He was really trying to vindicate a kind of African character against the pro-slavery racism I think.

*Mary-Jane Deeb:* Absolutely.

*Adam Rothman:* And I think both Mary-Jane what you were saying and Sylviane what you're saying lead us into another sort of dimension of Omar Ibn Said's life after he becomes settled in North Carolina in the household of the Owens. He becomes something of a celebrity in a certain intellectual and political milieu in the United States, a milieu of people who are interested, especially interested in colonizing free people of color and slaves in West Africa and bringing what they saw as civilization and Christianity to West Africa.

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And these people, like Theodore Dwight, but other people especially connected with the American Colonization Society sort of get wind of Omar Ibn Said, and they begin to take an interest in him. So for example, I think one of the first signs of that interest comes in 1819 when basically a letter from Omar Ibn Said ends up in the hands of Francis Scott Key, the author of our national anthem who is also a member of the Colonization Society, and Key learns his story, and Key actually sends two copies of the Bible in Arabic to Omar Ibn Said for his use. And many of the stories about Omar Ibn Said after that make a point to say that those became his treasured possessions. And that's also part of the story of Omar Ibn Said's conversion because he arrives in the United States as a Muslim, but according to many accounts, and these are contested by scholars in ways we can talk about, he converts to Christianity. He writes this in his autobiography in 1831 that he had become a Christian, basically. Although he continues to write verses from the Quran, so he's – he never completely severs himself from Islam, but he clearly has entered a Christian world. There's a record that he was baptized at the First Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville in 1820, and then when the Owens moved to Wilmington in the late 1830s, he moves with them and he becomes a member of the Presbyterian Church in Wilmington. So, he may be straddling two worlds, but it's clear that at least in the eyes of many of the people who found him interesting, many of the white Christian Americans who found him interesting, he was interesting because he had converted to Christianity. At least that's what they thought.

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*Mary-Jane Deeb:*

Yeah, I mean as I read his statements, again, as you point out, he is straddling both and trying to find a middle ground. And I – again, it's more a feeling than anything else. That is actually trying to find what is in common between Christianity and Islam. And even when he translates the Lord's Prayer, it has a rhythm and has a sense which is similar to some of the writings of Muslim writings. So I – the feeling that I got, and I don't know, Sylviane, I'd be interested in what you think, too, is that he was trying to find a common ground between his original beliefs as a Muslim and the Christian beliefs of people like Owens who he admired and felt were kind to him. How do you see it, Sylviane?

*Sylviane Diouf:*

Yes, I agree. First of all, the Secretary of the American Colonization Society reported in 1837 that Omar, and I quote, "retained a devoted attachment to the faith of his fathers," then gave him a copy of the Quran in Arabic, his richest treasure. Omar also in his autobiography writes that he loves – I love to read the Great Quran. He also – I think his autobiography is ambiguous. As you mention, Mary-Jane, he writes the Lord's Prayer. He also says that before I prayed like this, and he explains about Islam, the five pillars of Islam, et cetera, then he says now I pray

like this, and he quotes and writes the Lord's prayer. It is ambiguous, and the fact that he starts - your point about the autobiography - with what he wrote. You know, all of this to me points to this balancing act, but I also think if he had converted really, I mean if he had really converted and become you know, a real Christian, his autobiography would not be ambiguous. It would be very clear, and it is not. And the fact that it is ambiguous and that it starts with a Sūrat from the Quran, instead of for example writing an excerpt from the Bible or the gospel. All of this tell me that like other Muslims did in the sense of perspective, he converted because I would say falsely converted. I mean let's not forget that he was still enslaved, and he remained a slave for the rest of his life. He died a slave in 1863. And the - he writes in his autobiography that Jim Owen and his wife loved to read the Bible to him and so on and so forth. So to actually remain in the good graces of his owners and all the people, the missionaries and others who had been good to him and helped him, he has to kind of tell them well yes, I'm one of you. But he also talked about the Christian country, the Christian language, the Christian people, as if he's not part of that.

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*Adam Rothman:* Yeah. In addition to the text, the Arabic text he writes, the material that he writes includes these sort of visual - I don't know exactly how to describe them, these icons that appear to be a kind of - amulets or supposed to have some kind of magical quality that are actually rooted in West African Islamic practice. Right, Sylviane?

*Sylviane Diouf:* Yes.

*Adam Rothman:* That suggests also that he hasn't left everything behind.

*Sylviane Diouf:* No, he has not, and actually you know, when we also look at his last known manuscripts written in 1857, which is what - The Victory, you know, it's a short Sūrat which ends - "When God's help and victory come and you see people embrace God's faith in multitudes, give glory to your Lord and seek His pardon. He is ever disposed to mercy." Again, you know, this is his last known text, and again, it's a Sūrat from the Quran, it's not an excerpt from the Bible.

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*Adam Rothman:* I just want to - we don't have a whole lot of time left, so I just want to turn to one other kind of source that we have about Omar Ibn Said. There are two photographs of him as far as I can tell. And I would just - Sylviane, I don't know if you have them available or you may remember them. Mary Jane and I are looking at one of them right now. He's an old

man, he's sitting down, he's holding onto a cane in one hand, and I just wonder what you see in that photograph.

*Sylviane Diouf:* I see a Muslim. In all the images of Omar that exist, he either is always – his head is always covered, either as you know, kind of a what could pass for a skull cap or a turban or he has also the same kind of hat that another – another Muslim's portrait was done in Maryland had. So and he has these very buttoned up kind of coat, very covered. And again, that's how Muslims dressed. So to me, that's another indication of him remaining Muslim.

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*Adam Rothman:* Well for a man who never made his way back to freedom, Omar Ibn Said left quite a paper trail, he left quite a mark on history, and now some of that history is here at the Library of Congress. I wonder, Mary-Jane and Sylviane, why do you think it's important for this material to be preserved, to be accessible to the public? What lessons does Omar Ibn Said's life and his legacy leave for us today?

*Mary-Jane Deeb:* I want to say a couple things about how we acquired it, and it leads to precisely that. We acquired it in June 2017. We acquired 42 items. And it – but it first came to our attention at the library in 2002, 15 years ago. Well, more than that, yeah. 16 years ago when we organized a conference on Islam in America. And at that conference, Sylviane was there and so were a number of other people, but one of the people who was there was Derrick Joshua Beard, and he was an artist and collector who brought with him the manuscript of Omar Ibn Said which he'd purchased at the Swann Gallery in New York in 1997. I think this is when you went Sylviane.

*Sylviane Diouf:* Yes.

*Adam Rothman:* He outbid you, Sylviane!

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*Mary-Jane Deeb:* That's right, and Derrick purchased it at that point. And he displayed it at this conference. And in a way, he was documenting the first Muslims who came to America were in fact the people who were brought from West Africa as slaves to the United States. So the first ones were from Africa. The interesting thing is that Beard at that time at the conference had said this manuscript needs a home, and it should be at the Library of Congress. We remember that very well. Beard remained in touch with us over the years, and as late as 2015, he had – he was African-American, he became Muslim, and he was known as Tariq

Suleiman, and he stated in an interview in 2015 that he wished to share Omar Ibn Said's story with the world. I'm quoting him in an article.

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He says, "I could keep it in my family and pass it down, but whoever has it has to preserve it. It has to have a greater good and exposure in the world community. It cannot be destroyed in a fire or a flood."

He dies after we have acquired them. Derek was fighting cancer, and he died last year just after he learned that we had purchased the collection. It was as if he carried this burden but this joy, and brought this manuscript here to the library as its home, as its permanent home. So I just wanted to see this continuity of those who own who pass it on to the next person, then to the next, and Derrick is the last one to hold it, and then he brings it here and dies soon after. That's where it now resides. Symbolically.

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*Sylviane Diouf:*

I would say to just add to this that beyond the fact that it's unique, it's also an American story, and as you said, it belongs here. And it's the story of kind of three components I would say of the American people. The Africans, the enslaved, and the Muslims, and you know, so Omar kind of represent those three. And I think you know, this manuscript is not an artifact that should be displayed under a glass case. To me, it's a living document that should be translated again and again and interpreted again and again. I don't think we've seen, you know, so far the last translation and the last interpretation. I think that as it becomes available to many more people because as you mention, Mary-Jane, it's going to be scanned, put online. I'm pretty sure it can still reveal meanings that we are not yet aware of.

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*Adam Rothman:*

That's really wonderful, Mary-Jane and Sylviane. Thank you both so much for your expertise and knowledge and wisdom into the life and legacy of Omar Ibn Said. It seems to me that it's just – it's not just an American story. He lived a transatlantic life, and his story really belongs to the world. Thank you both.

*Mary-Jane Deeb:*

Thank you, thank you Adam, and thanks Sylviane.

*Sylviane Diouf:*

Thank you.

*[Singing]:*

Do lord, do lord, do remember me, oh do lord, do lord, do remember me,  
oh do lord remember me, oh when my blood runs chilly and cold...

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*[End of Audio]*