



Questions

1. What was the Fugitive Slave Law? Use a textbook or internet if needed.
2. Describe the scene in the cartoon.
3. What position do you believe the artist has taken on the law? Why?
4. The quote on the left is from the Bible: "Thou shalt not deliver unto the master his servant which has escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee. Even among you in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates where it liketh him best. Thou shalt not oppress him." Why do you believe the author of this cartoon chose that quote?
5. Translate the quote from the Declaration of Independence into your own words as much as possible: "We hold that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."
6. Imagine you are an artist who has been commissioned to draw a cartoon on the Fugitive Slave Law. Draw a picture that shows your opinion, either in favor or against the law. You will not be graded on your artistic abilities, just your ability to use symbols and images and even words that communicate your position clearly.

Answers

Complete Explanation:

An impassioned condemnation of the Fugitive Slave Act passed by Congress in September 1850, which increased federal and free-state responsibility for the recovery of fugitive slaves. The law provided for the appointment of federal commissioners empowered to issue warrants for the arrest of alleged fugitive slaves and to enlist the aid of posses and even civilian bystanders in their apprehension. The print shows a group of four black men--possibly freedmen--ambushed by a posse of six armed whites in a cornfield. One of the white men fires on them, while two of his companions reload their muskets. Two of the blacks have evidently been hit; one has fallen to the ground while the second staggers, clutching the back of his bleeding head. The two others react with horror.

1. As defined in the "free online dictionary": The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 mandated that states to which escaped slaves fled were obligated to return them to their masters upon their discovery and subjected persons who helped runaway slaves to criminal sanctions. The first Fugitive Slave Act was enacted by Congress in 1793 but as the northern states abolished [Slavery](#), the act was rarely enforced. The southern states bitterly resented the northern attitude toward slavery, which was ultimately demonstrated by the existence of the Underground Railroad, an arrangement by which abolitionists helped runaway slaves obtain freedom.

To placate the South, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 (9 Stat. 462) was enacted by Congress as part of the [Compromise of 1850](#). It imposed a duty on all citizens to assist federal marshals to enforce the law or be prosecuted for their failure to do so. The act also required that when a slave was captured, he or she was to be brought before a federal court or commissioner, but the slave would not be tried by a jury nor would his or her testimony be given much weight. The statements of the slave's alleged owner were the main evidence, and the alleged owner was not even required to appear in court.

Northern reaction against the Fugitive Slave Act was strong, and many states enacted laws that nullified its effect, making it worthless. In cases where the law was enforced, threats or acts of mob violence often required the dispatch of federal troops. Persons convicted of violating the act were often heavily fined, imprisoned, or both. The refusal of northern states to enforce the Fugitive Slave Act was alleged by South Carolina as one reason for its secession from the Union prior to the onset of the Civil War.

2. Four Black men are pursued by six armed whites in a cornfield. Two of the men have been shot and the shooters are seen reloading in the background.
3. The artist is opposed to the law which is evidenced by the quotes used, the imagery of the victims and the shooters, etc
4. Answers will vary but ought to mention that the quote specifically claims that once a man escapes to freedom he is free from then on, not to be returned to his former master; this conflicts with the text of the law.
5. Answers will vary but ought to include that the quote indicates that all men are born with certain rights that cannot be taken away from them including in this case freedom.
6. Answers will vary but need to show that they have taken a position on the Fugitive Slave Law.