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Captain Fountain skippered a schooner known as *City of Richmond*. The vessel carried cargo and passengers between the Southern city of Norfolk and the Northern city of New York. At great personal risk, Captain Fountain also hid fugitive slaves aboard his ship. This image depicts an engraving included in William Still's book *The Underground Railroad*. The Fugitive Slave Law allowed Norfolk's mayor, and police, to search Fountain's ship for 21 missing fugitives. The runaway slaves were actually on board, but they were so well-hidden they were never found. Image online, courtesy Project Gutenberg.

<u>Before</u> Lincoln's election, slaves who "belonged" to "owners" in the South (like Virginia) but escaped to states in the North (like Pennsylvania) were subject to the <u>Fugitive Slave Law</u>.

The courts allowed an owner to use "reasonable force" to detain runaways. Anyone who tried to help a detained slave escape would be subject to the scrutiny of a federal "grand inquest."

How did the laws work? The case of "Moses Honner" will make the point.

- Moses, who was "owned" by Butler, had escaped.
- Butler, using legal force, detained Moses in Pennsylvania.
- Jeremiah Buck, an abolitionist, tried to "rescue" Moses to prevent him from going back to Virginia and a life of slavery.

According to the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania:

• Buck's actions in trying to help free Moses were "against the <u>peace and dignity</u> of the United States of America."

FUGITIVE SLAVE LAWS



THE MAYOR AND POLICE OF NORFOLK SEARCHING CAPT. FOUNTAIN'S SCHOONER. (Twenty-eight fugitives were concealed in this vessel.)

• An <u>indictment</u>, in 1860, was issued against Buck for breaking the law.

Buck was <u>convicted</u> at trial.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/FUGITIVE-SLAVE-LAWS-Slave-Voices

See Learning Tasks for this story online at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/FUGITIVE-SLAVE-LAWS-Slave-Voices

Media Stream



Political Map of the United States

Image online, courtesy the Geography and Map Division, U.S. Library of Congress. View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Political-Map-of-the-United-States



<u> Jeremiah Buck - Indictment</u>

Image of text online, courtesy Library of Congress. PD

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