

The Code of Hammurabi, *continued*

Primary Source

54. If he be not able to replace the corn, then he and his possessions shall be divided among the farmers whose corn he flooded.

55. If any one open his ditches to water his crop, but is careless, and the water flood the field of his neighbor, then he shall pay his neighbor corn for his loss.

120. If any one store corn for safe keeping in another person's house, and any harm happen to the corn in storage, or if the owner of the house open the **granary** and take some of the corn . . . the owner of the house shall pay its owner for all of the corn that he took.

122. If any one give another silver, gold, or anything else to keep, he shall show everything to some witness, draw up a contract, and then hand it over for safe keeping.

123. If he turn it over for safe keeping without witness or contract, and if he to whom it was given deny it, then he has no legitimate claim.

125. If any one place his property with another for safe keeping, and there, . . . through thieves . . . his property . . . be lost, the owner of the house, through whose **neglect** the loss took place, shall [pay] the owner for all that was given to him . . .

The word "corn" here stands for various cereal plants. Ancient Mesopotamian farmers grew wheat, barley, and other grains.

This law deals with the irrigation systems that farmers used to water their fields.

If the person to whom you gave the goods says you did not do so, and if you have no legal record to prove that you did, you have no right to get the property back.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

1. How is Law 5 different from all the other laws listed here?

2. Re-read Laws 7, 122, and 123. Why do you think it is important for people to have witnesses and a contract?
