

Activity 3**Document-Based Activity**
The Second Great Awakening**DOCUMENT 5**

Before You Read The following words in the document below may be new to you: *adjudicated*, *begotten*. You may want to use a dictionary to look them up.

The case of Human Rights against Slavery has been adjudicated in the court of conscience times innumerable. The same verdict has always been rendered—"Guilty;" the same sentence has always been pronounced, "Let it be accursed;" and human nature, with her million echoes, has rung it round the world in every language under heaven, "Let it be accursed. Let it be accursed." . . . There is not a man on earth who does not believe that slavery is a curse. Human beings may be inconsistent, but human *nature* is true to herself. She has uttered her testimony against slavery with a shriek ever since the monster was begotten . . .

We will prove that the slaves in the United States are treated with barbarous inhumanity; that they are overworked, underfed, wretchedly clad and lodged, and have insufficient sleep; that they are often made to wear round their necks iron collars armed with prongs, to drag heavy chains and weights at their feet while working in the field, and to wear yokes . . . that they are often kept confined in the stocks day and night for weeks together, made to wear gags in their mouths for hours or days, have some of their front teeth torn out or broken off, that they may be easily detected when they run away; that they are frequently flogged with terrible severity . . .

Reader, what have you to say of such treatment? Is it right, just, benevolent? Suppose I should seize you, rob you of your liberty, drive you into the field, and make you work without pay as long as you live, would that be justice and kindness, or monstrous injustice and cruelty?

—Theodore Weld, revivalist minister and abolitionist
American Slavery as It Is, 1839

1. According to Theodore Weld, what is the condition of slaves in the United States?

2. Does Weld use legal, religious, or moral reasoning to make the case that slavery is wrong? Explain.

The Reform Era

In the early 1800s a wave of religious zeal swept the nation. Known as the Second Great Awakening, this religious revival ushered in the Reform Era—one of the great periods of social reform in American history. Reformers aimed to improve many aspects of life in America. They focused on such issues as prison and factory conditions, women's rights, slavery, and the consumption of alcohol. The following is a list of some of the actions that occurred as part of this movement.

- In 1825 Robert Owen attempted to build a utopian community in New Harmony, Indiana.
- In 1831 the abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator* began publishing in Boston, Massachusetts.
- In 1833 Oberlin College in Ohio became the first college to accept women as well as men.
- In 1834 several groups in New York City organized a labor organization called the National Trades Union.
- In 1837 the nation's first women's college, Mount Holyoke College, was established in Massachusetts.
- In 1839 Massachusetts created the country's first normal school—a school for training teachers.
- In 1841 New Hampshire became the first state to limit the workday to 10 hours.
- In 1843 the Massachusetts legislature created separate institutions to house and treat mentally ill people.
- In 1845 the transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau began living alone on the shore of Walden Pond near Concord, Massachusetts.
- In 1848 the first women's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York.
- In 1851 the state of Maine outlawed alcohol.
- In 1852 Massachusetts passed the first compulsory school attendance law.

MAP ACTIVITY

1. On the map, write in the names of the states in which events from the list above took place.
2. Use a color or symbol to indicate the number of reform activities that occurred in each of those states. For example, you might use a single red dot for each activity, and put the correct number of dots in each state. Or you might use a different color or a different symbol to indicate 1, 2, or 3 events, and so on.