

Louisiana: Our History, Our Home

Presentations, Quick Notes & Internet Activities

Chapter 8: Louisiana from Colony to Territory to State

Summary:

In this lesson, students will examine some of the effects of the invention of the cotton gin. They will examine how the cotton plant grows and the purpose of ginning it. Students will then graph data to examine the parallel growth of cotton production, slave population, and overall population Louisiana from 1800-1860.

Duration: 60-90 minutes

Notes:

- The Create-A-Graph website is an easy site to use to graph data. Depending on your students' knowledge and background, they may need some guidance at the beginning, especially in selecting the appropriate type of graph to create and adding the proper labels (see also Internet Activity for Chapter 3).
- In this activity, students will be printing several graphs of their data. You may want to have them work in groups to create the graphs and reduce the necessary printing.
- Be sure to discuss the meanings of "patent" and "obituary" as those terms are used in the activity.

Answer Key:

1. long, sunny growing period (at least 160 days of no frost)
2. 25
3. 32
4. 100
5. 3,200
6. weather, insects, moisture
7. Sample response: The mechanism inside the gin turns and brusho like objects pull the seeds from the bolls. The seeds fall away and the cotton lint gathers for removal. This process would save the farmers a lot of time as opposed to pulling out each seed by hand.
8. a newspaper from January 29, 1825
9. There was "scarcely a pound" exported before the gin but over \$12,000,000 per year after its invention.
10. The writer has a positive view of the life of Mr. Whitney. He lists many achievements and benefits as a result of his invention, including providing work for people that helped them get out of debt and achieve wealth. His death was described as a public calamity.

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Students should print two graphs and make a summary of what is shown in the graphs. Graphs should be either line or bar graphs since the data show changes over time. In addition, they should make a connection from these data to the invention of the cotton gin and whether the invention of the gin contributed to the expansion of slavery. There is no single, correct, answer, but students should defend their thinking.