

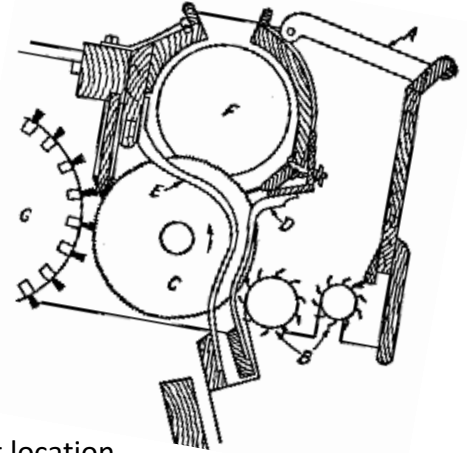
Louisiana: Our History, Our Home

Chapter 8: Louisiana from Colony to Territory to State

Internet Activity



Technology can cause change with consequences that are not always foreseeable. The invention of the cotton gin changed the lives of people in Louisiana, and cotton was at the center of economic life in the territory and new state of Louisiana. In this lesson, you will learn about this plant and how growing it affected the growth of the state.



Instructions: Use the links to complete each item.

Read the information at [Cotton's Journey](#) to learn about the crop whose production built the early economy of Louisiana.

1. What is required to grow cotton that makes Louisiana a great location to grow it?

2. How many weeks pass from planting to harvest of the cotton? _____
3. About how many seeds grow inside each boll (pod)? _____
4. About how many bolls grow on a typical cotton plant? _____
5. How many seeds, then, would typically come from one plant? _____
6. What three things must farmers adjust to in order to grow as much cotton as possible?

In order for cotton to be used in a factory to make cotton cloth material, the seeds must be removed. This was a very time-consuming job until Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, a machine to automatically remove the seeds.

[Watch a video](#) demonstrating an early cotton gin.

7. Describe what is happening in the gin and how it would have been a help to cotton farmers.

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Read the [obituary of Eli Whitney](#). It is on the right side of the document.

8. What type of document is this and when was it written?

9. According to the article, how much cotton was grown for export? What was the value of exported cotton 12 years after the invention of the cotton gin?

10. What is the opinion of the writer towards Mr. Whitney? What evidence supports your thinking?

Study this data table. Notice that it shows the amount of cotton grown in Louisiana in certain years and the number of slaves in the state.

Number of Slaves & Cotton Production - Louisiana

	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860
Slave Population	No data	No data	69,064	109,588	168,452	244,809	331,726
Cotton (est. bales)	3,000	8,000	52,000	139,000	411,000	468,000*	778,000

**data are from 1849; the 1850 crop was damaged by a late spring frost*

Use the [Create-A-Graph](#) online tool to create two graphs using data from the table.

Graph 1: Show the pattern of growth in cotton production in Louisiana.

Graph 2: Show the change in slave population.

Print your graphs and attach them to this page.

Write a short summary of the patterns you see in your graphs. How do these graphs support ideas you read related to the cotton gin? Explain your thinking.
