
Eli Whitney's Invention Of The Cotton Gin And Its Impact On America

A machine no bigger than a microwave doubled the population of slaves in the US and also made world economies blow up. This machine is called the cotton gin and was invented by Eli Whitney, an innovative and crafty man. His intent for the machine was to speed the process up for the separation of cotton fibers and its seeds. He had no idea what the machine's effects would have on the nation. Eli Whitney single handedly sparked "The Cotton Kingdom" and became the driving force of the US economy. As cotton prices fell and demand for cotton increased, so did demand for slave labor. Although Eli Whitney's intentions weren't to increase slavery with the cotton gin, slavery was, in fact, increased in the United States.

Eli Whitney is known as a successful inventor and a successful entrepreneur. He is also known as a leader of the industrial revolution. He's earned these characteristics because of the fact that he invented the cotton gin and also came up with the process of mass-producing parts. He is also known for his innovative and entrepreneurial actions in his adolescent years. Eli's intelligent character is built at a young age with his understanding of mechanisms and his high levels of literature and creativity. When Eli was in his mid to late teenage years, he worked for his father in a workshop. He was learning handyman skills such as carpentry and blacksmithing to help his father make repairs for his customers. While he was still working for his father, he thought he could make some money off selling nails. He convinced his dad to allow him to do that because of the fact that they were in high demand throughout the Revolutionary War. Later, Eli went to the college of Yale and after he left college, he was unemployed and was in search of a job. Eli worked as a tutor for a couple of years before his friend, Phineas Miller, suggested a job to him consequent to his failing tutoring jobs. He took the job and worked for Catherine Greene who was a businesswoman and manager of a plantation. He tutored at the plantation for a while before she gave Mr. Whitney the job of creating a machine that could make the process of taking the seeds out of cotton easier. This invention finally evolved the thousand-year traditional hand-picking method.

The history of cotton first starts around 6000 BC where it was believed to be first used in South Asia. Cotton wasn't a big trading item in these times much because of the fact that it was difficult to separate the seeds from the cotton fibers. Cotton was mainly used in small primitive groups to make traditional clothing. Thousands of years later, cotton was found in the Bahamas by Christopher Columbus and then later planted in continental America. Since then, the plant had been grown in the southern region of the US and harvested by slaves. The traditional way to separate the seed from the fibers is by doing it by hand which has been used for thousands

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of years. Before the cotton gin, the US was still a major exporter of cotton to countries around the world, especially in Europe. The cotton process was time consuming, labor intensive and also notoriously known for its slave use so the demand for cotton has always been low. The whole idea originated from a gathering of some local neighbors of Catherine Greene and they conversed about the difficulties they were having with making cotton profitable due to the fact that it was so difficult to separate the seed from the cotton fibers and cleaning it. Eli was given the task to try and find an easier and more efficient way to separate the seeds.

It didn't take long for Eli to start experimenting with different ways to make the process more efficient. From the design process to the finalization of the patent, the cotton gin only took around a year to invent. From 1773 to 1774, Eli worked on the cotton gin under Catherine Greene as a job. Once Eli finally completed the design and felt like he had a good marketing strategy, he applied for a patent for 30 dollars. When Eli was receiving his patent, Thomas Jefferson sent him a letter in regard to the finalization of the patent process for the cotton gin and he was very intrigued by the design of the cotton gin. He also expressed how using slaves for the seed picking process is an embarrassment to the country and that this invention should help water down the notorious. The machine itself was very innovative and very efficient. The machine itself would produce 10 times more cotton than one person in a day. The machine only required one user and their only job was to feed the machine cotton and crank it with their hand. Although this is a very attractive reason to buy the machine Eli Whitney had very bad sales strategies a poor production process. The design of the cotton gin was very simplistic and easy to replicate which happened. It came to be where Eli lost more money suing people for infringement than from the profits of the machine. In 1797, Eli had accumulated as much as 4000 dollars' worth of debt. It seemed to be that everyone except Eli was making money off cotton.

Although Eli never made any profits from the machine, many economies around the world did especially Britain because they would export the clothing from the cotton from America. The cotton gin totally changed the US economy and even helped spark the industrial revolution. Rancher weren't the only ones making a profit off cotton in America. Banks in North America, shipping merchants, stakeholders, and textile companies were all making profits off cotton at the time. Also, any fertile land stretching from Georgia to Texas was extremely valuable. By the start of the War of 1812, South America was producing around 75 percent of all the cotton in the world. The southern cotton industry was also creating more millionaires per capita around the Mississippi River than anywhere in the world. With the rapid rise in "the Cotton Kingdom", cotton became the driving force of America and also the whole world. Textile manufacturers fueled the industrial revolution for the entire world. From around 1820, 39 percent of all US exports were cotton. Around 1836, 59 percent of all US exports were cotton. Up until 1836, the value of cotton sold overseas is worth around 71 million dollars. Although, the US had good side effects of "the Cotton Kingdom", there were some serious side effects from the effect cotton

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had on the nation.

Slavery played a big role in the upbringing of the US. A lot of Atlantic civilizations were built on the back of enslaved field hands. Slavery increased in the US even though slave labor got reduced in the cotton cultivation process, cotton got so big that the demands were not getting met by the number of slaves in the south so slaves also grew in demand. Eli Whitney didn't mean to increase slavery in the US but he was the biggest reason why it happened. One could even say he tried to reduce it because of the fact that the cotton gin was intended to reduce the labor involved in the cottonseed picking process. The cotton gin did just that but it worked too well. Cotton started to become big and the demand for it surpassed the production. Therefore ranchers needed more slaves to increase their production rates to meet the demand. As a result of ranchers needing more slaves for higher production, slavery almost doubled in the south in the span of the next 20 years. From 1790 to 1810, the number of slaves in the south started with 657,000 slaves and ended up with an absurd 1.3 million slaves. Besides all the money and new technologies cotton brought to the world, slavery was one of the most impactful and notorious events that have ever happened in the US.

Eli Whitney never had the intent to increase slavery in America. He invented the cotton gin to reduce the labor needed to separate the seed from cotton fibers at a quicker pace. The side effects of the cotton gin were almost impossible to think about. Economies grew and a lot of money was being made throughout the world. The one negative effect the cotton gin had on the US was the unbelievable demand for slavery. This was just a side effect of the high demand cotton had on the US. Plantation owners could not resist being a part of "the Cotton Kingdom" so they kept buying slaves as field hands. As cotton got cheaper, the demand of cotton went up causing a domino effect on slavery which caused it to also go up in demand. All these consequences occurred because one simple man created a tiny machine.

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