

# Eli Whitney - the cotton gin and American manufacturing

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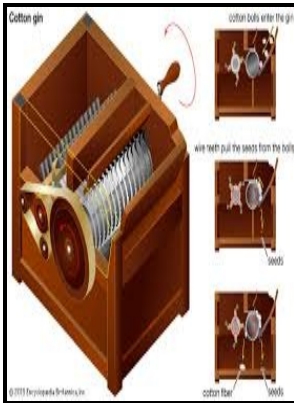
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**Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin, wasn't black. But here's why so many people think he was.**

By the middle of the 1800s, the United States produced over 75 percent of the world's cotton, and 60 percent of the nation's total exports came from the South. Eli Whitney used disassembled guns to demonstrate the virtue of interchangeable parts to Congress. Library of Congress, Washington, D.

**The Invention of the Cotton Gin and Its Historic Impact**

When inventor Eli Whitney arrived in the South in 1793, only green seed cotton could be grown inland. In 1807, Congress passed an act to make the slave-importation ban official. They do not dare



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to stop even at dinner time, nor return to the quarters, however late it be until the order to halt is given by the driver.

### Interchangeable Parts

A small patch of cotton was grown on almost every southern farm, but the great difficulty was to separate the fiber from the seeds. The hands are required to be in the cotton field as soon as it is light in the morning, and, with the exception of ten or fifteen minutes, which is given them at noon to

swallow their allowance of cold bacon, they are not permitted to be a moment idle until it is too dark to see, and when the moon is full, they often times labor till the middle of the night. To speed up production, the War Department solicited bids from private contractors for the manufacture of 10,000 muskets.

### **Did Eli get rich off his gin?**

Second, many historians believe that this invention allowed for the slavery system in the Southern U. Their charge was two-fifths of the profit -- paid to them in cotton itself.

### **Eli Whitney's Patent for the Cotton Gin**

Eli Whitney first made his name at the tender age of 27 with his invention of the cotton gin, patented in 1794.

### **Free Science Studies: Eli Whitney & the Cotton Gin**

Interchangeable Parts Patent-law issues prevented Whitney from ever significantly profiting from the cotton gin; however, in 1798, he secured a contract from the U.

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