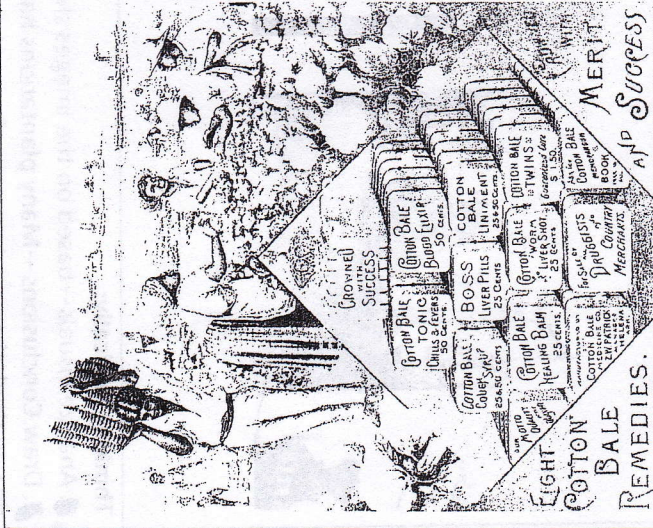


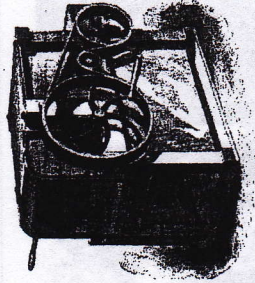
Gin Expands Slavery

Whitney made cotton growing big business with his invention of the cotton gin in 1793. Using a cotton gin, one person could clean about 50 times the amount of cotton in a day as someone working by hand. As a result, vast new areas in the South were planted with cotton, making the South the world's largest cotton supplier. But while the cotton gin decreased the amount of labor needed to remove seeds, the overall need for labor increased as cotton production went up.



This ad for cotton thread illustrates the effects cotton production had on slavery and plantations in the South, as well as manufacturing in towns in the North.

SOUTHERN COTTON GIN CO.



MANUFACTURE HAND GINS
FROM 7 TO 25 SAWS.
Power Gins from 30 to 80 Saws.
SOUTHERN COTTON GIN COMPLY,
BRIDGEWATER, MASS.
JOHN FEABOE, No. 60 MILK STREET, BOSTON.

The cotton gin had spiked teeth mounted on an enclosed revolving cylinder. Raw cotton was fed into the machine, and as the cylinder was turned, the seeds that were embedded in the plant were separated from the cotton fibers. Before the cotton gin, slaves performed this tedious task by hand.

Cheap labor came in the form of slaves, which led to a revitalization of slavery at a time when it was on the decline. Over time, this expansion of slavery increased tensions between the North and the South, eventually resulting in the Civil War.

Thinking Critically

- Identify Central Issues—Why did the invention of the cotton gin eventually cause further tensions between the North and the South?
- Predict Consequences—What might have happened to cotton as a commodity if the cotton gin had never been invented?