DAILY Warm-Up 8

Name _____ Date _____

THE COTTON GIN

Since the mid-1700s, Southern plantation owners had been growing cotton. This cotton was used to make cloth. As a result of the Industrial Revolution in the United States, the demand for cotton increased. The problem came from the fact that cotton was filled with green, sticky seeds. It was a tedious task to remove all the sticky seeds so that the cotton could be used. It took most workers an entire day to clean one pound of the cotton. This made the cotton very expensive.

In 1793, Eli Whitney made a visit to a plantation in Georgia. Eli was known for tinkering with machines and solving problems. Eli was encouraged by a plantation owner to see if he could create a machine that could remove the sticky seeds from the cotton. Eli was able to do just that. He was able to do it in just 10 days! This new machine was called the cotton gin. In a short amount of time, Eli was able to build a large cotton gin. This new gin was able to clean 50 pounds of cotton in one day.

As a result of this new invention, cotton could be sold at a cheaper price. Plantation owners began selling their cotton to factories in the North as well as in Great Britain. They were able to grow larger and larger crops. Soon cotton became the south's biggest crop. As a result, the need for slaves was even greater. The South's economy depended on this slave labor. This would eventually lead to a debate about the legality and morality of owning slaves. This debate fueled a division that would lead to the Civil War.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. After reading the passage, what can be inferred about why Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin?
   a. to eliminate slavery
   b. to remove the sticky seeds from the cotton
   c. to satisfy southern slave owners
   d. to fulfill an order

2. What can be implied about why the invention of the cotton gin made the need for slavery even greater?
   a. Cotton could be sold at a cheaper price.
   b. The cotton gin made cleaning the cotton easier, leading to more cotton needing to be picked.
   c. This new gin was able to clean 50 pounds of cotton in one day.
   d. Eli was encouraged by a plantation owner to see if he could create a machine that could remove the sticky seeds from the cotton.

3. What skills did Eli Whitney have that helped him invent the cotton gin?
   a. He had been well trained in his profession.
   b. He was personally in need of a new cotton machine.
   c. He was a natural at tinkering with machines and learning how they work.
   d. He was good friends with many plantation owners.

LIVEWORKSHEETS