

# Civil War Ironclads

USS Essex



USS Choctaw

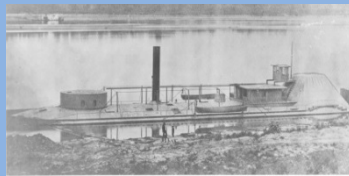


USS Roanoke

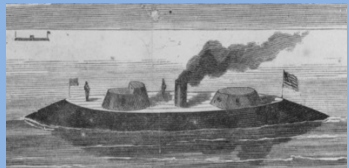


USS Onondaga

USS Osage



USS Galena



USS Keokuk

When news of the *Virginia* arrived in the North, the Union sought plans for an ironclad of their own advertising for:

“...the construction of one or more iron-clad steam vessels of war, either of iron or of wood and iron combined, for sea or river service, to be not less than ten nor over sixteen feet draught of water...”

Originally three different designs were selected; these became the *Monitor*, the *Galena*, and the *New Ironsides*. In addition to building several dozen variations of coastal *Monitor* class ironclads (Onondaga), the Union converted paddlewheel river boats on the Mississippi into ironclads (Essex, Choctaw, Osage, & Ozark) and experimented with ironclad designs that would be sea worthy on the open ocean (Keokuk & Roanoke).

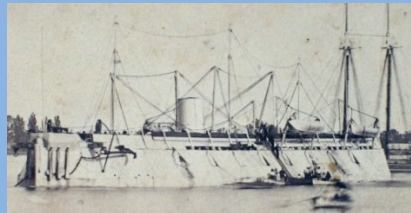


USS Ozark

What are some similar design features in Confederate ironclads? What differences do you notice from the design of the *Virginia*?



Which Union ironclads have design features similar to the *Monitor*? Why might the Union have had so many different designs of Ironclads?



USS New Ironsides

CSS Tennessee



CSS Manassas

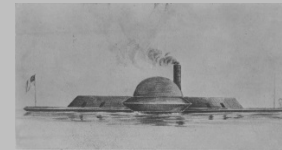


CSS Atlanta

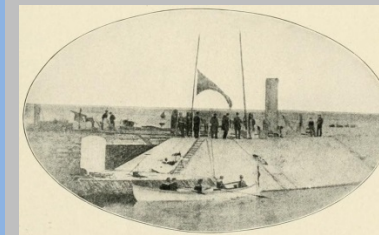


CSS Albemarle

CSS Nashville



CSS Chicora



The *Virginia* was the most successful Confederate ironclad and the prototype for almost all the other 50 ironclads the South attempted to build. The ship's simple design of a sloped and iron plated casemate had proven efficient at deflecting cannon shot.

However, only a few large offensive ironclads modeled on the *Virginia* were constructed to challenge the Union blockade. Most Confederate ironclads had a smaller casemate, fewer cannon, and were shallow draft defensive weapons designed to protect major cities against naval attack.

Nearly all Confederate ironclads also shared the problems that had plagued the *Virginia*. These challenges arose from the South's limited industrial capacity. Issues such as faulty engines, a shortage of iron, a lack of machinery, an insufficient transportation network, and an absence of skilled workers only grew worse as the war continued.



CSS Palmetto State