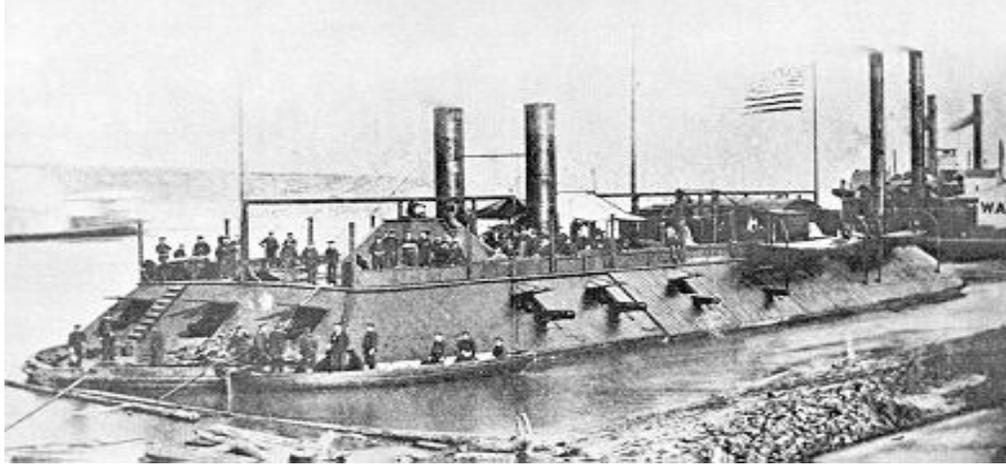




## The First Ironclads



### Impressive Creations

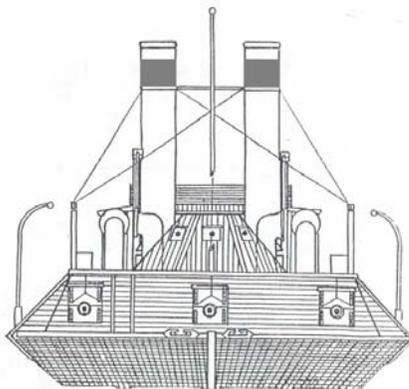
In January 1862, seven impressive creations were lined up along the river at Cairo, Illinois. They looked like something out of a Jules Verne fantasy. It was hard for people to describe the 90-day wonders. The seven city class ironclads resembled iron sheds floating on rafts.

### Statistics and Crew

In naval terms, they were “able to navigate heavy dew.” The infantry nicknamed them “turtlebacks” or “turtles.” To the inland navy, they were things of beauty. Admiral Foote complained their six-knot speed “almost too slow,” but Captain William Porter of the *ESSEX* interjected, “Plenty fast enough to fight with.” Of those seven boats that brought the U.S. Navy into the twentieth century, only one remains.

The statistics of the *USS CAIRO* represent her sister boats as well. The

seven sisters were identical except for their identifying chimney bands and their fates. As you look at the *CAIRO*, you will see the *CARONDELET*, the *CINCINNATI*, the *MOUND CITY*, the *BARON DE KALB* (formerly *ST. LOUIS*), the *LOUISVILLE*, and the *PITTSBURG*. The *USS CAIRO* is the sole survivor of the Mississippi Squadron. This boat is a monument to the vessels and crews on both sides who fought for the river that controlled America’s future.



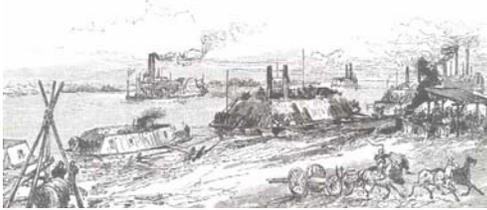
Type:  
Class:  
Number of vessels in Class:  
Area of Operations:

Length: 175’0”  
Width: 51’2”  
Draft: 6’0”  
Tonnage: 512 tons  
Full Load: 888 tons  
Speed: 6 knots

Ironclad River Gunboats  
City  
Seven  
Lower Mississippi River and its tributaries

Officers: 17  
Petty Officers: 27  
Seamen: III  
Landsmen: 3  
Apprentices: 1  
Firemen: 12  
Coal Heavers: 4  
**Total: 175**

## Construction

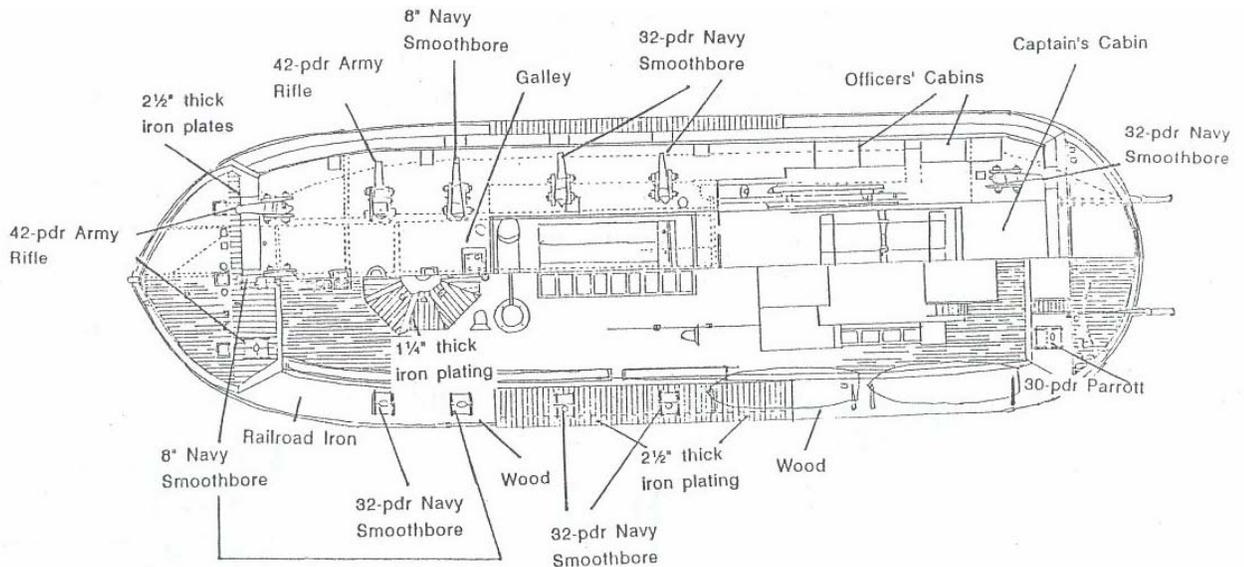


Union gunboats under construction at Carondelet, Missouri. James B. Eads possessed the organizing skill to build the North a fleet of river ironclads.

<i>Designer:</i>	Samuel M. Pook, US Naval Architect
<i>Contractor:</i>	James B. Eads
<i>Contract Price:</i>	\$89,600
<i>Average Cost of Changes:</i>	<u>\$12,208</u>
<i>Total Cost:</i>	\$101,808
<i>Building Sites:</i>	3 built in Mound City, Illinois; 4 built in Carondelet, Missouri

## Armor

<i>Thickness of Plate Armor:</i>	2-1/2 inches
<i>Total Weight of Armor:</i>	122 tons
<i>Armor Plate Size:</i>	13 inches wide by 8-1/2 feet to 11 feet long
<i>Material:</i>	Charcoal iron
<i>Location:</i>	Casemate front and casemate sides to protect boilers
<i>Rail Armor:</i>	Added after the Battle of Memphis on forward side casemates
<i>Ranges of Wood:</i>	19-1/2 inches to 26 inches



## Armament

7" Bore 42-Pounder Army Rifle.....	3	32-Pounder Navy Smoothbore .....	6
8" Bore 64-Pounder Navy Smoothbore.....	3	30-Pounder Parrott.....	1

## History

<i>Commissioned:</i>	January 15, 1862	<i>Raised:</i>	December 12, 1964
<i>Transferred:</i>	From US Army to US Navy, October, 1862	<i>By:</i>	Private citizens - Operation CAIRO
<i>Sunk:</i>	December 12, 1862	<i>Donated:</i>	To National Park Service, 1977
<i>Site of Sinking:</i>	16 miles from mouth of Yazoo River	<i>Restored:</i>	1984
<i>Cause:</i>	Torpedo (mine)	<i>Gunboat Opened:</i>	1985
<i>Depth at Site:</i>	6 fathoms (36 feet)	<i>Museum Opened:</i>	1980