

**BLIND TO GREAT INVENTION**

French Emperor Missed Opportunity When He "Turned Down" Ericsson's Offer to Build Monitors.

March 8, 1862; August, 1921. These dates comprise the history of ironclad monitors, the first of which, invented by John Ericsson, met and defeated the Merrimac at Hampton Roads on the date first named. The last of the British monitors, after seeing minor service in the World war, was consigned to the scrap heap by the admiralty last August.

The history of the monitors goes back to the days of Napoleon III, when Great Britain was in a ferment, apprehending invasion from across the channel. Ericsson, a Swedish engineer, urged the French emperor in 1854 to build, according to his design, armored vessels of low freeboard, with big guns in revolving shot-proof cupolas, placed centrally on the decks. Such a type of armor-clad ship, he declared, would revolutionize naval warfare. The idea was not carried out, and Great Britain's wooden ships never had to face the ordeal of the Merrimac.

But Ericsson prevailed on the Union leaders of the American Civil war to give his idea a trial. In 100 days his ship was built, armed and equipped, and it soon fulfilled the inventor's hope that it would serve as a "monitor," or lesson, to the Confederacy.

Even before this, however, the British admiralty had taken up the idea and had built a vessel of a similar type. At the time of the armistice the British navy had 37 of them.

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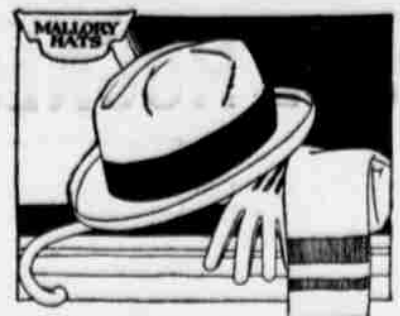


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