Ships and Work Boats of New Netherland, 1609–1674

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That the Dutch of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were a nautical people has long been undisputed. From earliest times the physical nature of their homeland and its restricted territory had required the employment of boats and ships for local mobility and for trading throughout European waters, without which trade they could not have survived nor prospered. Although they appear to have had a predilection for maritime pursuits, their superiority in seamanship was a skill acquired through early training and necessity. Just as children in America’s western plains settlements are said to have learned to ride horses before they learned to walk, so in the provinces of Zeeland and North Holland the young have always been equally precocious in the skills of handling marine craft.

When the Dutch began the settlement of New Netherland, they must have experienced a sense of déjà vu, so similar was the new land to areas of the Fatherland. Here, too, there were great rivers—the North River (Hudson), the South River (Delaware) and the Fresh River (Connecticut), all navigable for long distances and all penetrating to areas of lucrative trade. There were also two great bays, one in the south (Delaware) the other at New Amsterdam, with low islands suitable for farming, just as at home. It was a land that demanded ships and boats, and this need resulted in the introduction here of a variety of these suitable to the needs of the traders and settlers.

Something of the Dutch West India Company’s nautical resources may be learned from the “Remonstrance of the West India Company against a Peace with Spain,” presented to the States General in June 1633 in which it is stated that at this time the Company had “about one hundred and twenty well-built ships, some of 400 and some of 300 lasts; several of 250, 200 and 150 lasts and the remainder of smaller dimensions; all as well supplied with metal and iron pieces [cannon], and suitable ammunition as any of the enemy’s best and largest vessels.”

The smallness of many of the craft in which the Dutch crossed and re-crossed the Atlantic in pursuing their business in New Netherland is a commentary on their indomitable trading proclivities and seamanship. Today, visiting the model that represents the Mayflower at Plymouth, we marvel that families and young children could have survived the winter passage of the Atlantic aboard her. Yet she had nearly twice the tonnage of the Halve Maen (Half Moon) and three or four times that of many of the Dutch vessels that made repeated voyages to bring settlers to New Netherland.

Even the names of these ships are revealing of the Dutch who came there—Abrahams Offerhande (Abraham’s Sacrifice), of their Old Testament Calvinistic piety; de Liefde (the Love), of personal feeling for the ships that they sailed so casually through perilous seas. The type-names of these craft of the New Netherland Dutch may be found in hundreds of references in the public documents of New Netherland, yet the exact nature and design of the various kinds of ships and boats employed there still remain obscure to the researcher, and the same vessel is often called by several type-names. Chatterton says:

It is an unfortunate historical fact that, throughout the history of most ships from very early times sailor-men have been remarkably careless in nautical nomenclature. Such words as barks, galleys, wherries, galiotes, and brigantines have been regularly applied to totally different types of vessels.

Certainly this is true in the New Netherland records as well. Those types that appear in the documents relating to the Dutch in America are ship, fluyt (flyboat), frigate, yacht (jacht), galiot, bark, schooner, ketch, sloop (sloop); or, for smaller craft, yawl (jol), punt (pont), scow (schow), rowboat and canoe. Some of these craft, however, do not appear to be similar to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century examples having their type names. Of this dilemma a British writer on early ships says:

The later nomenclature of sailing ship types is useless in classifying vessels of this period [seventeenth century]; where special terms such as 'ketch' or 'bark' were used, they did not fit the careful definitions of nineteenth-century writers.
Another authority on ships declares that

"Until the middle of the nineteenth century, rig had little if any connection with designation of ship or boat types. Size, form, construction or other considerations usually determined the type name." 4

It is indeed true that yachts described in the New Netherland records are quite unlike the modern racing yachts or the over-decorated, top-heavy yachts of English royalty of the seventeenth century, and they are also unlike each other. Henry Hudson's *Halve Maen* was vastly different from the small, fore-and-aft rigged work yachts that were so active on the rivers and bays of New Netherland.

Though size may point to a given type of vessel, it does not determine it. The flyboat was conceived and generally thought of as a large vessel, and the yacht a small one. Yet the captured Swedish ship the *Gullene Hai* (Golden Shark) is called in the records a flyboat even though she was of only 80 to 90 tons burden, while the yacht *Halve Maen* carried about the same number of tons. The modern researcher, in trying to resolve these contradictions in seventeenth-century ship nomenclature can only resort to common sense aided by a basic knowledge of conditions existing in New Netherland at that period and the functions that the craft was built to perform. Even then there is often uncertainty.

### The Ship, the Fluyt and the Frigate

Judging by the New Netherland records, the three largest vessels used by the Dutch in their Atlantic colonies to trade, to transport colonists and supplies, and to engage in privateering were the ship, the fluyt and the frigate. Each fulfilled the special needs of one of these activities of the Dutch in the seventeenth century.

### The Ship

In what way the type of vessel referred to as a ship differed from the other two types named above cannot be determined readily, yet that the term is used fairly consistently for certain named vessels and not for others indicates that it refers to a craft with specific qualities setting it aside as a special type. Warships, undoubtedly, had certain unique specifications, yet these had little part in the daily business of New Netherland. All one can say now is that in the seventeenth century a 'ship' was probably distinguished from a *fluyt* or other vessel by the shape of its hull, yet undoubtedly the term 'ship' often was used carelessly in the records to refer to other specific types.

Among the earliest ships mentioned in the *Holland Documents* 5 that related to the Dutch settlement in America are *de Vos* (Little Fox) and *de Craen* (Little Crane) which, on February 1, 1611, were declared ready to embark crews for a voyage to discover a northern passage to China. 6 No details of the voyage are available, but the inclusion of this document in a study of the Dutch in America implies that they subsequently explored the northeastern coast of America, and we know that *de Vos* was on that coast a few years later. 7

There was at this time an escalating interest among Dutch merchants in underwriting "those who Discover any New Passages, Havens, Countries, Places," 8 and this concern for new markets eventually led to the formation of the Dutch West India Company. Prior to this, however, the States General of the Netherlands granted to a group of prominent merchants of the cities of Amsterdam and Hoorn the exclusive right to trade in New Netherland for four voyages to be completed within three years. This was on October 11, 1614, and the names of the ships owned by these merchants, with their skippers, were: *de Vos* (Jan de With), *de Tijger* (Tiger-Adriaen Block), *'t Fortuyn* (Fortune-Hendrick Costiaensen), *de Nachtegael* (Nightengale-Thys Volckertsen) and *'t Fortuyn* (Cornelis Jacobsen Mey). 9 Four years later two other Amsterdam merchants were granted permission to make a voyage to New Netherland with the ship *Het Schilt* (Shield). It is likely that all of these were small ships of shallow draft, easily maneuverable for exploring the bays, inlets and rivers of the new territory.

Cornelis Jacobsen Mey is again encountered in August 1620, this time as the skipper of the ship *de Blyde Bootschap* (Glad Tidings). He reports having discovered in the New Netherland area "some new Countries populous and fertile." 10 The following year there appears in the records the first clear-cut notice of a Dutch trade with Virginia that would become increasingly heavy and lucrative when a ship named the *de Witte Duif* (White Dove–Willem Jansen Houton, skipper) was given permission by the States General to proceed to Virginia and return with a cargo of tobacco and peltries. 11 This was quickly followed by other petitions to trade with Virginia.

A record of the West India company dated March 28, 1624, notes that "the colonists going to New Netherland
for the Chamber of Amsterdam will be mustered tomorrow.”12 A sequel to this entry shows that on March 30, 1624, a special manifesto was formally read to colonists preparing to sail on the ship Nieuw Nederlandt.13 Wassenaer, in his Historisch Verhael, says that the Nieuw Nederlandt was a vessel of 130 last (about 260 tons); her skipper, Cornelis Jacobsen Mey. He also declares that it was this ship that brought over the thirty families of Walloons who have generally been accepted as the first bona fide colonists (that is, complete families) to New Netherland. Since both of these contemporary sources support the claim that this group came on the Nieuw Nederlandt in 1624, the matter would seem to be settled, but many years later, in 1688, one of these Walloon refugees, Catelina Trico, at the age of 83 deposed that she came on d’Eendracht (Unity) in 1623.14 This has muddied the issue of what ship brought these first settlers, and the claims for both have been carefully examined and reported on by two well-known historians of the Dutch in America, C.A. Weslager and Arnold J.F. van Laer.15

The term ‘little ship’ is used repeatedly in the public records of New Netherland, and appears to refer to a vessel of between 80 and 200 tons, roughly speaking. In April, 1645, the ‘little ship’ St. Pieter of 44 or 45 last (about 90 tons) was sold at Amsterdam with standing and running rigging and all appurtenances for 4,050 Carolus gilders.16 (The St. Pieter is also referred to as a yacht.) Ten years later another so-called little ship, Abraham’s Offerhande (again referred to as a yacht) owned by the West India Company, was sold to Thomas Willett for 400 beavers or f3,550, payable in “good beef and pork.”17 She was 63 feet in length with a 29-foot beam.18 The following inventory taken at the time of sale shows the paucity of the equipment with which the Company upgaured its trading vessels:

Inventory of the property which I, skipper Claes Cornelisz, found on the ship De Offerhande Abrahams the 21st of October anno 1655

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 main sail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 foresails with a bonnet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 main topsail</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 fore topsail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 spritsail, good and bad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 cannon balls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 mizzen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 prince’s flag</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 jack</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 anchors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 cables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 keg with some powder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 iron 3 pounders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ladle and 1 sponge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 small pedereros with 3 chambers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 weapon as it is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 muskets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 powder horn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 copper kettles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 brass pot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 dishing out spoon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first large ship known to have been built in New Netherland was the Nieuw Nederlandt, of 800 tons burden and carrying 30 guns. She was built at Manhattan in 1631 for the West India Company, and in her period was one of the largest merchant ships afloat.20 Later the Company was criticized for her excessive costs.21 This ship should not be confused with the earlier ship Nieuw Nederlandt that has been discussed above as bringing over the Walloon families. In 1634 the large ship built in 1631 was taken by the Dunkirkers.22

David de Vries’s journals of his voyages, as well as the minutes of the Council of New Netherland, indicate that there were fine ships’ carpenters and excellent ship-repair facilities at Manhattan throughout its Dutch occupation. Certainly the extent of Dutch privateering in the Caribbean and elsewhere in American waters, with the attendant physical damage to ships, made it necessary to maintain close-at-hand facilities for making repairs. Just how many ships were actually built there each year cannot be determined from existing records.

Other agencies in New Netherland, besides the West India Company, that had need for ships were the agricultural colonies then being established as patroonships there. It appears from Kiliaen van Rensselaer’s letters that in the early days of his Colonie he depended on the West India Company ships to transport both his colonists and supplies.23 The Amsterdam Chamber of the Company in 1631 granted Van Rensselaer permission to send over eleven colonists and ten calves in the Eendracht,24 and in the following year the ship de Soubergh (Salt Mine) that was taking Wouter van Twiller25 to New Netherland as its director general, also carried cattle and supplies to the patroonship Rensselaerswyck. In the course of this voyage the Soubergh captured the Spanish yacht Hope laden with a valuable cargo of sugar. Both
the prize and the Dutch ship arrived at Manhattan in need of extensive repairs because of damage each had received from the guns of the other.26

A few years after this Van Rensselaer charged that the West India Company had “never attempted to make room in their ships” for the transportation of farm animals, as the Act of Freedoms and Exemptions required of them.27 Yet he continued to use *d'Eendracht* and other West India Company ships to transport his colonists and goods, doubtless because he had no alternative at the time.

The first hint in these records that the patroon had invested in a vessel of his own comes in April 1637 when he expresses hope to a friend in New Netherland “that by this time our people, ship and goods have arrived,”28 and in September of the same year in another letter he speaks of “my small ship.”29 This was the *Rensselaerswiijk* that we know to have been a small ship, not only from her owner’s letters, but from two other circumstances: she could navigate the shoals and sandbars of the Hudson of that day as far north as Fort Orange; and she was later sold for only f2,600.30 Yet in spite of this she carried 38 passengers to America, in addition to her cargo, skipper, supercargo and crew.31 There still exists the log of this voyage of six months. It shows that she left the Texel on October 8, 1636; and after spending time in several English ports and at La Rochelle, the Scilly Islands, Madeira and the Azores, made her way across the Atlantic to drop anchor before Fort Orange on the Hudson on April 7, 1637.32 During the passage three children were born, each birth occurring in the midst of a storm. One of the children, a boy, was christened Storm and later took as a family name van der Zee, meaning from the sea.

The protracted voyage of the *Rensselaerswiijk* was not profitable for the Van Rensselaers, and there were unpleasant problems with a partner and with the skipper and supercargo. As a result Van Rensselaer sold the ship on April 20, 1638, for f2,600. She was wrecked in the Caribbean six years later.34

Kiliaen van Rensselaer next turned to a foreign nation for his shipping, sending over a cargo by the Swedish ship *den Calmer Sleutel* (Keys of Calmer).35 He then joined with the West India Company, of which he had been so critical, in fitting out a ship *het Wapen van Noorwegen* (Arms of Norway) by which he transported goods and settlers to Rensselaerswiijk.36

By the summer of 1643 Kiliaen van Rensselaer and his business associates were again preparing to buy a ship to use for trade and for shipping supplies to their Colonie in New Netherland. On July 9 of that year Van Rensselaer wrote to a merchant friend at Leyden saying, “This afternoon we bought, with the advice of ship’s carpenters and other experts, a ship suitable for our intended voyage, of 80 lasts burden [around 160 tons], . . . with an upper deck five feet high extending the entire length, a comfortable forecastle . . . mounted with six pieces. . . .” He further revealed that this ship, *het Wapen van Rensselaerswiijk*, had been purchased for f7,000, and though somewhat old, was in good condition. She had been built at Lübeck, of heavy timbers and had a square stern.37 Jan Simonsz was her skipper, Pieter Wijncoop, supercargo.

Many years after this we find the Colonie of Rensselaerswiijk still involved in the purchase of ships. In 1670, under the directorship of Jeremias van Rensselaer, it purchased one-eighth interest in a small ship called the *Margriet of Albany* for 625 pounds sterling.38 Two other of her owners had ties with Albany—Pieter Schuyler and Andries Teller. Her skipper was David Edwards. On September 26, 1670, Ryckert van Rensselaer, who had been resident in the Colonie for several years, returned permanently to Holland on this “little ship,”39 as both he and his brother Jeremias referred to her in correspondence. Apparently she sailed out of Manhattan rather than Albany.

At about the same time in Holland, Jan Baptist van Rensselaer was purchasing one-fifth part in *de Witte Kloodt* (White Sphere), a pinnace. Today we think of a pinnace as a small boat and this was a sizeable vessel, yet Chatterton notes that in seventeenth century nautical references “pinnaces . . . may mean either sailing craft of good size or merely ships’ boats.”40 In the total bill for building and equipping *de Witte Kloodt* it is noted that “the hull of the pinnace” was 85 feet long, 21 feet wide, 20 feet deep and the deck about 5 feet [?—cost for the hull, f5,000. She carried 10 pieces of cannon, which, with their carriages, came to a cost of f789. We learn further that there was a new ship’s boat, a wainscotted cabin for which pewter costing f29 was purchased, and three figures were carved on the stem. When *de Witte Kloodt* sailed on her first voyage, she was carrying a ballast of 40,000 bricks, and her merchandise was valued at f23,609; ship and equipment at f12,480; and stores for the voyage at f3,428.41
The Fluyt

An authority on seventeenth-century ships says,

The most notable development in merchant ship building in the later sixteenth century was the evolution of the *fluyt* or flyboat. Turned out in thousands by the Dutch shipyards, the *fluyt* largely accounts for Dutch supremacy in the carrying trade.

Developed originally by the Dutch for their flourishing sixteenth-century trade with the Baltic countries and the British Isles, the *fluyt* was before everything else a cargo carrier. Cumbersome in appearance, it was a large, square-rigged vessel with three masts and rounded ends fore and aft, and with a pear-shaped stern rising steeply to a very high, narrow poop. The hull was long in proportion to its width and had a broad, flat bottom wider at the waterline than above.

One authority writes that *fluyten* (flyboats) were not usually armed, which may have been true in the beginning when their activities were confined to the northern ocean and the Baltic sea, since guns are heavy and would occupy space and tonnage needed for the commercial cargoes. In the seventeenth century, however, when these ships were engaged in carrying Dutch goods to all parts of the Atlantic theater, guns necessarily became a part of their equipment. It is likely that the amount of their armament from time to time depended on whether the Dutch were at peace or at war with the Portuguese, the Spanish or the English, though they always had the Dunkirk pirates to fear.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the *fluyt*'s impact on the science of shipbuilding and Dutch supremacy in world trade is that it was mass-produced with interchangeable parts, which facilitated repairs at sea and in foreign ports. This, in addition to the relatively small crews needed to sail these vessels, reduced operating costs and thus increased profits. In this connection Ralph Davis writes:

The Dutch *fluit* or flyboat of 300 tons carried not fifty men but fifteen. English ships could hardly compete in peaceful conditions.

It was not until the British began to copy the construction of Dutch ships captured during the Anglo-Dutch wars of the seventeenth century that they were able to challenge the Dutch in naval warfare or rival them in peacetime commerce.

The *fluyt* apparently had a wide range in size, since there are references to “small flyboats” of 80 to 90 tons,
and to those as large as the Wapen van Hoorn (Arms of Hoorn) of 600 tons capacity. A detailed record exists of the Swedish flyboat Gullene Haj that was seized by the Dutch in the Hudson River in September 1654 in retaliation for a Swedish attack on Fort Casimir in the South River. The inventory of her equipment and other information about her runs to nearly seven printed pages, and reveals that she was 62 feet from stem to stern and 13 feet wide at the deck: that among her equipment were one large spritsail, one foresail, one fore topsail, two mainsails, one foresail bonnet, other extra sails, and one mizzenmast; and that she carried two small iron cannons.4

The names of other fluyten operating in New Netherland waters dot the records. Among these is the Walvis (Whale) of 400 tons and one of the largest of these ships. Because of its basic design for carrying bulky cargoes, the fluyt lent itself to conversion into a whaler, and David de Vries fitted out the Walvis in 1630 as a whaling ship for his first voyage to Delaware Bay. As a licensed privateer she also carried 18 guns.45 Another fluyt, the de Coninck David (King David), again under de Vries’ command, was fitted out for a new 60-foot keel in 1630 at Manhattan. She was of 200 tons burden and carried 14 guns.46 The Gideon, a fluyt in the slave trade, had 14–16 guns.47

A fluyt familiar to New Netherlanders, since she made frequent trips to New Amsterdam with goods and settlers during the 1650s was the Valckenier (Falconer) of 160 lasts or 320 tons.48 De Liefde (Love), used in the New Netherland trade around 1655, is referred to as a flyboat by Stuyvesant,49 though at other times she is called a ship or a yacht. Reporting on the surrender of New Netherland to the English, Stuyvesant mentions the flyboat d’Eendracht, “with 10 or 12 small cannon.”50 In 1673 the small Dutch flyboat Expectatie was taken off Nantucket by the English.51

Little appears in English histories to show the crucial part these Dutch flyboats had in the defeat of the Spanish plan to invade and conquer England in 1588. At this time the Spanish strategy did not depend solely on the ships of the Armada, but called for the Duke of Parma and his large army based in the Spanish Netherlands to cross the

Fig. 12. Two frigates, by Monogrammist ARk, ca. 1675-99. Courtesy of Nederlands Scheepvaart Museum, Amsterdam.
English Channel and invade England, while the Armada was destroying its defenders on the sea. The Dutch admiral, however, under Prince Maurice of Nassau and Orange, assembled a fleet of 150 galleons, flyboats and other craft to blockade all ports from which the Duke might embark his troops, and thus prevented an invasion from the Continent. The Dutch vessels, smaller and more maneuverable than those of the Spanish, also took part in harassing the great, cumbersome galleons.53

The Frigate

The Dutch frigate of the seventeenth century was a trim, fast-sailing, three-masted, square-rigged vessel used extensively for trade and privateering in the Atlantic and Caribbean against the Portuguese, the Spanish and later the English. As would be supposed, she was heavily armed for her size. An early print of two seventeenth-century Dutch frigates shows medium-size vessels with wide, flat stems in which there are four guns, while two formidable tiers of gun ports run the length of the hulls. It is obvious from the records, however, that the frigates operating out of New Netherland during the first half of the century were much less pretentious in size and armament than those in this drawing.

Perhaps the most publicized of the New Netherland frigates was La Garce, among whose owners were men from Fort Orange and New Amsterdam. La Garce figures frequently in the records as a privateer, one of her most spectacular triumphs occurring in May 1644 when she brought in two captured Spanish barks, one carrying sugar, tobacco and ebony, the other wine destined for Guatemala. These had been taken in the Caribbean after a hard fight.53 It is significant that seaman on La Garce often made their wills before sailing to those waters. In 1643 Jacob Stoffelsen paid f350 for a tenth share in the equipment of this frigate, and four years later Christian Rams sold his title and interest in her for f1,400.54

Another frigate appearing in the Dutch records is the Palomme, purchased at Manhattan on June 13, 1651, by the well-to-do New Englander Thomas Willett for the sum of 800 pieces of eight (f2,000).55 In 1636 a small Spanish frigate of about 60 tons was brought into the harbor at New Amsterdam by an English ship that had taken her prize and there was auctioned off.56

The Yacht in New Netherland

Of all vessels employed in New Netherland, the yacht appears to have been the one most important to the survival and prosperity of the province. Yet the yachts mentioned so frequently in the New Netherland documents are difficult to reduce to a consistent set of specifications. It is generally agreed that in referring to yachts the Dutch meant small, swift-sailing vessels of shallow draft. One authority writes, "... the type name yacht was based on form rather than rig [and] yachts were of various sizes and [were] employed for many purposes."57

Since the word ‘yacht’ derives from the Dutch word ‘jaagen’ meaning to hunt or chase, it might be supposed
that this craft was primarily designed to serve a recon-
naissance function during naval engagements. Whether
or not this is true (and it must be admitted that the yacht
was used by the Dutch far more consistently in trade than
in war), there is no doubt that speed, maneuverability
and being able to function equally well in shallow waters or
high seas were among the qualities that made the yacht
so useful in early America.

It was the Dutch small yacht, so named in old Dutch
nautical prints, that became what may be called the
principal work boat of the province of New Netherland.
This was a single-masted, shallow-draft, fore-and-aft
rigged vessel with a gaff. It had a high, flat stern (the
so-called transom stern), a flat bottom and leeboards
(zwaards) to serve as stabilizers and to prevent its drift-
ing to leeward. Chatterton states that the Dutch adopted
leeboards from the Chinese, who had used them for
centuries. Speculating about why the Dutch did not adopt
the centerboard (which he says the English understood
in theory by the sixteenth century), he suggests two
probable reasons: it took up cargo space, or it might jam
if hung up on the many sandy shoals in Dutch rivers.

In the old records the name 'yacht' is also applied to
square-rigged vessels of an intermediate size and in the
fast-sailing class. Such was Henry Hudson's Haive Maen
of 80 tons burden, employing a crew of around eighteen
persons. From a carefully researched reconstruction of the
Haive Maen made in Holland in 1909 for New York's
Hudson-Fulton celebration, we have excellent plans
showing that she was a three-masted, square rigged
vessel with a high poop and high forecastle. Her length
from stem to stern was 63 feet, old Amsterdam measure,
or 58 feet, English measure: her beam, 17 feet 5 inches
by the former; 16 feet 2.5 inches by the English reckon-
ing. Yet her flat stern and rounded bows reflect the
general form of all yachts of that time. The Mackerel of
60 tons burden, designated as a yacht in the documents,
crossed the Atlantic in 1623 to trade all winter at Fort
Orange, and Wassenaer in his Historisch Verhael says
that on April 25, 1625, the Mackerel was again dis-
patched with supplies for New Netherland but was taken
by the Dunkirk pirates while still in European waters.

Often several yachts would accompany a larger ship on
the ocean crossings, a measure taken for mutual protec-
tion against the elements, pirates and the Spanish.

Four years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth the
Dutch were building yachts in New Netherland. The first
of these appears to have been the Onrust (Restless). On
August 18, 1616, the Dutch skipper Cornelis Hendrick-
sen reporting to the States General about coastal explora-
tions he had made in America declared that these had
been accomplished "in a small Yacht of about eight lasts
(16 tons burden)" named the Onrust and built in New
Netherland. Johan de Laet, writing his New World in the
1630s, mentioned the suitable timber for ship build-
ing in the new province and said that the Dutch "have
built there several sloops and tolerable yachts." He gave
the dimensions of the Onrust as stem to stern 44 1/2 feet,
keel 38 feet, width 11 1/2 feet. Construction of this
yacht was not undertaken as a part of a planned ship-
building program, but was a matter of sheer necessity. In
1614 Adriaen Block's ship Tijger burned at her moorings
near Manhattan Island shortly after her sister ship Fortuyyn returned to the Fatherland. Since nothing
could be accomplished in exploration or trade without a
vessel of some kind, it was necessary to build one.
Considering the lack of facilities and tools, this was a
prodigious accomplishment.

Although not originally intended for the rough
Atlantic passage, Dutch yachts proved fine sailors when
thus employed. On De Vries's second voyage to America
in 1632, his small accompanying yacht Eikhoorn
(Squirrel) of only 20 tons burden came safely through a
massive storm off Cape Hatteras, though she was badly
tossed about and at times given up for lost. The small
yachts of New Netherland were used in a multitude of
ways, initially for exploration and trading with the
Indians, later by the Dutch farmers and merchants for
transporting goods and produce. They were official
dispatch carriers between the various parts of New
Netherland, and useful for transporting persons to these
and to the New England and southern colonies of the
English. Freightling goods by these yachts from New
Amsterdam to the Fort Orange/Beverwijck/Rensselaerswiick area, or to the South River settlements
and Virginia and Maryland, became so profitable a
business that many individuals who undertook it rose
quickly from comparative poverty to riches.

One of these, Govert Loockermans, who had come to
New Netherland in 1633 as cook's mate on the yacht St.
Martyn, thus became a prosperous citizen of New
Amsterdam. From the frequency with which his name
appears in the court records and the nature of these
entries, it seems that Loockermans had a lively career
with his yacht. At one time he was accused of selling
contraband powder to the Indians of Rhode Island, and
so became persona non grata to the authorities there. On
another occasion he was involved in a comic-opera incident while sailing down the Hudson past Beeren Island in the summer of 1644 in his yacht *de Goede Hoop* (Good Hope). Beeren Island, the southernmost boundary of the *Colonie* of Rensselaerswijck, is a small, rocky island at that time fortified by the Van Rensselaers with a few small cannon and called *Rensselaersteyn*. That day, as *de Goede Hoop* came abreast of the island, Nicholaes Coorn, the patron’s agent, called to Loockermans to “strike... for the staple right of Rensselaerswijck.” To this Loockermans replied that he would strike to no man save the Prince of Orange or those to whom he was subject, upon which Coorn fired on the yacht. The first cannon shot went through the mainsail and halyards, the second missed, and a third blast from an ordinary firearm pierced the Dutch flag, narrowly missing Loockermans, who was holding it in his hand. Then the yacht passed out of range downriver “without firing back.”

Arrived at Manhattan, Loockermans promptly sued Coorn, who, in his answer to the suit, claimed that in firing on the yacht he had been but carrying out the orders of the patron. He further stated that Loockermans had shouted, “Fire, you dogs; may the Devil take you.” Considering the provocation and knowing those involved, these words seem mild indeed and it may be surmised that they have been laundered considerably in translation. At any rate, the case was decided for the plaintiff, and Coorn was ordered to pay for the damage to the yacht and to produce within ten months written approval of his actions from the patron in Holland or face corporal punishment.

Rutger Jacobsen, who came over as a farmhand for the *Colonie* of Rensselaerswijck, was another who eventually acquired a freighting and trading yacht that proved one of the first steps in his becoming a man of wealth in Beverwijck. He left, when he died, a stained glass window in the new church that bore his name and an impressive coat of arms.

Often charges of smuggling were levelled against some of these entrepreneurs, and not without reason. It is apparent that as the number of individually-owned yachts increased, many of these transacted business from obscure moorings in the waters surrounding New Amsterdam and Fort Orange, making it difficult for the government of the province—the West India Company—to patrol their activities. As a result, in July 1647 the council passed an order “that all private yachts, barks, ketches, sloops and boats under fifty lasts... shall not seek nor have any other roadstead than in front of the city of New Amsterdam, between Capsken’s Hoeck and the finger-post near the City Tavern.” Since this action came at the end of a long session of the council devoted to the problems of smuggling, the new regulation was undoubtedly an attempt to control that activity among the owners of the private boats.

There appears to have been a wide variation in the size of the Dutch yachts operating in the Atlantic prior to 1650, though the actual figures are rarely given in the records. The average size of the small yachts used by the Dutch in New Netherland for river and coastal trade and freighting appears to have been much the same as that of the *Onrust*—8 lasts or 16 tons burden; 44½ feet from stem to stern; and a width of 11½ feet. De Vries’ yacht *Eikhoorn*, chosen for working along the South River in 1635, was of the same tonnage, and 8 or 9 lasts was the size specified by Vice Director Alrichs for the small yacht he requested in 1657 for his South River colony.

There are frequent references to sales of these small yachts, and usually the prices are stated; but since neither the condition of the boat nor the dimensions is indicated in these, the usefulness of sales records as criteria for size is limited. These furnish, however, an interesting study of the variety of media of exchange in use in New Netherland at this time. In May 1641 at New Amsterdam Arent Steffeniers purchased the yacht *Wesel* and appurtenances from Maryn Andriaensen, a former freebooter, for 500 Carolus guilders in Holland currency. Teunis Dircksen van Vechten, a tenant farmer on the patroonship of Rensselaerswijck, bought half a share in the yacht *Zepaert* (Sea Horse) with half her appurtenances and yawl, “for the sum of three hundred guilders in current merchandise at the choice of the vendor, and one *mudde* of good wheat,” in June, 1651. The yacht *Vrede* (Peace) was sold in 1648 for forty beavers, which at that time amounted to around f210.77

A small yacht *de Liefde* (not to be confused with a ship or *fluyt* of the same name of around fifty lasts belonging to the West India Company) was purchased in April 1661 by Jan Jochensens Val and Adriaen Symonsen for five hogsheads of French wine and an *anker* of brandy “and nothing more.” At this time a hogshead of French wine sold for around f110 and an *anker* of brandy (about ten gallons) cost f44, making the price paid for the yacht about f595. The “sloop or yacht” *Swarte Arent* (Black Eagle) in November of the same year changed hands at Beverwijck for f1,300 “in good strung sewan [wampum]” with f1,200 additional to be paid six months later.
The inventory of the yacht de Wakende Boey (Vigilant Buoy), sold at Manhattan in June 1651 for the sum of 100 “good, merchantable beavers,” or approximately 800, gives some idea of the sparsity of equipment on these small yachts:

- Two pedereros [small swivel cannons]
- Two chambers [small cannons without carriages]
- Two anchors
- Two cables such as they are
- One cutlas
- 2 or 3 empty shells
- 2 or 3 mess bowls
- 1/2 dozen spoons
- One iron pot
- One copper kettle
- One small basting pan
- One earthen casserole
- Two or three water casks
- One mizzen sail with a foresail as they are on the roadstead
- Also the running and standing rigging
- The yawl with its appuglaances
- Two oars for the yacht

This appears to have been a typical small work yacht, judging from its sale price and equipment. The inventory is unusual in showing a modicum of eating utensils. The dearth of these on most ships’ inventories suggests that seamen of that time usually carried with them their own spoons and dishes, or went without.

Just as the small yacht proved of such value in the daily work and exploration of the new settlements in America, the larger yachts of the Dutch were equally indispensible for carrying on all kinds of maritime business for which speed, capacity, economy of operation and maneuverability were essential. The yachts in the larger class varied greatly in size, from those similar to Hudson’s gallant little Halve Maen of only 40 lasts, to yachts like the Westindische Raaf (Westindian Raven) and Neptuynis (Neptune), or the Kath (Cat)—the two latter in periods of war carrying crews of 60 men. At times these larger yachts are referred to in the records as ‘little ships,’ and again as ‘barks,’ which shows the looseness of nomenclature current at the time; though some of this ambiguity may derive from later translators.

A list of supplies and equipment taken on the Westindische Raaf (belonging to the West India Company) for a voyage from New Amsterdam to the Fatherland in June 1639 covers several pages, and the value in money amounts to £2,467. Among the items for the voyage delivered by the sailmaker alone were one mainsail with a bonnet of 350 yards of French canvas; 13 lbs. of sail yarn; four pieces of rope; 121 yards of French canvas for the mizensail; 149 yards ditto for the foresail; 48 yards of French canvas for repairs to the foresail; 8 lbs. of 3-ply marline yarn; 31½ yards of French canvas for patching cloth; 20 yards of duck.

The passage between New Amsterdam and Holland took an average of two months. An inventory of provisions issued in November 1643 to the West India Company yacht Reaal for that voyage is as follows:

- 29 scheepels of peas £89:–
- 154 loaves of rye bread 30:10
- 460½ lb of pork @ 5 stivers 115:2:8
- 32 loaves of wheaten bread 11:4
- 300 lb dried fish 36:–
- 883½ lb of beef @ 4½ stivers 198:15½
- 341 lb of hardtack 126:3
- 9 cans of Spanish wine 75:–
- 76 lb of tallow @ 2½ stivers 7:15
- 25 lb of cheese @ 6 stivers 7:10
- 8 cans of train oil @ 10 stivers 4:–

These supplies were “to mess the crew,” but as the size of the crew is not known, it is impossible to estimate how adequate they were. It is somewhat ironic that the verb to ‘mess’ derives from the Dutch word *megen* meaning ‘to feed or fatten,’ though Dutch skippers were notorious for cutting rations to the bone on these voyages. In one case passengers on the yacht deDolphyn to New Netherland were kept on such short and inedible rations that they complained bitterly to the authorities on arrival at Manhattan.

Privateering and Illegal Practices

Throughout the history of the Dutch West India Company in America a sizeable number of yachts, large and small, was constantly employed in its service. In addition to the pedestrian day-to-day tasks these yachts performed, there were livelier ones, since much of the Dutch period in America coincided with a continuing war with Spain, and later intermittent wars with England, so that privateering and smuggling operations against those countries accounted for a great deal of activity among the yachts of the company. Privateering, which in effect was piracy with governmental benediction, was at that time practiced widely among all nations having the means to do so, and New Netherland was in a particularly happy geographical position to indulge, since it had direct access to the sea lanes along which Spain and Portugal ferried home the treasure taken from South and Central America and Mexico.
While it is probable that most of the yachts of the Dutch West India Company that sailed out of New Netherland in the seventeenth century were at one time or other involved in privateering, now and then an item in the public records is specific in this regard. The Council of New Netherland, meeting at Fort Amsterdam on 20 June 1647, declared it “...expedient and proper for the increase of trade and commerce of this country to equip, fit out and send to sea the yachts named de Liefde and De Kath to cruise against our enemies the Spaniards.” 86 Later, finding that de Liefde was unseaworthy and that the necessary materials and carpenters to put her in condition were not available, it was decided that she should either be sold or stripped of running and standing rigging. “therewith to fit out next spring the ships that may come out of the sea, as to all appearances these will also be destitute of everything.”87 Obviously, privateering took its toll of vessels.

In June 1654 the yacht de Haen (Cock) left New Amsterdam for Curaçao, her official orders being to bring back a cargo of salt. She had, however, been “equipped with such munition of war as she requires.”88 In spite of this generous armament, she was taken by the Spanish on her homeward voyage. What is notable about this is that six years earlier the Treaty of Münster had ended officially the war between Spain and the Netherlands, but apparently both sides were reluctant to give up the congenial work of privateering. Indeed, two years after that peace treaty the delegates of New Netherland on 12 April 1650, declared in a communication to the States General that the Spanish in the West Indies were still ignorant of the peace and that hostilities still continued in those parts. Further, that “peace has never been proclaimed in New Netherland.”89

Many years earlier, in 1629, the West India Company, faced with a possible truce between Holland and Spain, had hastily sent off a memoir to the States General pointing out the desirability of continuing the war. In this remarkable document some of the goods acquired in one year through the privateering operations of the company are listed. These included 4,000 cases of indigo, 3,000 chests of sugar, “the handsomest lot of Cochineal that was ever brought into this country [Holland],” and “a vast amount of wealth in all sorts of precious stones, silk and silk goodes, musk, amber, all sorts of drugs, Brazil and Log Wood, and other wares too numerous to mention.”90 Since privateering by its very nature did not attract the faint-hearted or scrupulous, all kinds of illegal activities grew out of it. As has been pointed out, smuggling was rife throughout New Netherland and largely uncontrollable by the authorities.91 Crews often divided the smaller and more valuable items from a prize cargo among themselves. In July 1648 the yacht de Kath brought into New Amsterdam a Spanish prize, the bark Nuestra Senora del Rosario laden with hides. Almost immediately the crew were brought into court for recovery of “some pieces of eight and a few pearls” which they had found in her and had divided among themselves. They were found guilty but were pardoned because the company needed to fit out a vessel to “bring salt” from the West Indies and was short of seamen.92

Crews of privateering yachts likewise carried on a brisk business in gunrunning and the sale of contraband goods.

Yacht Armament

The Dutch yachts engaged in these dangerous pursuits were well armed with ordnance. In an inventory of 1626 of the West India Company’s fleet engaged in trade or privateering, it is stated that a large number consisted of “big and little yachts ... provided with metal and iron guns, and all sorts of supplies of ammunition of war.”93 The smaller yachts that mainly worked the rivers and bays or engaged in coastal trading with the English colonies were usually equipped with pedereros, which were small swivel cannon made of iron or bronze; or the chamber, an even simpler piece having no carriage and resting on its breech. Larger yachts and ships carried heavier armament. In November 1629 the directors of the West India Company declared,

“... we have provided our ships so well with heavy guns, ... amongst which were many demi-carthouns; and nearly 1400 heavy swivels (gotelingen), ... besides pedereros to the number of far beyond 600.”94

Yachts sailing between New Netherland and Curaçao appear to have carried at least four or five mounted guns, often more. Indeed, the number of guns carried by Dutch yachts in the first half of the seventeenth century varied considerably in the records and is probably marginally indicative of the size of the individual vessel. The yacht Siraen when seized by the Swedes on the South River in 1647 was carrying six guns and 60 lbs. of powder.95 The yacht Salm (Salmon), a single-masted, shallow-draft vessel built in 1630 for David de Vries’s first voyage to the South River but taken by Dunkirk pirates soon after she cleared the Texel, carried 10 guns.96 In 1644 three Curaçao-based yachts that were engaged intermittently in privateering against the Spanish were armed as follows: de Kath, 14 guns; de Neptuïjnis, 10 guns; and...
de Paroquit (Parakeet), 5 guns. Later, in 1655, the yachts de Dolphijn and Abraham's Offerhande, sailing from New Amsterdam against the Swedes on the South River, carried 4 guns each.

**Barks and Other Small Vessels**

Generally larger than the small yachts, yet not in the large-ship class, were the barks, galiots, ketches and pinks of the New Netherland records. Almost nothing can be learned about build and rigging from the references to these, though often they furnish clues about function, size or value.

**The Bark**

Modern dictionary definitions refer to the bark as a three-masted, square-rigged vessel, which suggests a larger ship than can be reconciled with the bark that Arent van Curler describes as having been purchased for use on the Hudson River and in coastal waters around New Netherland. In a letter written in June 1643 to his patron, Kiliaen van Rensselaer, Van Curler says, "Concerning the bark about the building [of which] the Patroon [has] written . . . it should be well adapted in breadth to convey cattle . . ." Then he adds, "I have purchased another for 1,100 guilders, which is a very tidy bark; . . .[and] can carry at sea 7 lasts; inland, 8 lasts (14 to 16 tons burden)."

Baker, writing on American colonial vessels, describes the bark of that time as "a single-decked, round-sterned vessel having no superstructures. Barks ranged in size," he continues, "from 12 to 100 tons and were employed for coastal trading and some off-shore fishing." He gives them two masts, square-rigged with a large mainsail on a mast amidships and a small foresail on a mast well forward.

**The Galiot**

The galiot, according to a definition in one modern dictionary, was "an old Dutch cargo vessel" with flattish bottom, rounded ribs and a mizzenmast placed near the stern. It carried a square mainsail and maintopsail and a forestay to the mainmast (there being no foremast) with a foresail and jibs.

From the New Netherland records we get the names of only a few galiots. One of these, the St. Michiel, cleared from the South River in 1650 for a voyage to the Fatherland. Another, the Hoop, which had been captured from the French, took part in an expedition against the Swedes on the South River in September 1655, armed with four cannon.

Jacob Alrichs, vice-director of the West India Company, in 1657 while still at New Amsterdam ordered a galiot sent out for his use on the South River and learned with satisfaction that one was already on the way to New Netherland in company with the ship de Waagh (Balance). This galiot appears to have been the Nieuwe Amstel, which later is shown by the records to have been in New Netherland and under charter to the West India Company between the years 1659 and 1662. A contemporary West India Company payroll indicates that the Nieuwe Amstel's company consisted of skipper, pilot, carpenter, cook, cabin boy and three seamen. The Nieuwe Amstel was chartered in December 1659 for $500 per month. In September 1660 she was chartered by Cornelis Willett to sail to Virginia, return to Manhattan, and then set out on a voyage to Curacao. At this time Jacob Jansen Huys, skipper of the galiot, declared that of a sum owed by the West India Company for her previous charter covering several months "not a doit" had been paid. He complained, too, of wanting to leave the American service and return to the Fatherland, and an entry for March 5, 1662, shows that the West India Company paid the passage to Holland on another ship of Skipper Huys and his crew. Prior to sailing on the Nieuwe Amstel in May 1661, Andries Andriessen, ship's carpenter, made his will. This can be taken to indicate that she was going on a privateering mission.

**Schooners and Ketches**

Schooners and ketches are only occasionally mentioned in the New Netherland documents. When the ship bringing Jacob Alrichs to America ran aground on Long Island in April 1657, Alrichs writes of having her cargo transshipped to the South River in "nine craft, both yachts and Schooners;" and a schooner was among the types of vessels he ordered sent from Holland for use in his South River colony.

In one reference the Nieuwe Amstel is called a schooner, another case, apparently, of mixed-up nomenclature.

A letter written by Jacob van Couwenhoven and Dirck van Schelluyne from New Amsterdam on October 6, 1650, mentioning the departure for the Caribbean of the ketch Voorlooper (Forerunner), is one of the few references found to this type of craft. In retaliation for the English capture of the fluyt Expectatie in December 1673, the Dutch in New Netherland confiscated four English ketches, though they later released them. While it is believed that the Dutch ketch of this period was a small fore-and-aft rigged vessel with two masts, it
may be that at the same time the English ketch was square rigged, since a modern writer says that the Dutch equated an English ketch with the Dutch galiot.\footnote{14}

**The Sloop**

In the Dutch nautical vernacular the term *sloop* was originally applied to a ship's longboat, which was often equipped with oars and a sail. The sloop of New Netherland that was much used for river and coastal travel, however, was a small, independent craft carrying oars and fore-and-aft sail. As previously stated, the Dutch documents relating to New Netherland often confuse the terms *yacht* and *sloop* for the same vessel, and toward the end of the seventeenth century the word *yacht* virtually disappeared from the New Netherland records, while *sloop* seemed to take on more importance.

In attempting to determine the precise difference between the New Netherland sloop and the small work yacht, it is tempting to assume that the former was undecked while the latter was decked over. Indeed Baker says, “A reference in 1654 indicates that in that year sloops were generally considered to be undecked” and that “Dutch sloops of New Netherland were definitely in the open-boat category propelled by both oars and sails.”\footnote{15}

Yet another authority, Chatterton, points to an early seventeenth-century book in French printed at Amsterdam which states that some sloops have decks while other do not.\footnote{16} Moreover, in a case brought before the council of New Netherland, two sailors are judged not obligated by their contract “to make a voyage northwards [to New England] in an unsuitable and open yacht during winter.”\footnote{17} So apparently some yachts were undecked also, and thus we are robbed of the deck as a criterion between sloop and yacht.

Marie Bayard sold half interest in the sloop *de Haen* for f508 in 1674.\footnote{18} The same year Abraham Jansen sold to Jacob Loockermans half part of the sloop *Salamander* for 130 beaver skins value, to be paid partially in wheat at 5 schepels\footnote{19} the beaver and partially in skins.\footnote{20}

![Fig. 14. Detail of 18th-century work yacht from Pau de Wandelaer portrait in the collections of the Albany Institute of History and Art, gift of Catherine Gansevoort Lansing.](image)
Sloops were often used to make the passage from New Amsterdam to the South River or to New England. Among the small craft that Jacob Alrichs requested for the South River in 1657 was "a sloop of 600 tons burden." However, in another letter written about the same time he asks for "a yacht of 8 or 9 lasts." Was Alrichs here using the terms sloop and yacht interchangeably for one boat?

The Dutch sloop of New Netherland was smaller and in other ways different from the Hudson River sloops of the nineteenth century. In his discussion of the sloop, Baker says that these became larger toward the end of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth. "During the second half of the seventeenth century," he writes, "after much confusion of type names and rigs, the sloop in North America became established as a single-masted vessel with a short-gaff fore-and-aft mainsail and one or more triangular head sails." This is a description of the Dutch work yacht of the first half of the seventeenth century.

**Crews and Passengers**

The number of the crew in these Dutch vessels varied with the size and mission of the ship. Presumably the company of a ship engaged in peacetime trading would be smaller than that of a privateer in time of war. Sir Walter Raleigh is said to have remarked that an English ship of 100 tons required a crew of 30, while a Dutch ship the same size could operate with a crew of 10.123

The Halve Maen of 80 tons burden is said to have had a crew of between eighteen and twenty, and the yacht Mackeral that brought supplies to Fort Orange in 1625, a crew of 12.124 The little yacht Eikhoorn (Squirrel) of only 20 tons that accompanied De Vries to America and was almost lost off Cape Hatteras had "a veteran crew of six."125 De Coninck David, a 200-ton flyt, carried a crew of twenty-five, and in 1648 the ship de Liefde of something just over 100 tons burden carried 16 on a voyage to Barbados.126 Parr says that the Wapen van Hoorne (Arms of Hoorn), a large flyt of 600 tons burden, "had a crew of 270"127—which seems an over-size crew for a Dutch ship, unless it was manned for war.

It is surprising and somewhat horrifying to note how many passengers were often crowded into the smallest of these vessels. We have already seen that for a voyage to America lasting six months, the little ship Rensiellaerswijck carried thirty-eight passengers, including three newborn babies, in addition to a crew of perhaps twenty.

Secretary van Tienhoven, writing in 1650 concerning sending farm families and artisans to New Netherland, declared that "a large flyboat of 200 lasts [about 400 tons burden]" should be chartered by the Company for the voyage out, and that it would probably carry 250 persons and crew.128 The Prins Maurits was carrying 129 passengers to Manhattan when she was wrecked in 1657,129 and the flyboat Valckenier of 400 tons could carry 140 immigrants, more than that number being turned away.130

**Diet and Wages**

It has already been noted that at times the food furnished passengers to America on Dutch vessels was so bad as to provoke complaints, and it seems probable that the seamen often fared worse. However, the list of provisions for a voyage of the Swol (a craft large enough to carry 22 guns131) in which sixty men were being transferred by the Company from Curaçao to New Amsterdam in 1645 seems adequate and sufficiently varied. It included 1 barrel of beef, 1 ditto pork, 3 ditto vegetables, 300 lbs. dried codfish, 900 lbs. bread, and 60 cheeses, the whole amounting in cost to f423:10.132

At this time wages for common sailors were extremely low, especially in view of the conditions under which they lived and worked, which today seem almost unendurable. Skippers' contracts show they were paid so little that it is no wonder they often turned to privateering and smuggling. In 1645 the crew of the West India Company yacht Paroquit consisted of skipper, pilot, supercargo, boatswain, gunner and fifteen sailors; there is no mention here of a cook or cabin boy, usually a part of crews. Their monthly wages were, respectively, f45, f28, f16, f18, f16, and for the sailors, f8.133 As a comparison, a day laborer in New Netherland earned one guilder per day; and one guilder would buy an 8-lb. loaf of bread, about a week's supply. Thus, skippers were making only a third more than the average unskilled laborer, while performing highly skilled and dangerous work. In addition, a lot of wealth passed through the hands of skippers, enough to make them wonder why they couldn't share in the bounty.

Though the men-before-the-mast worked in constant danger for these pitiful wages on seventeenth-century vessels, ship carpenters, on the other hand, were of the elite, so badly needed in New Netherland that they drew much better wages than the average workman. That they soon began to feel their indispensability is indicated by a record in the council minutes for March 1649. The
yacht de Liefde required repairs in order that she might proceed to the West Indies for salt critically needed for curing meat, but the West India Company's carpenters refused to work on her for less than $4 per day wages, "which is an unheard of wage," the record states. In the end the carpenters were ordered to do the work for whatever a board of arbitration composed of "two honest and impartial persons" should decide was a fair wage.134

Small Boats and Canoes

From earliest times the Dutch in the homeland had needed small boats in their daily living, and the transfer to America found them equally dependent on these. One of the first steps Jacob Alrichs, vice-director of New Netherland, took when he arrived at Manhattan in 1657 on his way to the South River was to write to the West India Company offices in Holland, asking that he be provided with "some suitable little vessels, to wit: one or two prams, which are here called, also, scows or champans, a good row boat, a sloop of nine or ten lasts and a schooner."135

The Dutch, too, soon saw the many advantages Indian canoes had over the clumsier rowboats, and adapted two kinds of these to their needs—one made of bark, the other a hollowed-out log. The former were fashioned usually of elm bark, since birch trees large enough to make them did not grow in the vicinity of Manhattan or Fort Orange; the dugouts were made by alternating burning and scraping a log until it was of suitable depth and width.

Canoes figure often in the neighbor-to-neighbor litigation with which the New Netherlanders enlivened their days. In 1648 Thomas Jansz of the Colonie of Rensselaerwyck told that court that Evert Pels had ordered his servant to take Thomas's canoe without the owner's permission.136 And across the river at Fort Orange the magistrates were having trouble with people who were "taking away the canoes from the shore."137 Mertenhertsz of Fort Orange provoked a lawsuit by allegedly upsetting a canoe in which there were thirty schepels of maize and a muddle of beans belonging to Albert Gerritsz. Thirty years later the court of Albany ordered a canoe to be kept by the farmers on Papsknee Island across the river from Fort Orange "in case of fire or other emergency," much as we would today keep an ambulance available.138 Doubtless because canoes could be concealed so easily in inlets and creeks, they were much used in New Netherland as a means for dispensing unlicensed liquors. In a court case of May 1654 it is stated that many of the inhabitants of Beverwijck "venture to sail in canoes, rowboats or other vessels from here to the Esopus and Catskill" to sell liquor illegally along the way to the Indians.139 On a more legitimate errand, Volkje Visbeek of Catskill borrowed a canoe belonging to an Indian and "sailed up the Riff and fetched maize in it."140 Thus we learn that New Netherland canoes were often fitted with sails.

Now and then there is reference to a punt—pont in Dutch—which was a narrow, flat boat usually fitted with a sail and propelled either by this or by a long pole. These were used for ferrying people, cattle and farm produce across streams. There is at least one reference to the use of a "raft of boards" for transporting lumber.141 Scows had many uses in a society such as that of New Netherland, including the transporting of brick, stone, cattle, lumber and farm crops. In May 1664 Maritie Meynderts sold her scow to Jan and Poulus Cornelissen for the sum of $1,000 in sewer.142

The surviving seventeenth-century records of New Netherland provide only fragmentary information about its ships and boats, yet these fragments include a great many details about this important aspect of New Netherland history. It is hoped that students of ships and sailing will find in these data from scattered sources material useful for clarifying the somewhat obscure image of New Netherland's maritime life.

Summary

Because of the pervasiveness of the sea in the western part of the Netherlands, the Dutch early became skilled in nautical pursuits, shipbuilding and trade. By the first half of the seventeenth century they were the foremost maritime nation in the world, and their traditional concern with trade and nautical activity was transferred to their new province, New Netherland. Here a wide variety of ships and boats was employed in trade with the Indians and with the English colonies and with Caribbean markets, as well as in smuggling and in privateering in time of war. The type names that occur repeatedly in the documentary records for the period include the ship, the frigate, the yacht, the galiot, the bark, the schooner, the ketch, the sloop (sloep) and names of many smaller craft. Two conclusions that emerge from a study of the maritime records of the Dutch in America are that in the seventeenth century the nomenclature applied to nautical craft was careless and unreliable; and that type names of these vessels cannot be equated in function, size, hull construction or rig with nineteenth-century craft bearing the same names.
Notes

1 Edmund B. O'Callaghan, Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Co., 1853–1858), 1:63; hereafter referred to as Documents Relative. N.B. A Dutch last is equal to 2 tons burden.
5 Published in volumes 1 and 2 of O'Callaghan's Documents Relative. Descriptions of West India Company ships can also be found in Tresoor der Zee- en Landereizen. Bereedeneerd Register op de Werken der Linschoten-Vereeniging, Parts I–XXV. D. Sepp, ed. ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1939) and another Register with the same title for parts XXVI–L. C. G. M. van Romburgh and C. E. Warnsinck-Delprat, eds. ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1957).
6 Documents Relative, I: 3–4.
7 Ibid., 11–12.
8 Ibid., 5.
9 Ibid., 11–12.
10 Ibid., 24.
11 Ibid., 26.
13 Ibid.
17 Ibid., 431–32.
18 "Footage as given in seventeenth-century Dutch manuscripts refers to the old Amsterdam foot, which is longer than the English foot.
21 Jameson, Narratives, 321.
22 Arnold J.F. van Laer, Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1908), 266; hereafter referred to as VRBM.
23 Ibid., 204, 807–8.
24 Ibid., 189.
25 In 1638, at the end of Wouter van Twiller's administration as director general in America for the West India Company, Tyman Jansen deposed that he had been employed as ships carpenter on all the "new and old work [of shipbuilding] which Mr. Twiller here caused to be executed, to wit: Anno 1633. Repaired the ship Soutberch and furnished her with new knees. On the ship Hope, of Groeningen and Omlanden, the Company's carpenters worked a long time. The yacht Hope, which was captured Ao. 1632 by said Van Twiller, he had entirely rebuilt and planked up. The yacht Prins Willem he had built. A large open boat. In the yacht Westel he caused an orlop and caboose to be made. The yacht Vrede, as above. The boat Omval at Fort Orange. The wood-cutter's boat. The yacht with a mizzen, sold to Barent Dircksen. Divers farm boats and skiffs, sold to various persons. Also many yawls and boats were built for the sloops. Furthermore, the carpenters continually repaired and caulked the old craft."
26 Jameson, Narratives, 186.
27 VRBM, 242.
28 Ibid., 347.
29 Ibid., 357.
30 Ibid., 75, 376.
31 Ibid., 326.
32 "Texel was an island north of Amsterdam from which Dutch ships cleared for the Atlantic passage in the seventeenth century.
33 VRBM, 355–76.
34 Ibid., 75fn.
35 Ibid., 403.
36 Ibid., 76, 403 tt.
37 Ibid., 670.
39 Ibid., 429.
40 Chatterton, Fore-and-Aft, 67.
41 VRBM, 795–803.
43 Davis, English Merchant Shipping, 11.
SHIPS AND WORK BOATS OF NEW NETHERLAND 69

45 Parr, The Voyages of David de Vries, 36.
46 Ibid., 199.
47 Documents Relative, II: 439.
50 Ibid., II: 439.
51 NYHMD, II: 162.
52 Ibid., 247.
53 Parr, The Voyages of David de Vries, 200.
54 Baker, Colonial Vessels, 50.
55 Chatterton, Fore-and-Aft, 73.
57 Van Laer, Documents Relating to New Netherland, XIII.
58 From 1558 to 1646 Dunkirk was owned by Spain. The French took it from Spain, but by 1654 it was again in Spanish hands. The so-called ‘Dunkirkers’ were a mixed group of French and Spanish corsairs. See C.B. Norman, Corsairs of France (E.J. Clode, Inc., 1929).
59 Dingman Versteeg, Manhattan in 1628 (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1904), 173.
60 Ibid., 172.
61 Ibid., 12.
62 Jameson, Narratives, 50.
64 Parr, Voyages de Vries, 114, 118.
65 Documents Relative, I: 432.
66 NYHMD, II: 231–32.
67 Ibid., 260.
68 NYHMD, IV: 242.
69 Ibid., 391.
70 Parr, Voyages de Vries, 114.
71 Documents Relative, II: 18.
72 NYHMD, I: 328.
73 NYHMD, III: 243.
74 Ibid., 62.
76 NYHMD, V: 98.
78 NYHMD, III: 246.
79 Documents Relative, I: 170, 172. Lists of stores and provisions furnished other ships belonging to the Dutch West India Company may be found on pages 165–72 and elsewhere in this volume.
80 NYHMD, I: 184–85.
81 Ibid., II: 177–78.
82 Ibid., I: 7.
83 Ibid., IV: 379.
84 Ibid., 552–53.
85 Documents Relative, II: 45.
86 Ibid., I: 397.
87 Ibid., 41–42.
88 NYHMD, IV: 250–51.
89 Ibid., 528–29.
90 Documents Relative, I: 36.
91 Ibid., 41.
92 Ibid., 595.
93 Parr, Voyages de Vries, 112.
94 Documents Relative, I: 165.
95 Jameson, Narratives, 383.
96 Baker, Colonial Vessels, 151–52.
97 NYHMD, XVIII–XIX: 33.
98 Jameson, Narratives, 383.
100 Baker, Colonial Vessels, 151–52.
102 NYHMD, XVIII–XIX: 33.
103 Jameson, Narratives, 383.
104 Documents Relative, II: 18–19.
105 Ibid., 114–15, 124, 179–82.
106 Ibid., 179–82.
107 Fernow, Documents Relating to Settlements, 452.
108 Documents Relative, II: 124.
109 Ibid., 189.
110 NYHMD: Register of Lachaire, 46.
111 Documents Relative, II: 6.
112 Ibid., I: 446.
113 Ibid., II: 663–64.
114 Baker, Colonial Vessels, 140.
115 Ibid., 47, 49.
116 Chatterton, Fore-and-Aft, 68.
117 NYHMD, V: 42.
119 A Dutch scheepel of wheat was 0.764 bushel.
121 Documents Relative, II: 6, 18.
125 *Parr, Voyages of de Vries*, 194.
126 *NYHMD*, II: 57.
127 *Parr, Voyages of de Vries*, 77.
128 *Documents Relative*, i: 361.
134 *NYHMD*, IV: 589.
135 *Documents Relative*, II: 6.
139 *Van Laer, Court of Fort Orange and Beverwyck*, i: 148.
140 *Van Laer, Court of Albany, Rensselaerswyck and Schenectady*, III: 456.
141 *Van Laer, Court of Fort Orange and Beverwyck*, III: 106.