

X built in Rhode Island, as early as the year 1646, but the ship was lost at sea on her first passage. Shortly after, a small cruiser, carrying ten guns, and forty men, was employed by the united colonies of Hartford and New Haven, to cruise in Long Island Sound, with a view to prevent the encroachments of the Dutch, and to keep open the communication with the settlements they had made on the opposite shore. In 1654, orders were received from Parliament to treat the Dutch as enemies, but both communities were still too young and feeble to engage in a warfare that was not considered of paramount necessity. Nothing effective appears to have been done under these instructions.

At a later day, or in 1655-6, Connecticut kept another small vessel cruising off Watch Hill, in order to prevent the Narragansett Indians from crossing to attack the Montauk tribe, which had been taken under the protection of the colony.

X In 1645, a ship of some size was built at Cambridge, Massachusetts, and receiving an armament of fourteen guns, and a crew of thirty men, she sailed for the Canary Isles. This vessel fell in with a rover, of twenty guns, and seventy men, supposed to belong to Barbary, when an action took place that continued the entire day. The rover receiving some serious injury in her rudder, the New England ship was enabled to escape. Although the conflict between Gallon and the Narragansett is, in one sense, entitled to the precedence, this action may be set down as the first regular naval combat in which any American vessel is known to have been engaged.

An important change occurred, in 1664, in the situation of the American colonies, by the capture of New Netherlands from the Dutch. The vessels employed on this service were under the orders of Sir Robert Carr, while Colonel Richard Nicoll commanded the troops. No resistance was made. In consequence of this accession of territory, and the subjection of the Swedish settlements on the Delaware, the English Colonies had entire possession of the coast, between the Bay of Fundy and the Florida.

X While the English were thus occupying the coast, the French were gradually extending themselves along the chain of Great Lakes in the interior, drawing a belt around the territories of their rivals. In the course of events of this nature, de la Salle launched a vessel of ten tons on Lake Ontario, in 1678, which was the first decked boat that ever sailed on those waters.