

Summary

The author describes one of the models from the collection of model boats and water building constructions, which is managed by the Rijksmuseum in The Netherlands. It is half of a ship model with a hollow keel and two scoop wheels, driven by a crankshaft gear. The author made a connection with Daam Schijf, a grocer from Zaandam.

In 1742 he asked for a patent for a vessel used for maintaining a fast mail and passenger service between Zaandam and Alkmaar. The vessel, 'Follow Me', was built in 1743. The test on June 20 of that year, was catastrophic. The ship sank, because too many people had boarded the ship. (had climbed onto it.) Five horses were rescued, the sixth drowned. Schijf moved to Delft and eventually emigrated to Curacao.

The author describes all this against the background of the use of animal power for the propulsion of vessels. As early as in the fourth century, we find a plan for a ship, on which oxes were driving a water wheel. After that, there are only indications of similar vessels from the Renaissance (1543, in Malaga, 1680, on the River Thames). The construction related to Dutch mud windmills from the seventeenth and eighteenth century may have been inspiring to Daam Schijf and his successors. In 1736 the Englishman Hulls obtained a patent for a wooden ship, equipped with a steam engine designed by Newcomen with scoop wheel.

He never succeeded beyond the paper stage. Like Daam Schijf he was the target of ridiculous songs. From the end of the eighteenth century, muscular force was successfully used to stow vessels. In the United States this type of ship was successful for some decades, usually in the form of animal driven water wheels on ferries, in the nineteenth century.

For Europe, the author writes more extensively about the nineteenth-century horse-driven paddle boats in the IJ at Amsterdam. Earlier in that century successful attempts were made to use steam engines for the propulsion of ships (including the Fulton River Hudson, in 1807). In the middle of the nineteenth century muscle powered submarines appeared.

Looking back it can be determined that all those people planning to make plans and try outs by animal propulsion force ultimately have paved the way for the successful application of steam power for this purpose.

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