

Chip Log



**Captain John Smith
Chesapeake National
Historic Trail**



Chip Log

A chip log was a tool used to measure a ship's speed. The "log" was a spool that held a long rope with knots tied in it. The "chip" was a triangular piece of wood and metal on the end of the rope. Every thirty minutes, a sailor would throw the chip into the water. He would let the rope unspool for thirty seconds and count the number of knots that passed. If five knots passed, he was travelling at five nautical miles per hour. This helped the ship's navigator figure out how far the ship had travelled.