

Sails



**Captain John Smith
Chesapeake National
Historic Trail**



Sails

John Smith's shallop likely had two sails. The sails were made out of hemp, a type of fabric that was popular in Europe in the 1600s. The sails were held up by a mast, a tall wooden pole in the middle of the ship. Smaller poles and ropes, known as lines, held the sails in place. The larger "main sail" caught the wind to move the ship forward. The smaller sail, known as the "staysail," was triangular and fastened to the "bow," or front, of the ship. The staysail helped the captain move the ship in the right direction.