FRED A. SEATON, SECRETARY



COMMERCIAL FISHERIES REVIEW



A review of developments and news of the fishery industries prepared in the BRANCH OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

A. W. Anderson, Editor

J. Pileggi, Associate Editor H.M. Bearse, Assistant Editor

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KNOT

"Knot" is a unit of velocity equal to one nautical mile (about 6,080 feet) an hour. The term was used informer times when a knotted line and old-fashioned sand glass were the equipment used to estimate the speed of a vessel.

The sand glasses used were similar to those sometimes employed nowadays for timing the boiling of an egg, in which the proper time for cooking was measured by the time taken for sand to run downfrom one end of a two-bulbed glass to the other. A common sand glass used at sea had sufficient sand to require 28 seconds to run down.

The line had a zero mark and at intervals of about 47 feet was knotted with pieces of string or rag. One end of the line, with a chip of wood attached, was thrown overboard. As the zero mark passed the rail the glass was inverted and the number of knots that ran out were counted during the time taken for the sand to run down. Since the distance between knots was the same proportion to a nautical miles as 28 seconds to an hour, the number of knots was equal to the speed of the ship in nautical miles per hour. Thus the number of nautical miles an hour is designated as the number of knots, and it is incorrect to say "knots per hour."

--Sea Secrets, The Marine Laboratory, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Fla.