

FACTPACK

Facts About the Commonwealth of Virginia



Compiled by:

National Federation of
Independent Business

Virginia Legislative Office

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Nickname

The Old Dominion

Founded

May 13, 1607, at Jamestown;
first permanent English settlement in
North America

Date Joined the Union

June 25, 1788
(10th state to ratify the Constitution)

Capitals

Richmond (since 1780)
Williamsburg (1699-1780)
Jamestown (1607-1699)

Population

6,872,900 (1999 estimate)

Area

40,767 square miles

Official State Emblems

Beverage – Milk

Bird – Cardinal

Boat – Chesapeake Bay Deadrise

Dog – Foxhound

Fish – Brook Trout

Floral Emblem – Dogwood

Folk Dance – Square Dancing

Insect – Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly

Shell – Oyster

Flag

The flag of Virginia contains the state seal in a field of blue. It was first used in the 1830s but not officially adopted until 1930.

Official State Emblems con't

Seal

The great seal of Virginia is circular. In the center is a figure of Virtus, the goddess of virtue, dressed as a warrior. She holds a spear in her right hand, with its point held downward touching the earth. In her left hand is a sheathed sword pointing upward. Her left foot rests on the chest of the figure of tyranny, who is lying on the ground. Above the figure is the word "Virginia," and under the figures is the state motto "Sic Semper Tyrannis" or "Thus Always to Tyrants." The seal, designed by George Wythe, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was first adopted in 1776 and modified in 1930.

Geography

Surrounding States and Bodies of Water

District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia, Atlantic Ocean, Chesapeake Bay

Major Rivers

Appomattox, Clinch, Dan, Elizabeth, Holston, James, New, North Anna, Nottoway, Potomac, Rappahannock, Roanoke, Shenandoah, South Anna, York

Other Major Bodies of Water

Lake Anna, Back Bay, Buggs Island Lake, Claytor Lake, Lake Gaston, Great Dismal Swamp, Smith Mountain Lake, South Holston Lake

Major Mountain Ranges

Allegheny, Blue Ridge, Cumberland, Shenandoah

Counties: 95

Independent Cities: 40

Incorporated Towns: 189

Major Industries

Manufacturing, Exports, Tourism, Technology, Agriculture, Government (including U.S. military installations)

Populations of Major Virginia Metropolitan Statistical Areas (1999 Estimates)

Bristol (Virginia portion)	91,000
Charlottesville	153,500
Danville	109,200
Lynchburg	208,800
Norfolk/Virginia Beach/ Newport News	1,521,000
Northern Virginia	2,083,700
Richmond	965,200
Roanoke	231,400
Total Virginia Population	6,872,900

History

What is the Commonwealth of Virginia?

You will often hear our state called the Commonwealth of Virginia. This does not mean Virginia has a different form of government than any other state. "Commonwealth" is defined by Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary as a political unit or government (1) "founded on law and united by compact or tacit agreement of the people for the common good," or (2) "one in which supreme authority is vested in the people." Using these definitions, it could be said that all 50 states, as well as our national government, are commonwealths. Besides Virginia, three other states - Kentucky, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania - use the term commonwealth as part of their official names.

The first use of commonwealth in Virginia was early in its history. One reason given by Governor George Yeardley for authorizing the first General Assembly meeting at Jamestown in 1619 was "for the better establishing of a commonwealth here."

From 1649 to 1660, England and Virginia did not have a king. Instead, the Puritans ruled under a Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell. The government was called the Commonwealth of England. This commonwealth ended when King Charles II reclaimed the throne in 1660.

In Colonial times, Virginia was officially known as the Colony and Dominion of Virginia. When the 13 colonies broke ties with the British Crown during the

Revolution, the old name was no longer suitable. The delegates to the convention in Williamsburg, when the first Constitution of Virginia was adopted on June 29, 1776, used commonwealth as the name for the new form of government. It is very likely they had in mind the Puritans' rebellion against the Crown in England more than 100 years earlier.

Pennsylvania and Massachusetts also chose to be called commonwealths after independence from Great Britain. The other 10 former colonies took the name "state," the term used in the Declaration of Independence.

Kentucky was once part of Virginia. When Kentuckians joined the Union as the 15th state in 1792, it kept the name commonwealth.

There are several other uses of the word "commonwealth" in the world today

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is not a state, but a territory. In this case, commonwealth refers to the free association with the United States chosen by the Puerto Rican people.

The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of Great Britain and about 50 countries that were once part of the British Empire. Some of these nations, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Bahamas, Jamaica and other Caribbean islands, still recognize the British monarch as their official head of state.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia and other former Soviet republics formed the Commonwealth of Independent States, a loose alliance set up to handle certain matters of mutual interest among these newly independent countries.

Famous Virginians

Political, Military and Social Leaders

United States Presidents born in Virginia

George Washington (1st, 1789-1797)
Thomas Jefferson (3rd, 1801-1809)
James Madison (4th, 1809-1817)
James Monroe (5th, 1817-1825)
William Henry Harrison (9th, 1841)
John Tyler (10th, 1841-1845)
Zachary Taylor (12th, 1849-1850)
Woodrow Wilson (28th, 1913-1921)

Colonial and Revolutionary Leaders (1607-1789)

Nathaniel Bacon

led "Bacon's Rebellion" against British authority in 1676

George Rogers Clark -

Revolutionary War soldier captured Northwest Territories from British

Patrick Henry

orator; patriot leader, famous for "liberty or death" speech

Henry "Lighthouse Harry" Lee

Revolutionary War hero, father of Robert E. Lee

Richard Henry Lee

presented the proposal for independence to Continental Congress in 1776

George Mason

author of Virginia Declaration of Rights

Daniel Morgan

Revolutionary War soldier, leader of "Morgan's Rifles"

Pocahontas

daughter of Indian Chief Powhatan, married John Rolfe

Peyton Randolph

president of First Continental Congress

John Smith

leader of first settlement at Jamestown

George Wythe

first professor of law in an American college, the College of William and Mary

Early America (1789-1860)

Stephen F. Austin

founder and chief colonizer of Texas, born in Austinville, Va.

James Barbour

Secretary of War (1825-1828)

Philip P. Barbour

Speaker of the House (1821-1823), Supreme Court Justice (1836-1841)

Henry Clay

famous orator and statesman, moved to Kentucky after youth in Virginia

Peter V. Daniel

Supreme Court Justice (1841-1860)

John B. Floyd

Secretary of War (1857-1861)

Thomas W. Gilmer

Secretary of the Navy (1844)

Sam Houston

Governor of Tennessee (1827-1829), first President of Republic of Texas (1836-1838)

Charles Lee

Attorney General (1795-1801)

John Marshall

Chief Justice of Supreme Court (1805-1835)

John Y. Mason

Secretary of the Navy (1844-1849), Attorney General (1845-1846)

Edmund Randolph

first Attorney General of the United States (1789-1794), Secretary of State (1794-1795)

John Randolph

congressman, political writer

Winfield Scott

general, hero of Mexican-American War

Alexander H. H. Stuart

Secretary of the Interior (1850-1853)

Abel P. Upshur

Secretary of the Navy (1841-1843)

William Wirt

Attorney General (1817-1829)

Civil War (1861-1865)

Jubal Early - Confederate general

A.P. Hill - Confederate general

Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson
Confederate general

Joseph E. Johnston

Confederate general, First commander of Confederate Army

Fitzhugh Lee

Confederate general, Governor of Virginia, commanded United States forces in Cuba during Spanish-American War (1898)

Robert E. Lee

Commanding general, Confederate Army of Northern Virginia

John Singleton Mosby

"The Gray Ghost", Confederate cavalry commander

George Pickett

Confederate general, led fateful charge at Battle of Gettysburg

J.E.B. Stuart - Confederate general

George Thomas - Union general

20th Century

William Doak

Secretary of Labor (1930-1933)

Henry H. Fowler

Secretary of the Treasury (1965-1968)

Carter Glass

Secretary of the Treasury (1918-1920)

John A. Knebel

Secretary of Agriculture (1976-1977)

Nancy Langhorne, Lady Astor

first woman member of British Parliament

John O. Marsh Jr.

Secretary of the Army (1980-1989)

Lewis F. Powell Jr.

Supreme Court Justice (1972-1990)

James R. Schlesinger

Secretary of Defense (1973-1975),
Secretary of Energy (1977-1979)

E. R. Stettinius Jr.

Secretary of State (1944-1945)

Claude A. Swanson

Secretary of the Navy (1933-1940)

Maggie L. Walker

first woman bank president in America, advocate of black women's rights

John W. Warner

Secretary of the Navy (1972-1974),
U.S. Senator (1979-present)

Educators, Inventors, Scientists, Explorers

Richard E. Byrd

aviator, explorer of North and South poles

William Clark

explored Louisiana Purchase for President Thomas Jefferson

Meriwether Lewis

explored Louisiana Purchase for President Thomas Jefferson

Matthew Fontaine Maury

mapped ocean currents, "Pathfinder of the Seas"

Cyrus H. McCormick

inventor of the grain reaper

Dr. Ephraim McDowell

"father of abdominal surgery"

William McGuffey

educator, author of "McGuffey Readers"

Walter Reed

Army doctor, discovered cause of yellow fever

John Rolfe

introduced tobacco to America in 1612

Edmund Ruffin

founded public education system in Virginia

James Rumsey

pioneer of steamboat development

Alexander Spotswood

Royal Governor, led early expeditions into western Virginia

Booker T. Washington

educator, founder of Tuskegee Institute

Writers, Journalists, Artists

Russell Baker

political columnist, Pulitzer Prize winner (1979, 1983)

William Cabell Bruce

historian, Pulitzer Prize winner (1918)

William Byrd II

chronicler of early colonial life

James Branch Cabell

fiction writer in 1900s

Willa Cather

novelist, early 1900s, Pulitzer Prize winner (1923)

Virginus Dabney

historian, newspaper editor; Pulitzer Prize winner (1948)

Rita Dove

U.S. Poet Laureate (1993-95), Pulitzer Prize winner (1987)

John A. Elder

painter of famous Civil War scenes

Sir Moses Ezekiel

sculptor; famous for Civil War subjects, knighted by the Emperor of Germany and King of Italy

Douglas Southall Freeman

historian, newspaper editor, one the America's greatest biographers, Pulitzer Prize winner (1935, 1958)

Ellen Glasgow

fiction writer in early 1900s, Pulitzer Prize winner (1942)

Earl Hamner Jr.

novelist, creator of "The Waltons" television series

James J. Kilpatrick

Newspaper columnist on politics and the English language

Dumas Malone

historian, famous for works on Thomas Jefferson, Pulitzer Prize winner (1975)

David J. Mays

historian, Pulitzer Prize winner (1953)

Charles McDowell

newspaper columnist

Gari Melchers

painter, sculptor

Thomas Nelson Page

fiction writer of the 1800s

Edgar Allan Poe

famous writer of novels, poetry, short stories

Tom Robbins- novelist

Ann Spencer - African-American poet

William Stith - colonial historian

William Styron

novelist, Pulitzer Prize winner (1968)
"Confessions of Nat Turner"

Peter Taylor

Pulitzer Prize winner for fiction -
"Summons to Memphis" (1987)

Edward V. Valentine

sculptor, famous for statues honoring prominent Virginians

Tom Wolfe -

novelist - "Bonfire of the Vanities",
non-fiction - "The Right Stuff "

Entertainment

(Music, Movies, Television)

Pearl Bailey - singer

Kylene Barker - 1979 Miss America

Warren Beatty

movie actor and director, Academy Award winner as director of "Reds"

Maybelle Carter - country singer

June Carter Cash

country singer, married to Johnny Cash

Spencer Christian

TV weatherman, ABC's "Good Morning America"

Roy Clark

country singer, star of "Hee Haw"

Patsy Cline - country singer

Katie Couric - "Today Show" host

Joseph Cotton - movie actor

Ella Fitzgerald - singer

Bruce Hornsby - singer

Nicole Johnson - 1999 Miss America

Shirley MaLaine -

stage and screen actress, Academy Award winner

Wayne Newton

singer/Las Vegas entertainer

Robert Porterfield -

founder of the Barter Theatre in Abingdon, the State Theater of Virginia

Tim Reid -

TV actor, director "WKRP in Cincinnati", "Simon & Simon"

Bill "Bojangles" Robinson -

dancer, stage and screen actor in early 1900s

George C. Scott

movie actor, Academy Award winner for "Patton"

Willard Scott

TV weatherman, NBC's "Today Show"

Kate Smith - singer

The Statler Brothers -

country-western singing group

Blair Underwood - actor, "LA Law"

Athletes

Arthur Ashe

(tennis) - Wimbledon champion

Mary Meagher Plant

(swimming) - 2 time Olympic gold medalist in swimming

Pernell Whitaker - (boxer)

1984 Olympic gold medalist

Football

Frank Beamer

Virginia Tech, National College Coach of the Year (1999)

Bill Dudley

member, pro football Hall of Fame

Willie Lanier

Kansas City Chiefs, member, Pro Football Hall of Fame

Bruce Smith

Outland Trophy winner at Virginia Tech, Buffalo Bills, Washington Redskins

Fran Tarkenton

member, Pro Football Hall of Fame

Lawrence Taylor

New York Giants, Pro Football Hall of Fame

Basketball

Moses Malone - Washington Bullets

Alonzo Mourning - Miami Heat

Ralph Sampson

University of Virginia, Houston Rockets

Golf

Sam Snead

3 Masters titles, 3 PGA titles, 1 British Open title

Curtis Strange

U.S. Open champion (1988, 1989), winner 1985 Canadian Open

Lanny Watkins - PGA title (1977)

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW IN VIRGINIA

The following steps depict the normal procedures where a non-controversial bill becomes a law. Bills may originate in either house of the General Assembly. By custom, the general budget bill is introduced in the House.

1. A delegate (as requested by constituents) prepares legislation permitting localities to prohibit the sale and use of certain fireworks.
2. The delegate explains exactly the proposal he has in mind to a staff attorney in the Division of Legislative Services. The attorney checks existing law and the constitutionality of the proposed legislation.
3. A bill is drafted by the Division of Legislative Services.
4. Copies of the bill are delivered to the delegate.
5. The delegate signs his name on the bill, and introduces it by laying the original and a duplicate copy on the desk of the Clerk of the House of Delegates.
6. The bill is ordered printed and referred to the Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns.
7. The members of the Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns - in public session - familiarize themselves with the bill and decide to approve it without amendments.
8. The Committee reports the bill to the House.

9. First reading: the bill title is printed on the calendar or is read by the Clerk, and the bill advances to second reading.
10. Second reading: The next day the bill appears on the printed calendar on second reading. Bills are read in the order they appear on the calendar. The Clerk reads the title of the bill a second time.
11. A bill on second reading is amendable. The bill is explained by its patron who answers any questions that may be asked. By voice vote the House votes to advance the bill to third reading.
12. A bill that has passed second reading with or without amendments is "engrossed." Any amendments are inserted in the proper place, and the bill is then in the final form for passage.
13. The next day, the engrossed bill title appears on the House calendar on Third Reading. The bill is read by title a third time by the Clerk of the House of Delegates. By recorded roll call vote the bill is passed by the House of Delegates.
14. Communication: When passed, the bill is sent to the Senate either by the Clerk in a communication or by a member in person, informing the Senate that the bill has passed the House and requesting the concurrence of the Senate.
15. In the Senate: The bill goes through the same procedure in the House. The bill is read by title a first time, referred to a committee, considered and reported by the committee, read a second and a third time before passage by a majority.
16. After the bill has been passed by both houses of the General Assembly it is printed as an enrolled bill, examined, and signed by the presiding officer of each house.
17. Then the bill is sent to the Governor for approval.

18. The bill is then sent to the Clerk of the House (The Keeper of the Rolls of the State) to file for convenient reference.
19. Bills enacted at a regular session (or the reconvened session which follows) are effective on July 1 following adjournment of the regular session, unless another date is specified. Bills enacted at a special session (or the reconvened session which follows) are effective the 1st day of the 4th month following the adjournment of the special session, unless another date is specified. The General Appropriation Act is usually effective July 1. Emergency Acts are effective when signed by the Governor.