

General Information

GENERAL INFORMATION

Sir Edmund Andros, Governor	1692-1698
Colonel Francis Nicholson, Governor.....	1698-1705
Represented by the following during brief absences:	
William Byrd, President of the Council.....	September-October 1700 April-June 1703 August-September 1704
Edward Knott, Governor.....	1705-1706
Edmund Jennings, President of the Council.....	1706-1708
Robert Hunter, Governor, captured by the French and never reached Virginia	1707-1709
Edmund Jennings, Lieutenant Governor and Deputy to Hunter	1708-1710
George Hamilton, Earl of Orkney, Governor.....	1710-1737
Never went to Virginia and was represented by the following:	
Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant Governor.....	1710-1722
Hugh Drysdale, Lieutenant Governor.....	1722-1726
Robert Carter, President of the Council.....	1726-1727
Sir William Gooch, Lieutenant Governor.....	1727-1749
James Blair, President of the Council (acted during Gooches absence)	1740-1741
William Anne Keppel, Governor.....	1737-1754
Never went to Virginia and was represented by the following deputies:	
Thomas Lee, President of the Council.....	September 1749-November 1750
Lewis Burwell, President of the Council	November 1750-November 1751
Robert Dinwiddie, Lieutenant Governor	1751-1758
John Cambel, Earl of Loudoun, Governor	1756-1759
Never went to Virginia and was represented by the following deputies:	
John Blair, President of the Council	January-June 1758
Francis Fauquier, Lieutenant Governor	1758-1768
Sir Jeffrey Amherst, Governor.....	1759-1768
John Blair, President of the Council	March-October 1768
Norborne Berkeley, Governor.....	1768-1770
William Nelson, President of the Council.....	1770-1771
John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, Governor.....	1771-1775

V. *Virginia in Revolt – The Convention Period*

Peyton Randolph, President of the Virginia Convention of 1774, March 1775, and July 1775.
Edmund Pendleton, President of the Virginia Convention of December 1775 and May 1776

VI. *Governors Under the Commonwealth 1776-1852 (chosen by the State Legislature)*

Patrick Henry, Governor.....	1776-1779
Thomas Jefferson, Governor.....	1779-1781
William Fleming, member of the Council of State acting as Governor	June 4-June 12, 1781
Thomas Nelson, Jr., Governor	June-November 1781
David Jameson, member of the Council of State acting as Governor	November 22-30, 1781
Benjamin Harrison, Governor.....	1781-1784
Patrick Henry, Governor.....	1784-1786
Edmund Randolph, Governor	1786-1788
Beverly Randolph, Governor	1788-1791
Henry Lee, Governor	1791-1794
Robert Brooke, Governor.....	1794-1796
James Wood, Governor.....	1796-1799
Hardin Gurnley, member of the Council of State acting as Governor.....	December 7-11, 1799
John Pendleton, member of the Council of State acting as Governor	December 11-19, 1799
James Monroe, Governor.....	1799-1802
John Page, Governor.....	1802-1805
William H. Cabell, Governor.....	1805-1808
John Tyler, Sr., Governor	1808-1811
George William Smith, member of the Council of State acting as Governor....	January 15-19, 1811
James Monroe, Governor.....	January 19-April 3, 1811
George William Smith, member of the Council of State Acting as Governor.....	April 3-December 6, 1811
George William Smith, Governor.....	December 6-26, 1811

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Peyton Randolph, member of the Council of State	
Acting as Governor.....	December 27, 1811-January 4, 1812
James Barbour, Governor	1812-1814
Wilson Cary Nicholas, Governor.....	1814-1816
James P. Preston, Governor	1816-1819
Thomas Mann Randolph, Governor.....	1819-1822
James Pleasants, Governor.....	1822-1825
John Tyler, Jr., Governor	1825-1827
William B. Giles, Governor	1827-1830
John Floyd, Governor	1830-1834
Littleton Waller Tazewell, Governor	1834-1836
Wyndham Roberts, member of the Council of State	
Acting as Governor.....	March 1836-March 1837
David Campbell, Governor.....	1837-1840
Thomas Walker Gilmer, Governor	1840-1841
John Mercer Patton, member of the Council of State acting as Governor.....	March 20-31, 1841
John Rutherford, member of the Council of State	
Acting as Governor.....	March 1841-March 1842
John M. Gregory, member of the Council of State	
Acting as Governor.....	March 1842-January 1843
James McDowell, Governor	1843-1846
William Smith, Governor.....	1846-1849
John Buchanan Floyd, Governor	1849-1852

VII. Governors Under the Commonwealth 1852-Present (Elected by Popular Vote)

Joseph Jonson, Governor,	1852-1856
Henry Alexander Wise, Governor.....	1856-1860
John Letcher, Governor	1860-1864
William Smith, Governor.....	1864-1865
Francis Harrison Pierpoint, Provisional Governor	May 1865-April 1868
Henry H. Wells, Provisional Governor	April 1868-September 1869
Gilbert C. Walker, Provisional Governor.....	September 1869-December 1869
Gilbert C. Walker, Governor	1870-1874
James Lawson Kemper, Governor	1874-1878
Frederick W. M. Hilliday, Governor.....	1878-1882
William E. Cameron, Governor	1882-1886
Fitzhugh Lee, Governor.....	1886-1890
Philip W. Mckenny, Governor.....	1890-1894
Charles T. O'Ferrall, Governor.....	1894-1898
James Hoge Tyler, Governor	1898-1902
Andrew Jackson Montague, Governor.....	1902-1906
Claude A. Swanson, Governor.....	1906-1910
William Hodges Mann, Governor.....	1910-1914
Henry Carter Stuart, Governor.....	1914-1918
Westmoreland Davis, Governor.....	1918-1922
E. Lee Trinkle, Governor	1922-1926
Harry F. Byrd, Governor.....	1926-1930
John Garland Pollard, Governor	1930-1934
James H. Price, Governor	1934-1938
George C. Peery, Governor.....	1938-1942
Colgate W. Darden, Jr., Governor.....	1942-1946
William M. Tuck, Governor	1946-1950
John Stewart Battle, Governor	1950-1954
Thomas B. Stanley, Governor.....	1954-1958
J. Lindsay Almond, Jr., Governor.....	1958-1962
Albertis S. Harrison, Jr., Governor	1962-1966
Mills E. Godwin, Jr., Governor.....	1966-1970
A. Linwood Holton, Governor	1970-1974
Mills E. Godwin, Jr., Governor.....	1974-1978
John N. Dalton, Governor.....	1978-1982
Charles S. Robb, Governor	1982-1986

GENERAL INFORMATION

Gerald L. Baliles, Governor.....	1986-1990
Lawrence Douglas Wilder, Governor	1990-1994
George Allen, Governor	1994-1998
James S. Gilmore, III, Governor	1998-2002
Mark R. Warner, Governor	2002-2006

It is difficult to compile a clear and comprehensive list of governors for the colonial period because of the governmental and administrative changes made in England, and due to the proxy system whereby the person bearing the title of Governor often resided in England while a deputy resided in the colony. During the exploration or pre-colonization period, the territory that became Virginia was directly under the crown. Under the charter granted to the London Company, the early government of Virginia was a company appointed council and president, often spoken of as governor. The first man ever to have the title "governor" was Lord Delaware, appointed in 1609. When the London Company lost its charter in 1624, Virginia became a royal colony, and the governor was appointed by the crown. Those appointed to the position often resided in England and were represented in Virginia by deputies. During this period Virginia still remained a resident council and if the governor or deputy governor was absent from the colony the president of the council served as acting governor. There was a break in royal control after the Civil War in England when Parliament allowed the colony to be almost completely self governed. From 1652 to 1660 the General Assembly elected four Governors. Royal authority was restored in 1660, and from that date until the American Revolution in 1776 the Governors were appointed by the crown.

After the colony declared independence, a constitution was adopted which provided for the election of the governor by the General Assembly for a one-year term. A governor could be reelected to serve a total of three consecutive years. He could be reelected again only after a break in service. From 1776 to 1852 the governor was chosen by the state legislature. When the office became vacant by death or resignation, the senior member of the Council of the State acted as governor until the Assembly was able to choose a successor. The Constitution of 1851 abolished the Council of State and provided for the popular election of the Governor for a four-year term. With the exception of the Reconstruction period 1865-1869, when provisional governors were designated by federal authorities, the governor has been elected by popular vote since 1852.

Information on Virginia Governors was obtained from A Hornbook of Virginia History, third edition, Edited by Emily J. Salmon, 1983.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH

SECRETARIES OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Gabriel Archer, <i>Recorder</i> 1607-1609	James McDonald..... 1870-1879
William Strachey..... 1610-1611	Thomas T. Flournoy* 1880-1881
Ralph Hamor, Jr..... 1611-1614	William C. Elam..... 1882-1883
John Rolfe 1614-1619	Henry W. Flournoy 1884-1893
John Pory 1619-1621	Joseph T. Lawless 1894-1900
Christopher Davison 1621-1623	David Q. Eggleston 1901-1910
William Claiborne..... 1625-1635	B. O. Jones 1910-1926
Richard Kemp 1635-1649	Martin A. Hutchinson..... 1927-1929
Richard Lee..... 1649-1652	Peter H. Saunders 1930-1937
William Claiborne..... 1652-1660	Raymond L. Jackson 1938-1941
Thomas Ludwell 1661-1678	Ralph E. Wilkins 1942-1944
Philip Ludwell..... 1678	Thelma Y. Gordon, acting 1945-1946
Daniel Parke..... 1678-1679	Jesse W. Dillon..... 1946-1948
Nicholas Spencer..... 1679-1689	M. W. Armistead..... 1948
William Cole..... 1689-1692	Thelma Y. Gordon..... 1948-1952
Christopher Robinson..... 1692-1693	Martha Bell Conway 1952-1970
Ralph Wormeley 1693-1701	Cynthia Newman..... 1970-1974
Edmund Jennings 1702-1712	Patricia Perkinson..... 1974-1978
William Cocke 1712-1720	Stanford E. Parris 1978
Edmund Jennings 1720-1722	Frederick T. Gray, Jr. 1978-1981
John Carter..... 1712-1743	Marilyn Lussen, acting 1981-1982
Thomas Nelson 1743-1788	Laurie Naismith..... 1982-1985
John Harvie 1788-1800	H. Benson Dendy, III 1985-1986
Daniel L. Hylton 1801-1811	Sandra D. Bowen 1986-1990
William Robertson 1811-1820	Pamela M. Womack 1990-1993
John Burfoot..... 1820-1821	Scott Bates..... 1993
William H. Richardson..... 1821-1852	Penelope Anderson, acting 1993-1994
George W. Munford..... 1853-1865	Betsy Davis Beamer 1994-1998
Charles H. Lewis 1865-1867	Anne P. Petera..... 1998-2002
John M. Herndon..... 1867-1869	Anita A. Rimler..... 2002-Present
Brevet Col. Garrick Mallery (<i>appointed under Special Orders No. 68, Hdqrs., First Military District</i>)..... 1869-1870	

**From 1801-1830 this official was designated only as "Clerk of the Council of State" or "Clerk of the Privy Council"; later the phrase "Keeper of the Public Seal" was added.*

GENERAL INFORMATION

PRESENT GOVERNORS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Alabama	Robert Riley (R)	Montgomery
Alaska	Frank Murkowski (R)	Juneau
*American Samoa	Togiola Tulafono (D)	Pago Pago
Arizona	Janet Napolitano (D)	Phoenix
Arkansas	Mike Huckabee (R)	Little Rock
California	Arnold Schwarzenegger (R)	Sacramento
Colorado	Bill Owens (R)	Denver
Connecticut	M. Jodi Rell (R)	Hartford
Delaware	Ruth Ann Minner (D)	Dover
Florida	Jeb Bush (R)	Tallahassee
Georgia	Sonny Perdue (R)	Atlanta
*Guam	Felix Camacho (R)	Agana
Hawaii	Linda Lingle (R)	Honolulu
Idaho	Dirk Kempthorne (R)	Boise
Illinois	Rod Blagojevich (D)	Springfield
Indiana	Mitchell Daniels (R)	Indianapolis
Iowa	Thomas Vilsack (D)	Des Moines
Kansas	Kathleen Sebelius (D)	Topeka
Kentucky	Ernie Fletcher (R)	Frankfort
Louisiana	Kathleen Babineaux Blanco (D)	Baton Rouge
Maine	John E. Baldacci (D)	Augusta
Maryland	Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. (R)	Annapolis
Massachusetts	Mitt Romney (R)	Boston
Michigan	Jennifer Granholm (D)	Lansing
Minnesota	Tim Pawlenty (R)	St. Paul
Mississippi	Haley Barbour (R)	Jackson
Missouri	Matt Blunt (R)	Jefferson City
Montana	Brian Schweitzer (D)	Helena
Nebraska	Mike Johanns (R)	Lincoln
Nevada	Kenny C. Guinn (R)	Carson City
New Hampshire	John Lynch (D)	Concord
New Jersey	Richard J. Codey (D)	Trenton
New Mexico	Bill Richardson (D)	Santa Fe
New York	George E. Pataki (R)	Albany
North Carolina	Michael Easley (D)	Raleigh
North Dakota	John Hoeven (R)	Bismarck
*Northern Mariana Island	Juan Babauta (R)	Saipan
Ohio	Bob Taft (R)	Columbus
Oklahoma	Brad Henry (D)	Oklahoma City
Oregon	Ted Kulongoski (D)	Salem
Pennsylvania	Edward Rendell (D)	Harrisburg
*Puerto Rico	Sila Calderon (PDP)	San Juan
Rhode Island	Donald Carcieri (R)	Providence
South Carolina	Mark Sanford (R)	Columbia
South Dakota	Mike Rounds (R)	Pierre
Tennessee	Phil Bredesen (D)	Nashville
Texas	Rick Perry (R)	Austin
Utah	John Huntsman (R)	Salt Lake City
Vermont	James H. Douglas (R)	Montpelier
*Virgin Islands	Charles W. Turnbull (D)	St. Thomas
Virginia	Mark R. Warner (D)	Richmond
Washington	Christine Gregoire (D)	Olympia
West Virginia	Joe Manchin (D)	Charleston
Wisconsin	Jim Doyle (D)	Madison
Wyoming	Dave Freudenthal (D)	Cheyenne

*Territories governed by the United States of America
 (R) Republican; (D) Democrat; (I) Independent; (PDP) Popular Democratic Party



Why is Virginia a Commonwealth?

Virginia was first known as a Commonwealth in the period between the execution of Charles I in 1649 and the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II in 1660. This period was referred to as the Interregnum (“between reigns”). During this time Oliver Cromwell was Lord Protector of England. (He refused to take the title “King”). Under his leadership, the colony of Virginia enjoyed greater freedom in self-government than it had before. After Cromwell’s death in 1658 his son tried but failed to continue his father’s legacy. The British Parliament reconvened and restored the monarchy. Charles II took the throne and once again the colonies were under a firm British rule.

Britain’s thirteen colonies broke ties with the Crown in the American Revolution and the first Constitution of Virginia was adopted on June 29, 1776. The delegates at the Williamsburg convention decided to name their new form of government the Commonwealth of Virginia, probably in deference to the rebellion against the Crown and the relative freedom they had enjoyed as a colony over one hundred years before during the Interregnum.

Massachusetts and Pennsylvania also chose to adopt the name Commonwealth following the War of Independence. Kentucky, which was once part of Virginia, kept the name Commonwealth when it joined the Union as the 15th state in 1792.

Virginia’s Constitution states “Government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people...” and “That all power is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people...” These statements are the foundation and heart of the meaning of the “Commonwealth of Virginia.” The citizens of Virginia are encouraged to have direct participation in their own government. One of the most important duties of the Secretary of the Commonwealth is to foster this inclusion by assisting the Governor in appointing Virginians from all walks of life and all corners of Virginia to serve on our many boards and commissions. This enables the public to have direct input to the policies and activities of each and every agency. Every Governor is bound to honor the Constitution by encouraging all citizens to actively and directly participate in Virginia’s government.

Louise A. Arnatt