

Facts on Virginia

Capitol Building, Richmond



Photo provided by the Library of Virginia

The cornerstone for the Virginia Capitol Building was laid on August 18, 1785; the building was completed in 1792. Modeled after the Maison Carree at Nimes, France, the Capitol was the first public building in the United States to be built using the Classical Revival style of architecture. Thomas Jefferson designed the central section of the Capitol, its most outstanding feature being the interior dome, which is undetectable from the exterior; the wings were added in 1906 to house the Senate and House of Delegates.

FACTS ON VIRGINIA

Virginia was named for Queen Elizabeth I of England, the “Virgin Queen.” Virginia is also known as the “Old Dominion.” King Charles II of England gave it this name in appreciation of Virginia’s loyalty to the crown during the English Civil War of the mid-1600s. The first permanent English settlement in America was established at Jamestown in 1607; in 1619, the Jamestown colonists established the first representative legislature in America. Virginia entered the Union on June 25, 1788, the tenth state to do so. Virginia and the following three states are designated as Commonwealths: Kentucky, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. The Virginia state capitol is the second oldest working capitol in the United States, having been in continuous use since 1788.

The following eight U.S. Presidents were born in Virginia: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler, Zachary Taylor, and Woodrow Wilson, giving Virginia the nickname the “Mother of Presidents.”

Virginia is also known as the “Mother of States.” All or part of the following eight states were formed from western territory once claimed by Virginia: Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Virginia is home to the country’s largest port, Hampton Roads, and the second oldest college in America, The College of William and Mary, founded 1693 in Williamsburg. Virginia’s Natural Wonders include the Natural Bridge, Natural Chimneys, Natural Tunnel, and Luray Caverns.

Population.....7,712,091
Rank in Country 12th
Density per Square Mile 191

Land Area (Square Miles) 42,774
Rank in Country 35th

Capital City Richmond
Population.....195,300
Rank in State 4th

Number of Counties 95
Number of Independent Cities 48
Number of Incorporated Towns 190

Congressional Delegation:
U.S. Senators..... 2
U.S. Representatives 11
Electoral College Votes..... 13

State Legislature:
Senators..... 40
Delegates..... 100

Ten Largest Counties:
Fairfax.....1,012,512
Prince William371,939
Chesterfield.....298,721
Henrico289,788
Loudoun.....275,796
Arlington201,163
Stafford120,387
Spotsylvania.....119,907
Hanover..... 97,569
Albemarle..... 93,601

Ten Largest Cities:
Virginia Beach.....433,033
Norfolk.....235,987
Chesapeake216,568
Richmond.....195,300
Newport News182,478
Hampton145,862
Alexandria.....136,732
Portsmouth.....98,543
Roanoke.....93,504
Suffolk81,209

Ten Largest Towns:
Blacksburg39,284
Leesburg37,476
Herndon21,877
Christiansburg17,853
Vienna14,872
Front Royal14,561
Culpeper.....13,011
Pulaski9,062
Warrenton8,733
South Boston.....8,064

FACTS ON VIRGINIA

Official Emblems and Symbols:

State Flower Dogwood Blossom
State Tree Dogwood
State Bird Cardinal
State Dog..... Foxhound
State Fish..... Brook Trout
State Shell Oyster

State Beverage Milk
State Folk Dance..... Square Dancing
State Insect..... Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly
State Fossil..... Chesapacten Jeffersonius
State Motto..... *Sic Semper Tyrannis*
(Thus Always to Tyrants)
State Bat..... Virginia Big Eared Bat