

## *Facts on Virginia*

## FACTS ON VIRGINIA

### *Capitol Building, Richmond*



*Photo courtesy of the Governor's Office*

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. In 2007, in time to receive the Queen of England during the celebration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jamestown Settlement, the Capitol underwent an extensive restoration, renovation and expansion, including the addition of a state of the art Visitor's Center that will ensure that it remains a working capital well into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. More information on the Capitol building can be found at <http://www.virginiacapitol.gov>

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.

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**Statewide Statistics:**

**Population** .....8,001,024  
**Rank in Country** ..... 12th  
**Density per Square Mile** ..... 202

**Land Area** (Square Miles) .....39,490  
**Rank in Country** ..... 36th

**Capital City**..... Richmond  
**Population** .....204,451  
**Rank in State** ..... 4th

**Number of Counties** ..... 95  
**Number of Independent Cities** ..... 39  
**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.....1,081,726  
Prince William.....404,002  
Chesterfield.....316,236  
Loudoun.....312,311  
Henrico .....306,935  
Arlington.....207,627  
Stafford.....128,961  
Spotsylvania.....122,397  
Hanover .....99,863  
Albemarle .....94,970

**Ten Largest Cities:**

Virginia Beach .....437,994  
Norfolk.....242,803  
Chesapeake .....222,209  
Richmond.....204,214  
Newport News .....180,719  
Alexandria.....139,966  
Hampton .....137,436  
Roanoke .....97,032  
Portsmouth.....95,535  
Suffolk .....84,585

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**Official Emblems and Symbols:**

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

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