

Virginia Studies Timeline

12,000 B.C.

Paleo Indians settle the New World.

1000 B.C.

Woodland Indians inhabit the area that is now Virginia.

1526

A group of Africans is brought to South Carolina by a Spanish explorer to erect a settlement. They escape and settle with Native Americans.

1560

Spanish missions established in Chesapeake Bay region and later deserted.

1584

Sir Walter Raleigh seeks to establish colony in Virginia and explore Virginia.

1585

England establishes first colony on Roanoke Island.

1600

Powhatan Confederacy includes 8,000 people and 200 villages in Tidewater region of Virginia.

1606

King James I permits the formation the Virginia Company of London.

Dec. 20, 1606

The *Susan Constant*, *Godspeed*, and *Discovery* set sail for Virginia.

May 13, 1607

The ships arrive 50 miles upstream on James River.

May 14, 1607

Jamestown colony established and becomes the first permanent English settlement in North America.

May 26, 1607

The colonists are attacked by Powhatan Indians.

1608

Captain John Smith takes over as leader of the Jamestown colony, requires settlers to work, and initiates trading with the Powhatans.

Winter 1609-1610

Colonists have little food during this winter, called the Starving Time, and only 60 out of 500 settlers survive.

1612

John Rolfe introduces tobacco growing and exporting, which later becomes the colony's most profitable product.

1617

Virginia planters send 20,000 pounds of tobacco to London.

1618

King James I grants new charter for the Virginia colony.

1619

Virginia's governor calls a meeting of the Virginia Assembly, which included two citizen representatives (called "burgesses") from each division of Virginia, the governor's council, and the governor.

1619

First recorded Africans arrive on Dutch ship as indentured servants.

1620

The first English women arrive in Jamestown making it possible for the settlers to establish families and a more permanent settlement.

1621

House of Burgesses is granted the power to make all laws for the colony.

1624

Virginia becomes a royal colony.

1634

The Syms Free School opens in Hampton.

1639

African-Americans in Virginia are not required to bear arms although white settlers must.

1640

John Punch, an escaped African slave is captured and sentenced to lifetime servitude. First recorded case of slavery prescribed by law in the colony of Virginia.

1640s

The burgesses become a separate legislative body, called the Virginia House of Burgesses.

1642

Law passed making it illegal to help runaway slaves.

1660

Virginia legalizes slavery.

1661

Children born to enslaved mothers are considered slaves.

1667

Colonial law establishes that slaves baptized into the church are still considered to be slaves.

1669

Colonial law establishes that an accidental killing of a slave during punishment is not considered a crime.

1670

Colonial law establishes that African Americans and Native Americans are not permitted to own servants of another race. All non-Christians arriving in the colony by water are hereafter considered slaves.

1671

Colonial law establishes that African American slaves are considered property in real estate appraisals.

1672

Colonial law establishes that runaway slaves resisting capture may be killed.

1676

Nathaniel Bacon leads a rebellion against the Colonial government.

1680

Colonial law establishes that African Americans are forbidden to possess any type of weapon. Also that same year, laws are created whereby slaves must have permission before leaving their plantation or residence, and that slaves are forbidden to raise a hand against any Christian.

1682

Colonial law establishes that African Americans are required to give up ownership of cattle, horses, and sheep.

1693

The College of William and Mary is established.

1699

The colonial capital moved from Jamestown to Williamsburg.

1700

The Virginia colony's population is estimated at 58,000.

1730s

Pioneers move into the Shenandoah Valley.

1736

The first newspaper is established, *The Virginia Gazette*.

1754-64

French and Indian War fought on western frontier of Virginia colony.

1765

The British Parliament passes the Stamp Act.

1772

0,449,000 pounds of tobacco exported from Virginia colony.

1775

Governor Dunmore issues an emancipation proclamation that imposes martial law in Virginia and offers freedom to indentured servants and slaves willing to fight for the King of England.

1775

A slave insurrection in western part of Virginia is suppressed by colonial government.

1775

Patrick Henry issues "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" speech; George Washington becomes commander in chief of Continental Army.

1775-1783

The Revolutionary War is fought.

1776

A state seal is adopted.

1776

Thomas Jefferson writes Declaration of Independence; signed by Continental Congress.

1776

The Virginia colony declares independence from England and adopts first state constitution.

1776

The Virginia Declaration of Rights, written by George Mason, forms basis of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the United States.

1779

The capital of Virginia moves from Williamsburg to Richmond.

1780s

The Little River Turnpike becomes first toll road in America.

1780s

Large numbers of Virginians move west and to the deep South through the Cumberland Gap to find better farmland and new opportunities.

1781

The British surrender at Yorktown ending the Revolutionary War.

1784

The Alexandria Gazette, the longest-circulated newspaper in America, first published.

1785

Thomas Jefferson designs capitol building in Richmond.

1786

Virginia General Assembly passes the Statue for Religious Freedom.

June 25, 1788

Virginia becomes 10th state.

1789

George Washington becomes first president.

1790

Virginia population is estimated at 600,000.

1799

George Washington dies at Mount Vernon.

1800

Virginia population is estimated at 650,000.

1801

Thomas Jefferson becomes President (1801-1809); John Marshall becomes Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court (1801-1835).

1801

The Gabriel Plot for a slave rebellion in Henrico County is suppressed.

1809

James Madison becomes President of the United States (1809-1817).

1810

Virginia population is estimated at 800,000.

1812

War of 1812 fought between the United States and Great Britain.

1817

James Monroe becomes President of the United States (1817-1825).

1819

Virginia law makes it is illegal to teach African Americans to read or write.

1820

Virginia population is estimated at 900,000.

1820s

Canals link portions of Virginia. The Kennawah Canal connects Richmond to Buchanan; the Potomac Canal goes around the Great Falls of the Potomac; the Norfolk Canal is constructed to the North Carolina border.

1830

Virginia population is estimated at 1,000,000.

1831

Cyrus McCormick invents the mechanical reaper for wheat.

1831

The first railroad in Virginia is constructed and tested.

1831

Nat Turner leads slave insurrection in Southhampton County. He and his followers were caught and convicted of treason, and Turner is hanged.

1833

The first steam-powered railroad operates out of Richmond to Weldon, North Carolina.

1840

Virginia population is estimated at 950,000.

1841

William Henry Harrison becomes President and dies in 1841. Vice President John Tyler, also a Virginian, becomes President (1841-1845).

1849

Zachary Taylor becomes President (1849-1850).

1850

Virginia population is estimated at 1,200,000.

1859

John Brown and others attack the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry and prepare to free all slaves. Ten of his men were killed; he and seven others are hanged.

1860

Virginia population is estimated at 1,250,000.

1861

Virginia secedes from Union. Richmond becomes capital of the Confederate States of America.

1861

Virginia adopts a secessionist constitution affirming alliance with Confederate states of America.

1861-1865

Civil War is fought.

1861

Battle of Bull Run, first major battle of Civil War, fought near Manassas.

1862

Battle of the ironclads, Monitor and the Merrimac (*Virginian*). fought at Hampton Roads Harbor.

1862

Second Battle of Bull Run fought.

1862

The Seven Days Battle fought.

1862

The Battle of Fredericksburg fought.

1863

The Battle of Chancellorsville fought.

1863

The Emancipation Proclamation, issued by President Abraham Lincoln, frees slaves in portions of Virginia occupied by federal troops.

1863

48 counties of northwestern Virginia become the state of West Virginia.

1864

The Battle of the Wilderness fought.

1864

The Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse fought.

1864

Cold Harbor and the Crater fought.

1865

The Battle of Petersburg fought.

1865

Richmond, capital of the Confederacy, falls to Federal troops.

April 10, 1865

At Appomattox Court House, General Robert E. Lee surrenders the Army of Northern Virginia to General Ulysses S. Grant commander of all federal armies. The Civil War ends.

1865

Congress passes the 13th Amendment making slavery illegal and extending civil rights to former slaves.

1865

Virginia becomes Federal Military District #1 during Reconstruction.

1866

Congress passes the 14th amendment extending civil rights to former slaves.

1869

Congress passes the 15th Amendment permitting men to vote without regard to race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

1869

Virginia adopts "Reconstructed" state constitution recognizing federal constitution and federal authority.

1870

Virginia population is estimated at 1,300,000.

1870

Virginia readmitted into Union; Federal reconstruction ends.

1877

Federal occupation of Virginia ends.

1880

Virginia population is estimated at 1,450,000.

1883

The Norfolk and Western Railroad completes a section of railroad reaching the coal mines in Southwestern Virginia and the first carload of coal is hauled to Norfolk.

1890

Virginia population is estimated at 1,850,000.

1893

Restoration of Jamestown begins.

1900

Virginia's population is 1,854,184.

1908

Staunton is first town in United States to adopt the council-manager form of government.

1910

Virginia's population is 2,061,612.

1913

Woodrow Wilson is the eighth Virginian to become President (1913-1921).

1917-1918

During World War I, 1,200 Virginians give their lives.

1918

Norfolk becomes largest naval base in the country.

1918

Marine Corps base at Quantico in Prince William County is created.

1920

Virginia's population is 2,309,187.

1920

19th Amendment to the Constitution gives women the right to vote.

1923

WTAR first commercial radio station in Virginia goes on the air.

1926

John D. Rockefeller invests millions for the restoration of Williamsburg.

1926

Harry F. Byrd, Sr. becomes governor, modernizes government, and institutes a “Pay As You Go” policy for road improvements.

1930s

Nation suffers from economic depression.

1930

Virginia’s population is 2,421,851.

1933

New Deal programs started including: the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), which brings electricity to thousands of rural Virginia farms; the Civilian Conservation Camps (CCC), which employ young men for conservation work; Public Works Administration (PWA), which funds major construction projects throughout the state; and the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which funds school improvement and public construction projects.

1936

African Americans win right to vote in primary elections.

1939

Maggie L. Walker founds St. Luke’s Penny Savings Bank. She is the first woman and the first African American woman to become a bank president. The bank is the longest established African-American bank in nation.

1940

Virginia’s population is 2,677,773

1941-1945

Famous Virginians during World War II include: Gen. George C. Marshall (originally from Pennsylvania); Gen. Lewis B. (Chesty) Puller of West Point, Virginia, the most decorated marine in history; and Gen. Leonard T. Gerow of Petersburg, overall commander of the Omaha Beach, “D-Day” invasion. Notable military units from Virginia participating at the invasion include: Virginia’s 116th Infantry and the 111th Field Artillery of the 29th Division organized from Bedford, Virginia. These units lose many soldiers during the battle and Bedford suffers the highest percentage loses of any city in the nation. Bedford now has a national memorial to those who fell at the Normandy Invasion.

1941-1945

9,000 Virginians give their lives during World War II.

1941-1945

The war demands the creation Fort Belvoir, Fort Eustis, Fort Lee, Fort Monroe, Langley Air Force Base, Norfolk Naval Base, and the Quantico Marine Corp Development and Education Command.

1948

WTVR becomes the first television station in Virginia.

1950

Virginia's population is 3,318,680.

1950

Korean War begins.

1950s

People move from rural to urban areas for economic opportunities. Post World War II housing shortages creates great demand and leads to the suburbanization of acres of Virginia farmlands surrounding the District of Columbia.

May 17, 1954

Brown vs. Board of Education U.S. Supreme Court decision outlaws segregation in the public schools.

January 19, 1957

Massive Resistance becomes the reaction to the Supreme Court decision ordering public school to desegregate.

1958

The United States space program begins in Hampton, where the first astronauts train.

January 19, 1959

In *Harrison v. Day*, the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals rule 5-2 that the state must support free public schools for all students regardless of race.

February 2, 1959

Twenty-one black children peacefully enter formerly white schools of Norfolk and Arlington.

May 1959

The U.S. Supreme Court orders Prince Edward County to desegregate schools. The county Board of Supervisors votes to abandon public education. White students are

accommodated in private academies. For four years, African-American children in Prince Edward County are without public schools.

1960

Virginia's population is 3,966,949.

1961

The U.S. Civil Rights Commission reports "significant racially motivated impediments to voting" in Virginia.

1963

The Prince Edward Free School Foundation is established with federal funds to aid young African Americans gain some educational opportunities.

1964

Congress passes landmark Federal Civil Rights Act.

1964

24th Amendment added to the U.S. Constitution bans the Poll Tax as a prerequisite to voting in federal elections. The General Assembly "transfers" 11 seats in the 140-representative legislature from rural to urban constituencies. Six go to Northern Virginia and 5 to the fast growing Hampton Roads area. Virginia is becoming an urban, and not just a rural, state.

1964

Chesapeake Bay Bridge tunnel opens.

1966

Virginia Community College system begins.

1970

Virginia's population is 4,648,494.

1971

Virginia's fifth state constitution is ratified.

1980

Virginia's population is 5,346,818.

1990

Virginia's population is 6,187,358.

January 13, 1990

L. Douglas Wilder is sworn in as governor and becomes the first African American to hold this office in the U.S.

1993

Arthur Ashe (1943-1993), tennis champion born in Richmond, passes away.

2000

Virginia's population is 7,078,515.