VIRGINIA

THE OLD DOMINION *Became a state June 25, 1788 (10th)*

Virginia is where English America began and where many of the nation's first leaders were born. It stretches from Atlantic beaches in the east to the ridges of the Appalachian Mountains in the west.



The First Lasting English Town

In May 1607, about 100 English men and boys built a fort beside the James River, on land of the Powhatan people. They named it Jamestown for their king. In 1608 glassblowers from Germany and Poland built a glasshouse there. Craftspeople blow glass in a rebuilt one today. In 1619 Jamestown held the first elected assembly in the English colonies.



Mother of Presidents

Eight presidents were born in Virginia, more than in any other state. The first was George Washington. His home, Mount Vernon, grew into a farm of nearly 8,000 acres above the Potomac River. The mansion has 21 rooms and a two-story porch facing the river. A golden dove of peace tops the roof.



Jefferson's Little Mountain

Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of Independence, also loved to design buildings. In 1769 he began a house on a hilltop near Charlottesville, and he kept changing it for 40 years. He named it Monticello, which means "little mountain" in Italian. A dial on the porch ceiling shows which way the wind blows. His bed opens to two rooms.



Where Rivers Meet the Sea

Chesapeake Bay is an estuary, a place where fresh water from rivers mixes with salt water from the sea. It is the largest one in the United States, about 200 miles long. The bay formed about 10,000 years ago, when glaciers melted and the rising sea flooded a river valley. Blue crabs, oysters and striped bass live in its waters.



Ponies on the Mountain

Mount Rogers, the highest point in Virginia, is named for William Barton Rogers, the state's first geologist. About 100 wild ponies roam the grassy ridges around it. The Wilburn Ridge Pony Association, formed in the 1970s, helps look after the herd. Each year the ponies are rounded up for a health check, and some young ones are sold at a fall festival.



Music From a Cave

In 1878, five local men noticed cool air coming from a sinkhole near the town of Luray. They dug for four hours and found a huge cave. In the 1950s, Leland Sprinkle spent three years building an organ there. Its rubber mallets tap stalactites, the stone icicles that hang from the ceiling, to play notes.

BY THE NUMBERS

Population	About 8.9 million (12th most)
Size	About 42,800 square miles (35th largest)
Highest point	Mount Rogers, 5,729 feet
Counties	95, plus 38 independent cities
Neighbors	Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina

DID YOU KNOW?

- Virginia is called the Old Dominion. The name likely means it was the oldest of the English king's dominions, or lands, across the ocean.
- The American dogwood is both Virginia's state flower and its state tree.
- Lake Drummond, in the middle of the Great Dismal Swamp, is one of only two natural lakes in Virginia. Even its deepest spot is only about six feet deep.
- Monticello has been on the back of the nickel since 1938, except for two years.

FIND IT ON THE MAP

1. Which city is the capital?
2. Which city is closest to Cumberland Gap?
3. Which president helped breed the American Foxhound?

Answers: 1. Richmond 2. Bristol 3. George Washington