

VIRGINIA

HISTORY

Virginia has been home to Native nations, English colonists, enslaved Africans and American leaders. Each of them helped shape the state you see on the map today.

The First Peoples

People have lived in Virginia for thousands of years. By 1600, a leader named Wahunsenacah, called Powhatan, led about 30 tribes near the coast. They lived in towns of bark houses. They grew corn, beans and squash, and they fished and hunted deer. The Monacan people lived farther west, in the Piedmont hills.



Jamestown and Tobacco

English colonists built Jamestown in 1607. It was the start of the **colony** of Virginia. The first years were hard, and many colonists died of hunger and sickness. Around 1612, John Rolfe planted a sweet kind of tobacco. It sold well in England and became Virginia's **cash crop**. In 1614, Rolfe married Pocahontas, a daughter of Powhatan, and peace lasted for a few years. In 1619, the first Africans in the colony arrived on a ship. Over time, enslaved people did much of the work on tobacco farms.

The Powhatan Wars

The colonists kept taking more land for tobacco. In 1622, Powhatan's brother Opechancanough led attacks on the English farms and killed about 350 colonists. The English struck back and burned Powhatan towns and fields. Fighting came again in 1644. In a 1646 **treaty**, the Powhatan tribes gave up most of their land and kept smaller areas for

themselves. Seven tribes with federal recognition live in Virginia today.



The Revolution

In 1775, Patrick Henry told Virginia's leaders, "Give me liberty, or give me death!" That same year, Daniel Boone marked a trail west through Cumberland Gap. In 1781, American and French troops trapped a British army at Yorktown. The British general had to **surrender**, and the Americans won the war. Virginia became the 10th state on June 25, 1788.

The Civil War

Virginia left the United States in 1861 and joined the Confederacy. Richmond became the Confederate capital. Counties in the west broke away and became the state of West Virginia in 1863. More Civil War battles were fought in Virginia than in any other state. In 1865, Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House. Slavery ended that year.

Building Virginia

After the war, Virginians built railroads and dug coal in the southwest mountains. A shipyard opened at Newport News in the 1880s. Today its workers build the Navy's giant aircraft carriers. In 1943, workers finished the Pentagon in Arlington. It is the main office of the United States military.

VIRGINIA THROUGH TIME



PEOPLE TO KNOW

Pocahontas	Daughter of Powhatan. Married John Rolfe in 1614.
Patrick Henry	Speaker who said, "Give me liberty!"
James Madison	Father of the Constitution. The 4th president.
Booker T. Washington	Born enslaved in Virginia. Started a famous school.
Ella Fitzgerald	Born in Newport News. A great jazz singer.

WORDS TO KNOW

colony	land ruled by a faraway country
cash crop	a crop grown to sell, not to eat
treaty	a written agreement between nations
surrender	to give up in a battle or war