Virginia Becomes a State; States Become a Nation (1760-1800)
People of Virginia

The number of people residing in the Virginia Colony increased by over 2 ½ times from 1760-1800.
53 Counties had formed in Virginia by 1760

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1760

VA Counties were mostly on the coast (i.e., Tidewater) and inland along rivers like the James, Roanoke, York, Potomac, and Rappahannock (i.e., Piedmont)
The “Fall Line” Separates **Tidewater & Piedmont** Regions in Virginia

**Fall Line:**
The natural border between the Coastal Plain (Tidewater) and Piedmont regions, where waterfalls prevent further travel on the river.
Great Falls of the Potomac on the Virginia “Fall Line”
Virginia’s Early Land Claims included present-day Kentucky, West Virginia and much of the “Northwest Territories” also claimed by other Colonies/States.

Virginia ceded its claims on Northwest Territories to the United States in 1783.
In the 1760s, Virginian’s gentry-owned companies hoped to make money from land speculation on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. The Ohio Company (which started work in 1754 and was managed by George Mason) and the Mississippi Land Company (organized by Thomas Ludwell Lee, Francis Lightfoot Lee, Richard Henry Lee, William Lee, William and Henry Fitzhugh, Thomas Bullitt, and George Washington in 1763) sought title to millions of acres of Western land through grants from King George III.

Instead of supporting land ventures by Virginia’s gentry, King George III hoped to set these lands aside for the Crown or English gentry and made a proclamation forbidding further settlement and speculation in British lands West of the Appalachians by colonial residents.
Virginia Encouraged and Administered Settlements in Present-day Kentucky Until Ceding these 9 Counties to the Federal Government in 1789.
92 Counties in Virginia by 1800
(Including Appalachian Plateau, Valley & Ridge, Blue Ridge Mountain, and other areas in present-day West Virginia)
Present-day Counties of Virginia (featuring Blue Ridge Mountains, Valley and Ridge, and the Appalachian Plateau regions)
The Virginia Conventions (5 independent meetings of House of Burgesses members in Virginia during the Revolution)

The 5th Convention met in Williamsburg on May 6th, 1776; and on...

-- May 15th, Instructs Virginia’s delegates to 2nd Continental Congress to “Propose Independence”;

-- June 12th, Approves a State “Declaration of Rights”; and,

-- June 29th, Adopts Virginia’s State Constitution

Henry’s Famous Speech to the 2nd Virginia Convention on March 23rd, 1775

“Give Me Liberty; or, Give Me Death”
Virginia Declaration of Rights was drafted by George Mason and edited by Thomas Ludwell Lee and by the Virginia Convention.

[Thomas Jefferson drew heavily from this document when he drafted the Declaration of Independence one month later.]

Mason wrote that "all men are born equally free and independent, and have certain inherent natural rights ... among which are the Enjoyment of Life and Liberty, with the Means of acquiring and possessing Property, and pursuing and obtaining Happiness and Safety."
Commonwealth of Virginia

On June 29, 1776, the Virginia Convention adopted a State Constitution (written by George Mason) that established Virginia as a “Commonwealth” independent of the British Empire.

The English word “Commonwealth” dates originally from the 15th century.

The phrase "common wealth" or "the common weal" comes from the old meaning of "wealth" which is "well-being".

The term literally meant "common well-being".

Thus “Commonwealth” means: “a state or nation-state governed for the common good” as opposed to an authoritarian state governed for the benefit of a given class of owners
As instructed, Richard Henry Lee submits Virginia’s proposal for independence to the 2nd Continental Congress on June 7th, 1776:

“Resolved, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.

That it is expedient forthwith to take the most effectual measures for forming foreign Alliances.

That a plan of confederation be prepared and transmitted to the respective Colonies for their consideration and approbation.”
By an Act of the new General Assembly in 1779, four superior courts, including the Supreme Court of Appeals, were created.

The Supreme Court of Appeals was composed of judges of the other three courts: the Admiralty, the General, and the Chancery Courts.

The Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, served as a model for the United States Supreme Court. It was first convened in Williamsburg, VA on August 30, 1779.

Judges of Virginia’s 1st Supreme Court included: Top-Left, Edmund Pendleton (Chief Justice), Bottom-Left, John Blair (later appointed to the US Supreme Court), and Top-Right, George Wyatt (Signer of the US Declaration of Independence)
Sometime after 1789, George Wythe, a Virginia signer of the Declaration of Independence, designed the State Seal of Virginia inscribed with the motto “Sic Semper Tyrannis” (meaning “thus always to tyrants“). The Seal is still in use today and appears on the State flag.
US Declaration of Independence

-- Prepared by a Committee of 5 men;

-- Thomas Jefferson was its principal author;

-- Presented and approved by the 2nd Continental Congress on July 4th, 1776

-- Printed & Signed by most delegates on August 2, 1776

-- Printed in “Broadside” format (i.e., on large paper like a modern newspaper) and distributed/read to audiences throughout the colonies.

Mary Katherine Goddard’s Printing of the Declaration Included the Names of Signers
Committee of 5 Men appointed by the 2nd Continental Congress to prepare a Declaration of Independence

(Left to Right: Thomas Jefferson, Roger Sherman, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Livingston, and John Adams)
Jefferson was the principal author of the Declaration of Independence (1776) and one of the most influential “Founding Fathers” for his promotion of the ideals of republicanism in the United States.
House where Thomas Jefferson Drafted the Declaration

(Near 7th & Market Sts., Philadelphia, PA)
Editing Jefferson’s Draft Declaration

Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson
Presenting the “Declaration of Independence” to the 2nd Continental Congress (July 4th, 1776)
Philosophy of the Declaration of Independence

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

George Mason (wrote) & Thomas Ludwell Lee Sr. (older brother of Richard Henry and Francis Lightfoot Lee) (edited) Virginia’s Declaration of Rights upon which Thomas Jefferson based this philosophical premise for the Declaration of Independence.
Virginia’s Seven Signers of the Declaration of Independence
George Washington didn’t sign the Declaration because he was in New England organizing the Continental Army.
The Declaration was read in public squares throughout the colonies. In Philadelphia, PA, militia colonel John Nixon (1733-1808) gave the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 6, 1776.
Receiving a copy of the Declaration of Independence on July 24th, 1776, Virginia’s Privy Council ordered that copies be printed and that County Sheriffs throughout the Commonwealth read it to the public on the steps of Court Houses as soon as possible.

“Williamsburgh, July 26, 1776.—Yesterday afternoon, agreeable to an order of the honourable Privy Council, the Declaration of Independence was solemnly proclaimed at the Capitol, the Court House, and the Palace, amidst the acclamations of the people, accompanied by firing of cannon and musketry, the several regiments of Continental troops having been paraded on that solemnity.”

Comment on its reading and reception by the public was published in the Virginia Gazette.
Articles of Confederation

The “Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union” was the first Constitution of the United States of America.

The final draft was written in the summer of 1777 and adopted by the Second Continental Congress on November 15, 1777 in York, Pennsylvania after a lot of debate.

Virginians signed/ratified it on July 9, 1778. Maryland was the last State to ratify it on March 1, 1781.

The confederation was capable of making war, negotiating diplomatic agreements, and resolving issues regarding the western territories; it could also print and borrow money.
Signers (i.e., “ratifiers”) of the Articles of Confederation for Virginia on July 9, 1778 were:

Richard Henry Lee, John Banister, Thomas Adams, John Harvie, and Francis Lightfoot Lee (Top to Btm – Left to Rt.)

John Harvie (1742-February 6, 1807) was an American lawyer and builder from Virginia. He was a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1777 and 1778, where he signed the Articles of Confederation.
Revolutionary War Virginia can claim a leading role in political agitation leading to the war and for the heroic service of its militiamen with the Continental Army in the North; but, little fighting actually occurred in Virginia for the first 5 years of the conflict.

Lord Dunmore was in conflict with Virginian's from his arrival as Colonial Governor in 1771 until his ships burned the city of Norfolk and the British left Virginia in 1776.

Early Conflicts in Virginia included:

- Lord Dunmore’s War with Indians at Point Pleasant
- Dissolving the House of Burgesses
- Battle of Kemp's Landing
- “Gunpowder Incident” at the Magazine in Williamsburg
- Yorktown “Tea Party”
- Battle of Great Bridge
- Burning of Norfolk
On October 7th, 1777, British General John Burgoyne surrendered to American General Horatio Gates during the Battle of Saratoga. About 5,800 British troops (including a high percentage of Hessian mercenaries) surrendered and became known as the “Convention Army.” These prisoners were marched to Charlottesville, VA and imprisoned in the Albemarle Barracks they were forced to build until 1781.
In the final stages of the Revolutionary War, fighting in the South was decisive for the Americans. After several disastrous fights in South Carolina, the Americans rallied under General Nathaniel Greene with troops commanded by Virginians Daniel Morgan and William Washington defeating Cornwallis’ cavalry under Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton at the Battle of Cowpens.

Finally, in a convergence of French and American forces at Yorktown, General Cornwallis was forced to surrender and the Revolutionary War was over.
On January 17, 1780, Virginia’s General Daniel Morgan leads continental troops at Battle of Cowpens, defeats British cavalry under Lt. Colonel Banastre Tarleton and thereafter limits Cornwallis’ ability to maneuver at will throughout the South.
Lt. Col. William Washington’s Light Dragoons Attacking British Cavalry at Battle of Cowpens
In 1781, Washington’s Army moves South & joins French in siege of British at Yorktown (at right -- Colonial & French troops storm the British redoubts)
In September of 1781, the French armada fights “2nd Battle of the Virginia Capes” and defeats the British fleet thereby cutting off Cornwallis’ escape route by sea.
Under siege for about 2 ½ months and cut off by the French Fleet, General Charles Cornwallis surrenders at Yorktown (in October) to George Washington and his French allies. [General Lincoln, who commanded American forces defeated at Charleston, SC, accepted Cornwallis’ sword as Washington watched.]
A Few Virginia Heroes of the “Era of Revolution in America …”

- George Mason
- Carter Braxton
- Edmund Randolph
- Benjamin Harrison
- Francis Lightfoot Lee
- George Wythe
- Thomas Jefferson
- Richard Henry Lee
- George Washington
- Patrick Henry
- James Madison
- Daniel Morgan
Constitution of the United States

-- A federation of sovereign States (i.e., Federal government)
-- Three branches of government (i.e., Executive, Legislative, and Judicial)
-- 2 Legislative bodies (i.e., Senate with 2 senators representing each State and a House of Representatives with members from States based on population)
-- Powers not delegated to the Federal government are reserved by the States or the People themselves.
From May 25 until September 17th, 1787 the Constitutional Convention meets in Philadelphia.

George Washington is the Presiding Officer.

The “Virginia Plan” is the unofficial agenda for the Convention. All but the first resolution is written by James Madison (later regarded as the “Father of the Constitution”)

Delegates from Virginia:
George Washington (Left-Top), Edmund Randolph*, John Blair (Left-Bottom), James Madison (Right), George Mason*, George Wythe*, and James McClurg*

( * ) = Did not sign the Constitution
On September 17th, 1787, the Committee of “Style and Arrangement” completed a final draft of the Constitution of the United States. The Committee included: Gouverneur Morris (PA), Alexander Hamilton (NY), William Samuel Johnson (CN), Rufus King (MA) and James Madison (VA)

The Constitution was adopted and signed by 39 of the delegates. Three delegates refused to sign: Edmund Randolph (VA), George Mason (VA), and Elbridge Gerry (MA).
Nationalists Elbridge Gerry (left) and George Mason (right) had almost perfect attendance records at the Convention, played influential roles in the proceedings, objected to the lack of a bill of rights in the Constitution, and refused to sign. (Gerry, oil on panel (early 19th century) by an unknown artist, after John Vanderlyn, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University; Mason, oil (1811) by Dominic W. Boudef, after a lost portrait by John Hessleius, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (on loan to Gunston Hall Plantation).)
President George Washington (1789-1797)

George Washington invented the Executive Branch of Government including the Cabinet, (i.e., his advisers whom he met with frequently) and he spent a lot of time trying to calm the **bickering between two new political parties**, the Federalists led by Hamilton and the Democratic-Republicans led by Jefferson.

Washington & His Cabinet (Lt to Rt):

*Washington
Knox (Sect of War)
Hamilton (Treasury)
*Jefferson (State)
*Randolph (Attorney General)

* = Virginians
Notable Events in Washington’s Presidency:

1789 The Judiciary Act specified the number of Federal courts and judges.

1790 Supreme Court met for the first time with John Jay as the Chief Justice. (In 1801, John Marshall of Virginia was appointed the 4th Chief Justice and served for 30 years.)

1791 Federal capital established in swamplands on the Potomac. A national banking system established by the Bank Act.

The Bill of Rights takes effect.

John Jay (above) & John Marshall (below)
Nation’s Capitol – in the South Along the Potomac River

Hamilton’s plan for managing the Public Debt of the United States included a provision that “State debts would be assumed by the federal government.” This was opposed by representatives from Virginia.

Virginia had already paid off most of its Revolutionary war debt and thought it unfair for them to have to help pay off debts incurred by other States.

THE DEAL To obtain the support of Virginians, Hamilton made a deal with Thomas Jefferson and James Madison whereby Hamilton agreed to support establishment of the Nation’s Capitol in the South along the Potomac River in return for their support for his “debt management plan”.

Jefferson & Hamilton led opposing “parties” as members of Washington’s Cabinet.
Washington, D.C. (estab. in 1791) was named after George Washington. “Columbia” is an early poetic name for the United States which honors Christopher Columbus.

The Potomac River site was originally recommended to President Washington by George Mason who owned 2,000 ac. of land in George Town.

L’Enfant’s layout plan for the Capitol in the new District of Columbia
1792 Post Office established by Congress as a separate entity. New York Stock Exchange organized. Coins are minted by the government as enacted by the Congress.

1793 War breaks out again in Europe between Britain and France (i.e., led by Napoleon)

1794 (Whiskey Rebellion)
Revolt of settlers in western Pennsylvania over an excise tax on Whiskey. About 15,000 Militia troops called out to suppress the armed rebellion were commanded by General Henry “Light-horse Harry” Lee (then Governor of Virginia and head of its militia)

1795 The Constitution is ratified. British troops required to withdraw from the US. Pinckney's Treaty with Spain opens navigation on Mississippi River.

1796 Washington delivers his Farewell Address and retires after 2 terms in office (i.e., a precedent)
Whiskey Rebellion. Congress imposed a duty on distilled spirits. This roused great opposition in western Pennsylvania, where whiskey was the principal article of manufacture and trade. President Washington called out the militia (on August 7, 1794), about 15,000 strong under the command of General Henry “Light-horse Harry” Lee. Washington led the Army himself into Pennsylvania to suppress the revolt.
Washington’s Farewell Address (1796)

Washington warned against the evils of “political parties” and the dangers of "tangling alliances" abroad (i.e., alliances with warring European Countries like England and France).
President John Adams (1797-1801)

-- Vice President for 2 terms under George Washington

-- A “Federalist” party leader like Alexander Hamilton

-- Served one term as President (defeated for re-election by the “Democratic-Republican” party led by Thomas Jefferson in 1800)

-- Appointed many Federalists as judges just prior to leaving office and refused to attend swearing-in ceremonies for Thomas Jefferson as his successor.

-- Later, he established and maintained a cordial correspondence with Thomas Jefferson for the rest of his life.
Adams’ Major Activities as President:

- Built up the U.S. Navy
- Fought the “Quasi War” with France
- Signed “Alien and Sedition Acts” of 1798
- Ended “war” with France through diplomacy
- Was the first President to reside in the “White House” that was completed in 1800

The early “White House” on the Potomac River was called the “President’s Palace”
In 1798, Adams (a Federalist) cracked down on political opponents and immigrants who tended to vote as Democratic-Republicans (i.e., Jefferson’s political party) with the **Alien and Sedition Acts**. These ‘hated’ Acts were composed of four distinct units:

- The **Naturalization Act** doubled the period required to naturalize the foreign born to American citizenship from 7 to 14 years;
- The **Alien Friends Act** and the **Alien Enemies Act** allowed the president to deport any foreigner that he thought was dangerous to the country; and,
- The **Sedition Act** criminalized anyone who publicly criticized the federal government.

James T. Callender (editor of the Richmond Reporter and a critic of President Adams) was indicted for publishing a book entitled "The Prospect Before Us," in which it was said that he brought President Adams into disrepute by accusing him of being a monarchist and a “toady” (i.e., “sycophant”) for British interests.

Callender was fined $200 and sentenced to nine months in the Richmond jail for libel.

He and others found guilty of sedition were later pardoned by President Jefferson.
In the election of 1800, John Adams and his running mate, Charles Pinckney went against the duo of Jefferson and Burr. Hamilton tried his best to sabotage Adams’ campaign in hopes of boosting Pinckney's chances of winning the presidency. The election was decided in the House of Representatives where 10 State delegations voted for Jefferson, 4 voted for Burr and 2 made no choice. [VP Burr subsequently killed Hamilton in a duel]
In old Virginia, FAMILY was very important in preserving wealth and in determining social rank/positions held in public service. The LEE family is a good illustration of this. **Thomas Lee** (Colonial Governor) and **Hannah Harrison Ludwell Lee**’s three sons (*) are honored as “Founding Fathers” of the State of Virginia and the United States of America. Their cousin “**Light-horse Harry**” Lee was a Rev. War Hero.

* **Richard Henry Lee** (Signed Declaration of Independence, was President of the Continental Congress and a US Senator from Virginia)

* **Francis Lightfoot Lee** (Signed Declaration of Independence)

* **Thomas Ludwell Lee** (edited Virginia’s Declaration of Rights);

**Henry “Light-horse Harry” Lee** (Aide to General George Washington, 9th Governor of Virginia, & Father of Robert E. Lee)
The Timeline
(1760 – 1800)
1760  **George III** becomes King of Great Britain and Ireland and reigns for 59 yrs

1762  Treaty signed in Paris ending “French & Indian War” between France & Great Britain

1763  By proclamation, George III declares “all territory West of the Appalachian Mountains in Virginia off limits to further settlement” (e.g., Ohio County and Kentucky) It is ignored by Virginia settlers and land speculators)
1765  British Parliament passes “Stamp Act” requiring a tax and stamp (i.e., proof of payment) on all legal documents, permits, commercial contracts, newspapers, wills, pamphlets, and playing cards in the American colonies. The Act was enacted in order to defray the cost of maintaining a British military presence in America for the protection of the colonies.

-- Patrick Henry delivers a “spirited” speech to House of Burgesses against the Stamp Act
1765 Virginia House of Burgesses adopts Patrick Henry's Stamp Act Resolves. These resolutions declared that:

(1) Virginians possess the same rights as Englishmen, especially the right to be taxed only by their own representatives;

(2) Virginians should pay no taxes except those voted by the Virginia House of Burgesses; and that,

(3) anyone supporting the right of Parliament to tax Virginians should be considered an enemy of the colony.
1766 The Stamp Act is repealed

1767-1768 Parliament imposes duties on colonial imports to England (i.e., Townshend Acts). House of Burgesses Petitions King for their Repeal

1770 Boston Massacre

1771 Lord Dunmore becomes last Colonial Governor of Virginia

1773 Boston “Tea Party” held to protest the tax on tea (i.e., the Tea Act of Parliament)
1774  May 26, House of Burgesses declares June 1st a “day of fasting and prayer” throughout the Colony in sympathy with the citizens of Boston

May 26, Lord Dunmore dissolves House of Burgesses

May 27, The 1st Virginia Convention of House Members meets in Apollo room of the Raleigh Tavern to discuss their situation

May 28, Despite actions by Governor Dunmore, Burgesses host previously scheduled, large reception and ball to honor the arrival in Virginia of Lady Dunmore & her daughters

(Left to right; top to bottom).

Virginia’s 7 Delegates to the 1st Continental Congress
1774  1st Continental Congress Accomplishments:

-- drafted the Articles of Association which was a compact among the colonies to boycott British goods

-- organized a Second Continental Congress to meet in Philadelphia on May 10, 1775.

[PeYton Randolph, of Virginia, presided for most of the Congress; Henry Middleton, SC, presided for the last few days, and Charles Thomson, of Philadelphia, served as its Secretary]

Leaders of the 1st Continental Congress: Adams, Morris, Hamilton, & Jefferson
1774

November 7, Virginians throw British tea imports into the York River (i.e., the "Yorktown Tea Party" painting by Sidney King, Natl. Park Service)

-- Thomas Jefferson purchases “Natural Bridge” and 157 ac of surrounding land in Rockbridge County (painting by Edward Beyer in his “Album of Virginia”)
1775 Daniel **Boone blazes** a trail to Kentucky from Virginia through the **Cumberland Gap** (i.e., later known as the “**Wilderness Road**” to the West – painting by Carl Rakeman)

--- **Patrick Henry** gives spirited speech to 2nd Virginia Convention of House of Burgesses members at a meeting in St. John’s Church, Richmond, Virginia with the famous line (i.e., “**Give Me Liberty; Or, Give Me Death**”)
1775  April 19, News of Lexington & Concord Battles (i.e., “Shots heard round the World”) was published in Virginia Gazette

Lexington (above)
Concord Bridge (right)
1775

April 20, Governor Dunmore confiscates weapons & gunpowder from the Colony’s Magazine in Williamsburg to keep them away from the “colonials”. Eventually, he pays 330 pounds sterling for them in order to avert a fight with irate Virginians.

June 8, Governor Dunmore and his family leave Virginia aboard HMS Fowey for their own safety.
The 2nd Continental Congress met from May 10, 1775; and, thereafter, until ratification of the Articles of Confederation on March 1, 1781. * Served as Presiding Officer of the Continental Congress under Articles of Confederation (i.e., with title of “President of the United States”)

Virginia’s Delegates:

Richard Bland (1775)
Benjamin Harrison (1774-1777)
Patrick Henry (1774-1776)
Thomas Jefferson (1775-1776)
Francis Lightfoot Lee (1775-1779)
Richard Henry Lee (1774-1779) *
Thomas Nelson (1775-1777)
Edmund Pendleton (1774-1775)
Peyton Randolph (1774-1775)
George Washington (1774-1775)
George Wythe (1775-1776)

1775 May 10th

2nd Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia.
1775  June 17  **Battle of Bunker Hill** took place on Breed’s Hill, as part of the Siege of Boston

**British**

226 dead, 828 wounded

**Americans**

140 dead, 271 wounded, 30 captured (20 POWs Died)

British held the field; but, suffered heavy losses.
1775 George Washington of Virginia becomes Commander in Chief of the Continental Army of colonial militiamen by appointment of the 2nd Continental Congress.
1775 November, Lord Dunmore issues Proclamation offering freedom to slaves who leave their patriot masters and join the royal forces.

December, Battle of Great Bridge – Virginia forces victorious (South of Norfolk) seven months before the Declaration of Independence. It was, at the time, called the “Second Battle of Bunker Hill”. It resulted in the capture of Norfolk by the Patriots.

John Murray, 4th Lord Dunmore of Scotland
1776 On New Year's Day, Lord Dunmore's fleet of 3 ships shells the city of Norfolk for over 8 hours. The shells and ensuing fires set by the British destroy 800 buildings, almost two-thirds of the city. The rebels complete the destruction of the city by burning another 400 buildings as part of a scorched earth policy. The bombardment and complete destruction of Norfolk ends the rule of the British Crown in Virginia.
1776  The 5th Virginia Convention:

-- May 15th, Instructs Virginia’s delegates to 2nd Continental Congress to “Propose Independence”;

-- June 12th, Approves a State “Declaration of Rights”; and,

-- June 29th, Adopts Virginia’s State Constitution
1776  June 7th  As instructed, Richard Henry Lee submits Virginia’s proposal for independence to the 2nd Continental Congress.

-- Patrick Henry becomes the 1st Governor of the “Commonwealth of Virginia”
1776 Thomas Jefferson serves on the Committee to draft a Declaration of Independence for approval by the delegates to the 2nd Continental Congress of the United States of America

[Most delegates sign the printed document on August 2nd, 1776]

Thomas Jefferson (Principal author of the Declaration of Independence and 2nd Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia)
Declaration Committee Presents its Work to the 2nd Continental Congress (July 4th, 1776)
1776 Thomas Paine (of Philadelphia) publishes “Common Sense”; Washington has it read to his troops in order to inspire their patriotism.

"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph."
1776  December  Washington’s Continental Army (including the majority of Virginia’s militiamen) crosses Delaware river, surprises British mercenaries (i.e., Hessian troops), and is victorious at the Battle of Trenton, NJ.
1777 January 3\textsuperscript{rd}
Battle of Princeton, NJ (another victory for Washington’s army)

1777 September 26\textsuperscript{th}
British Occupy Philadelphia, PA.
1777 October 7th By Convention (i.e., written agreement), British General John Burgoyne surrenders about **5,800 British troops at the Battle of Saratoga.** Mostly Hessian mercenaries, these prisoners were marched to Charlottesville, VA and imprisoned in the Albemarle Barracks until 1781 when they were moved to Pennsylvania as the British came South.
1777  November 15\textsuperscript{th} Continental Congress adopts \textbf{Articles of Confederation} to establish a \textit{union of the Colonies} (i.e., “States”)

-- December 19, 1777 to June 19, 1778 Washington takes Army into Winter Camp at \textbf{Valley Forge}
1777-1778 Winter
[Baron von Steuben trains Continental Army at Valley Forge]
1778 British General Howe abandons Philadelphia on learning of French involvement in the War. He crosses through New Jersey and is defeated by Washington’s Army at Monmouth Court House.
1779  **Thomas Jefferson becomes 2nd Governor** of the Commonwealth of Virginia

-- Virginia’s new General Assembly creates four superior courts, including a Supreme Court of Appeals

1780  Virginia’s Capitol **moves from Williamsburg to Richmond** for the safety of its Legislative Assembly and the Officers of the Commonwealth

-- Focus of Revolutionary War shifts to the South. British General Clinton attacks and seizes Charleston, SC. About 5,000 American Soldiers are captured **including almost all Virginian’s serving in the Continental Army.**
1780 After General Clinton captured Charleston, SC, command of British troops was given to Lord Cornwallis who marched through SC and NC killing American soldiers, destroying rebel supplies and inciting loyalist to seize control of Southern colonies.

-- Virginia’s Legislature and Commonwealth Officers move to Charlottesville for their safety;

-- In December, Benedict Arnold, now a General in the British Army, captures Richmond.

General Benedict Arnold “the traitor” who tried to sell out his command post at West Point, NY to the British
1781  January 17,  
Battle of Cowpens in South Carolina  
(Morgan’s Continentals vs Tarleton’s British Cavalry)  
A major victory for American forces in the South.

Continental Troops included Elements of the 1st and 3rd Light Dragoons (both recruited mainly in Virginia) under Lt-Col William Washington (82) & Elements of State Dragoons from NC and VA (30)
William Ranney’s Painting of Cavalry Fighting at Battle of Cowpens (Lt. Col. William Washington pictured on a White Horse)
1781 Mid-April. A group of New England infantry commanded by the French, twenty-nine year old, Major General Marquis de Lafayette entered Virginia.

This force reached Richmond just in time to prevent British forces under General Arnold from burning the entire capital.

John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, a Lutheran/Anglican minister of Woodstock, VA organized the 8th VA Regiment, commanded all troops of the Virginia Line in the North, and served in Lafayette’s Division at Yorktown.

In Sept.,1777, Lafayette had rallied troops of the 8th Virginia Regiment at Brandywine, PA and was wounded in the leg.
1781  June 4th, British Cavalry under Lt. Colonel Banastre Tarleton threaten to capture Virginia’s Commonwealth Officials who were meeting in Charlottesville. Captain Jack Jouett warns them that the “British are coming” in a ride from Louisa County to Charlottesville. He is later hailed as Virginia’s “Paul Revere”
1781 Following Tarleton’s raid on Monticello and Charlottesville, Thomas Nelson, Jr. became the 4th Governor of Virginia and Commanded Virginia’s militia at the Battle of Yorktown – even asking artillerymen to shell his own home which was Cornwallis’ headquarters.
1781 September French Fleet defeats British in “Battle of the Capes” off the coast of Virginia – cuts off Cornwallis’ escape by sea and forces his surrender at Yorktown in October.
1783  Peace of Paris
signed by United States, Great Britain, France and Spain (i.e., officially ending the American Revolutionary War)

-- Virginia’s General Assembly cedes Virginia’s claims to land in the Northwest Territory (i.e., Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin) to the United States Government

-- In December, George Washington resigns his commission as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army
1784-1789 Thomas Jefferson goes to France as minister from the United States.

Jefferson’s duties in France involved the negotiation of commercial treaties with several European powers. He joined John Adams and Benjamin Franklin already in France working on these tasks. Because of the decentralized federal government under the Articles of Confederation even this most formidable American triumvirate could find little success in these negotiations.

While in France, Jefferson writes Notes on the State of Virginia.
1785  George Washington heads up Potowmack Company **to build locks and canals on the Potomac River** (He reportedly used "Success to the navigation of the Potomac" as a common drinking toast among friends.)

1786  January 16th, A young **James Madison** is successful in getting the Virginia Legislature to pass Jefferson’s **“Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom”** which Jefferson had written several years before but was unable to get adopted by the Legislature.

1786  Maryland and Virginia officials meet and **propose a Constitutional Convention** to resolve problems between States under the Articles of Confederation.

Delegates from Virginia:
George Washington (Top-Left), Edmund Randolph*, John Blair (Top-Right),
James Madison (Btm-Left), George Mason*, George Wythe*, and James McClurg* (Btm-Rt)
( * ) = Did NOT sign the Constitution
1787 September 17th

A Committee of “Style and Arrangement” completes the final draft of the Constitution of the United States. The Committee included (Lt to Rt): Gouverneur Morris (PA), Alexander Hamilton (NY), William Samuel Johnson (CN), Rufus King (MA) and James Madison (VA).

The Constitution was adopted and signed by 39 of the delegates on Aug.2, 1787. Three delegates refused to sign: Edmund Randolph (VA), George Mason (VA), and Elbridge Gerry (MA).
1788 By a vote of 89 to 79, the Virginia State General Assembly voted FOR ratification of the Constitution of the United States.

Constitution supporters, called "Federalists", included: George Washington and James Madison

“Anti-Federalists” included: Patrick Henry and George Mason.

The principal objection to the Constitution was its lack of a Bill of Rights (later added on a resolution in the first Congress by representative James Madison as the 1st 10 Amendments to the US Constitution.)
1788 Virginia’s General Assembly legislated that the Virginia State Supreme Court of Appeals should be entirely separated from the other courts with five judges to be elected by joint vote of both houses of the General Assembly. These men were commissioned by the Governor and appointed for life on good behavior.

The Virginia State Supreme Court of Appeals served as the model for the Supreme Court of the United States of America.
1789-1797  George Washington unanimously elected 1st President of the United States by the Electoral College in 1789. He serves as President for 8 years being re-elected in 1792.

Washington’s “Cabinet” officers included:

John Adams (Vice President)

Thomas Jefferson (1790-93), Edmund Randolph (1794-95), & Timothy Pickering (1795-97) (Secretaries of State)

Alexander Hamilton (1789-95) (Secretary of Treasury)

Henry Knox (1789-94) (Secretary of War)
1791  First 10 Amendments to the US Constitution (i.e., Bill of Rights written by James Madison) ratified by the Virginia Assembly

1794  Whiskey Rebellion in PA (VA Militiamen called up to put down the revolt in Pennsylvania)

1796  Washington delivers “farewell address” and retires to a life of farming at Mount Vernon

1799  December Washington dies at Mount Vernon (i.e., signaling the End of an Era of Revolution)
1800  After a rancorous election, **Thomas Jefferson is elected the 3rd President of the United States.** Aaron Burr becomes his Vice President. This is considered a victory for **democracy** in America and for **freedom of expression** that was suppressed under the “Alien and Sedition Acts” signed by his predecessor in 1798.
Virginia Becomes a State; States Become a Nation (1760-1800)

A Few Virginia Heroes of the “Era of Revolution in America …”

George Mason      Carter Braxton     Edmund Randolph   Benjamin Harrison  Francis Lightfoot Lee    George Wythe

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