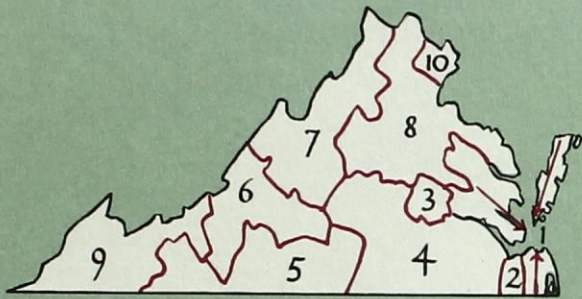
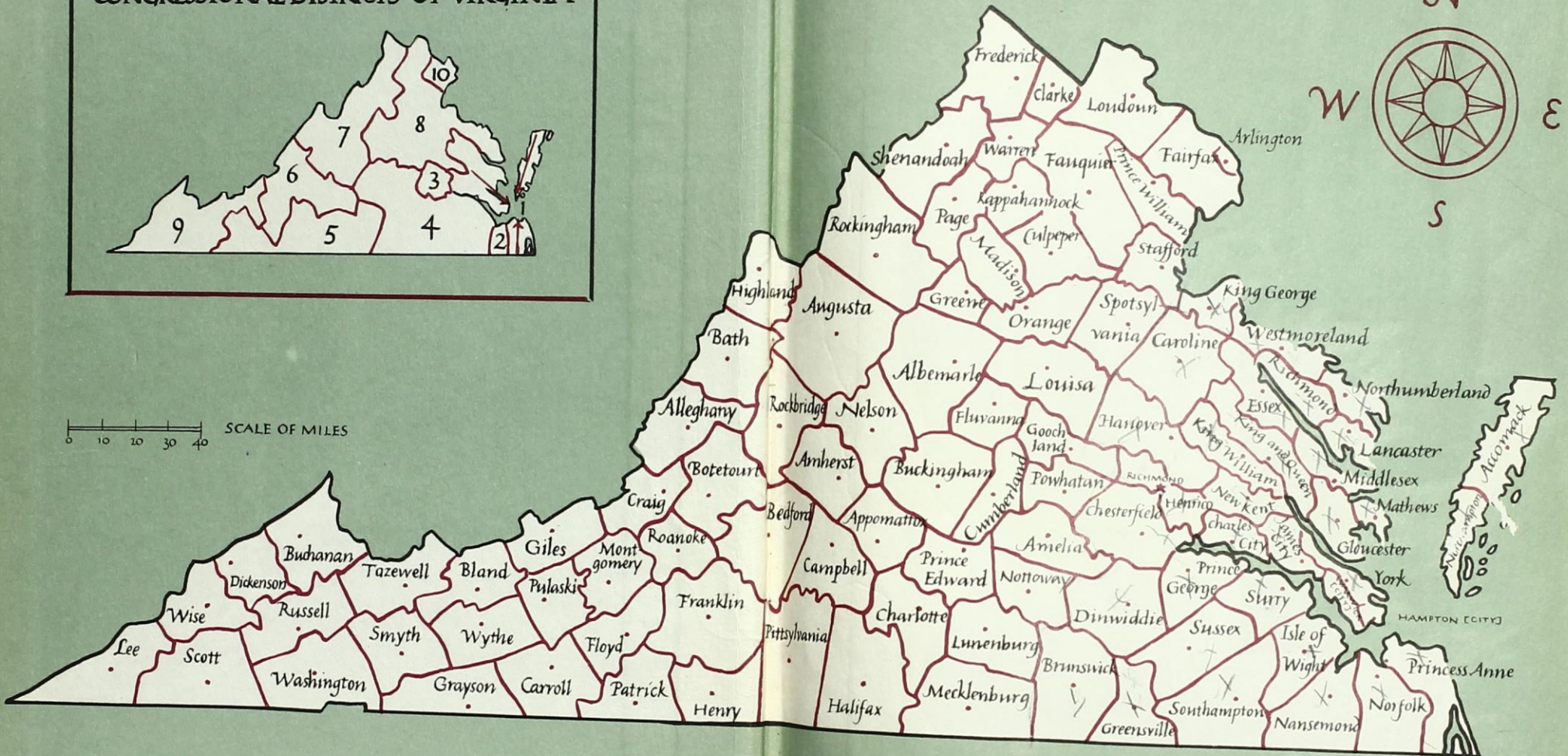


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# VIRGINIA:

HISTORY • GOVERNMENT • GEOGRAPHY

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THE Virginia History and Government Textbook Commission was created by a resolution adopted by the General Assembly of Virginia during its 1950 Session. Its purpose was to make available the necessary textbooks on Virginia history, government, and geography to facilitate the placing of greater emphasis on the teaching of these subjects in the schools of Virginia. Finding that such textbooks were not available, the Commission determined that books should be prepared for the purpose expressed in the resolution.

This book has been written and published under the supervision of the Commission, working in close consultation with the State Board of Education, which has approved and adopted it for use in the public schools. In the preparation of this work, the Commission has been guided by the earnest desire that the book may be helpful to our students in realizing and appreciating the rich heritage that is theirs as citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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THE AID OF MARGARET ROBINSON SIMKINS  
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covered. Members of the Virginia Company did not become rich from the colony they had planted. A great mistake had been made in the selection of the site of Jamestown, which proved unhealthy. The hunger, sickness, and death which resulted from this and other mistakes caused terrible sufferings.

Yet during these ten years the colonists at Jamestown succeeded, for they began the settlement in America which grew into a great state and a great nation. This success was due to the faith of those who supported the colony in England and to the courage of those who came to live in the Virginia wilderness. The Virginia Company continued to spend large sums of money on its colony and to send fresh supplies and more settlers.

Captain John Smith, Christopher Newport, John Rolfe, Lord Delaware, Sir Thomas Gates, Sir Thomas Dale, and other leaders helped overcome the many difficulties of founding the colony in a strange land. They learned to work and to govern under new conditions. They learned how to deal with the Indians and thereby saved the colony from being wiped out by the savages. They experimented with several industries; they planted a variety of crops; and they found in tobacco a plant which would bring riches to the colony.

Under these leaders the people overcame many hardships. They had dared to cross a great ocean in hope of establishing a better life. They loved the beauty of their new land, and worked for the wealth that might come from their labor. Many were killed by disease or by the arrows of Indians. But those who lived and those who died must be honored by us today, for they won for us—their descendants—a good life and freedom and prosperity.

## Unit III

(Chapters 6-13)

### VIRGINIA GROWS AND PROSPERS

In England, as in Virginia, there were many who wished the colony to grow and to become a better place in which to live. In 1619, the Virginia Company secured the king's permission for the colony to establish a representative government. In the same year the need for labor was partly solved by the coming of Negroes to Virginia. Also in 1619 many young women came to the colony to help establish homes. The way was gradually prepared for Virginia to become a land of plenty.

Virginians wished to have a government which served their own needs. To secure such a government, the colonists wanted a large part in governing themselves. They did not hesitate to turn out of office royal governors who were dishonest or would not protect them against the Indians.

The interest in higher education led to the establishment of the College of William and Mary. Shortly afterward, the capital was moved from Jamestown to the site of the new college at Williamsburg.

The eager spirit of the Virginians and their desire for new



lands soon led them westward from the Tidewater into the Piedmont, into the Valley of Virginia, into Southwest Virginia, and over the mountains into the Ohio Valley. But they had to fight many battles with the Indians and the French to make themselves masters of the land as far west as the Mississippi River.



## CHAPTER 6

### *An Eventful Year for the Colony: 1619*

#### THE FIRST LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**I**N 1618 Sir George Yeardley was appointed governor of the colony by the Virginia Company. He brought with him from England a new charter. The members of the Virginia Company had persuaded King James I to give Virginians the right to take part in governing themselves. They were to have a legislature to make their laws. The group of men chosen to make laws was to be called the General Assembly of Virginia.

The new charter provided that the General Assembly be made up of two parts, or houses. One of these houses was the Council. Its members were to be advisers of the governor and were to be chosen by the company. The Virginia Company also continued to appoint the governor. The second house of the General Assembly was to be made up of men chosen by the people of the colony. It was to be called the House of



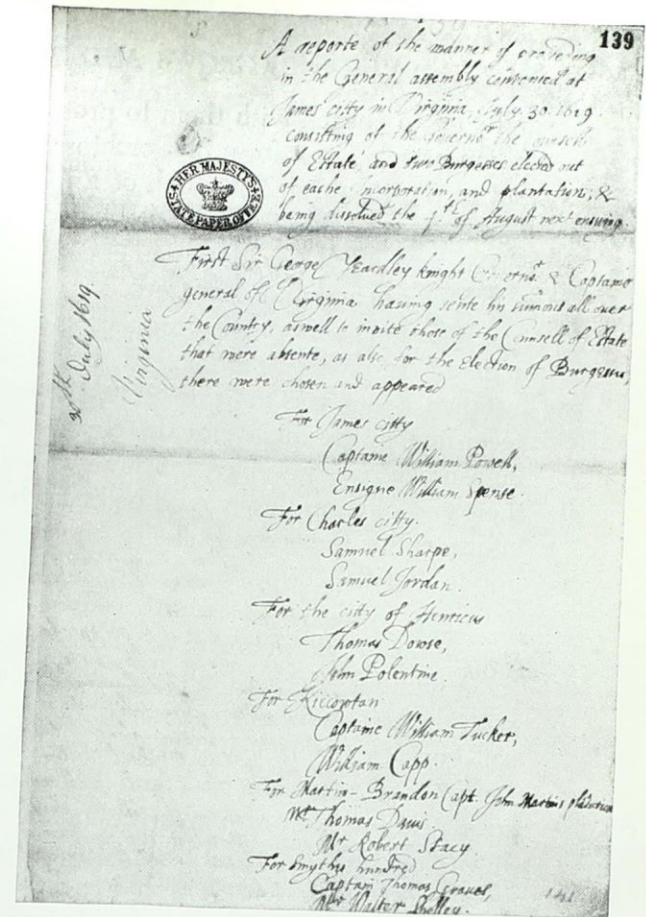
Burgesses. The colony was divided into eleven districts, called boroughs or plantations, and each district was to be represented by two men called burgesses. The free citizens of each district were to vote for the persons they wished to represent them in the General Assembly. In order that as many as possible could take part in the election, it was not held until after the spring crops of 1619 had been planted.

#### WHY REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT WAS NECESSARY

*T.*  
The first General Assembly of Virginia was the beginning of representative government in the New World. By 1619 the people of Virginia had spread over a wide territory along the banks of the James River, and it would have been difficult for all of them to go to Jamestown to take part in making laws. Therefore, the freemen of each district were asked to elect delegates to represent them and to express their wishes. Then the voters chose representatives who promised to make the kind of laws the voters of each district wanted. This is what is called representative government. It is the way we govern ourselves today in Virginia and in the other states of our country. The present day General Assembly grew out of the 1619 meeting.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*T. explain*  
The first General Assembly of Virginia met in the church at Jamestown on July 30, 1619, and remained in session five days. The twenty-two burgesses, elected from the eleven districts, took seats in the choir of the church. The governor and members of the Council sat in the front pews. Each man kept his hat on as was the custom in the Parliament of England. Master John Pory, secretary of the colony, was the speaker, or presiding officer, of the meeting. The men who came together in this first meeting of the first representative government in America wanted God to guide them in their work; so their minister, the Reverend Richard Buck, opened the meeting with prayer. He prayed earnestly "that it would



A page from the report of the first meeting of the House of Burgesses in the year 1619. This report is kept in the Public Record Office in London.

please God to guide and to make free from sin all our proceedings to His glory and to the good of this plantation."

After the prayer, the burgesses moved into the main part of the church. When they had taken their seats, they were called to order, and one by one they took an oath recognizing the authority of King James I. They then examined their new charter and accepted it as a good basis for government.

#### THE FIRST LAWS PASSED

The members next took up the business of making laws. They decided that everyone must attend church, and those who owned arms had to bring their guns, swords, powder,



and shot to church with them to protect themselves against Indian attacks. The form of worship should be the same as that of the Established Church of England. The price of tobacco was set, and each householder was required to plant a certain amount of corn, flax, and hemp, and a certain number of grapevines and mulberry trees.

Other laws were passed regulating the colonists' behavior in detail. Today we think some of these laws were quaint. For instance, a man was to be taxed for the support of the church according to the quality of the clothes he or his wife wore. Punishment was provided for those who drank to excess. For their first offense, they would be corrected in private by the minister. For the second offense, the correction would be in public. For the third offense, the correction would be by the governor. And for the fourth offense, the governor could punish the drunkard in any way he thought proper.

A number of other laws were passed, some of which dealt with the treatment of the Indians. Settlers were forbidden to sell guns to the Indians. They were forbidden to injure or harm them. Also, each town and each plantation was required to educate a certain number of Indian children "in true religion and civil course of life." It was provided that all males over sixteen years of age would each be taxed one pound of the best tobacco for the salaries of burgesses.

#### THE COMING OF THE NEGROES

The second important event of 1619 took place a few weeks after the meeting of the first General Assembly of Virginia. A Dutch ship brought twenty Negroes to Jamestown. It was a pirate ship, and it had taken the Negroes from a



Spanish galleon which it had attacked hoping to get much gold and silver. Dutch and English ships in those days often made raids on Spanish ships. There was no treasure aboard the Spanish galleon; instead there was a load of Negroes who had been purchased in Africa. All but twenty of these Negroes died during the voyage to Virginia because the Dutch ship was small and the Negroes were crowded closely together. The twenty survivors were the first Negroes to arrive in Virginia.

The first Negroes came to Virginia twelve years after the coming of the first Englishmen. For sixty years thereafter not many additional Negroes came to the colony. Those who did come were able to adjust themselves to their new life far from their African home and slowly to increase in number. Before coming to Virginia they had learned many useful things which served them well. They could not read and write and knew nothing of Christianity, but they knew how to farm and how to make tools of iron. They were quick to learn the ways





of civilized people. They learned how to speak English, and how to labor in the fields. They also became Christians.

#### THE USEFULNESS OF NEGRO LABOR

The colonists, with the help of their families, could grow only small amounts of tobacco. If they wished to grow tobacco in large quantities, they needed extra help. At first they used white laborers who entered the colony as indentured servants pledged to work for landowners who had paid their passage from England. At the end of their required periods of service, the indentured servants became free.

The disadvantage of this system was that by the time the indentured servants had become used to living and working in Virginia their period of service was over and they became free. After 1670 the planters gradually turned to African slaves for their labor supply. They discovered that the Negroes learned easily to work in Virginia and to survive in the Virginia climate. The Africans were almost entirely immune from the sicknesses that killed so many of the white settlers. Not one of the twenty Negroes brought to Virginia in 1619 died during their first year in the colony. They made such excellent farm laborers that it was not long before Virginia planters were buying Africans not as indentured servants but as lifetime slaves.



Slavery was in many ways a harsh and cruel system. We do not approve of it today and are glad that it is no longer part of our American way of life. But slavery made it possible for the Negroes to come to America and to make contacts with civilized life, and to play an important part in the development of Virginia.

#### THE COMING OF THE MAIDENS

A third important event also happened in Virginia in 1619. Before that date there were only a few women but many lonely unmarried men in the Virginia settlement. Englishmen are a home-loving and a family-loving people, so the Virginia bachelors needed English girls to court and marry. Sir Edwin Sandys, the wise head of the Virginia Company, firmly believed that if the colony was to be successful, the settlers would have to think of Virginia as their permanent home. He believed they should marry and settle down.

Sandys hit upon what proved to be an excellent plan. In 1619 he sent to Virginia almost a hundred girls who were brave enough to risk a voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to become homemakers in a new land. They were selected for honesty and good behavior. When the ship came in sight, the men, dressed in their best clothes, went to meet it. They





rowed out from their plantations to follow the maidens' ship up the river to Jamestown.

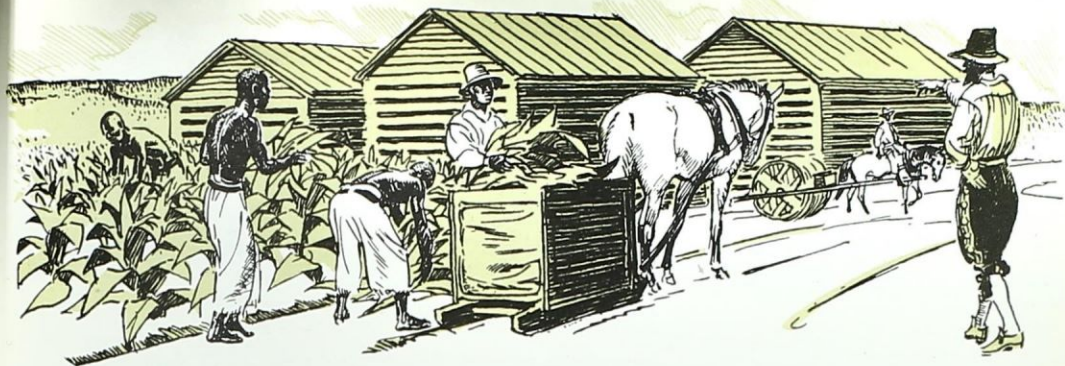
The girls stayed at the homes of married planters until they were claimed by young men. Most of them had but a short time to wait. Each husband was required to pay 120 pounds of tobacco to the Virginia Company to cover the cost of his wife's transportation from England. The young men who had not saved 120 pounds of tobacco had to look on with envy and disappointment.

The happy husbands led their wives to houses made of hewn timbers. The young women soon changed these crude dwellings into homes. They must have loved their new life because they wrote happy letters to their friends and relatives in England. It was not long before a second shipload of girls arrived to find husbands and to establish homes in Virginia.

These women brought much happiness to the colony. As the number of families grew larger, the colony became more orderly and Virginia became a home to its people. The descendants of these courageous women and their pioneer husbands are living in many parts of the United States today.

#### THE THREE IMPORTANT EVENTS OF 1619

Indeed, 1619 was an eventful year in the history of Virginia. In that year the General Assembly of Virginia began, and the people of the colony won the right to take a part in their own government. In the same year Negroes were first brought to the colony. By the use of Negroes the planters of Virginia would have more help in the growing of tobacco and other crops. And, in the same year, many young women came to the colony, making possible the establishment of English homes in Virginia.



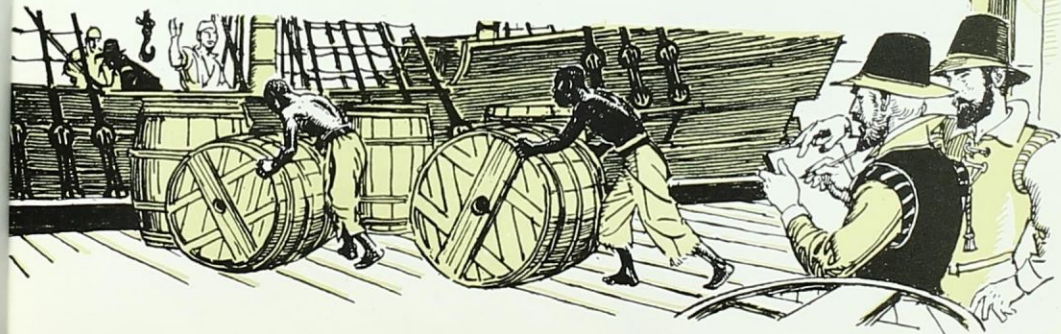
#### CHAPTER 7

### *A Land of Plenty*

#### TOBACCO, THE MAIN CROP

EUROPE bought so much of the improved tobacco grown by John Rolfe and other planters that the colony became prosperous. Tobacco brought such high prices that the settlers began raising more of it. In fact, they were so busy raising tobacco they neglected to grow enough food crops. Governor Dale was worried when he saw that not enough corn was being planted, so he limited the amount of tobacco each settler could raise. He was the first person in this country to try the control of crops by law. Regardless of this crop control, however, tobacco became the money crop of Virginia, and the colony's financial success was founded on its sale.

As the colony grew in size and wealth, the settlers needed new farm lands. Since they did not understand the necessity for crop rotation and fertilization, they had to have new fields to take the place of those worn out by heavy crops of tobacco. Land was cheap, and they went farther and farther into the forests to clear more land. The growing of tobacco, more than

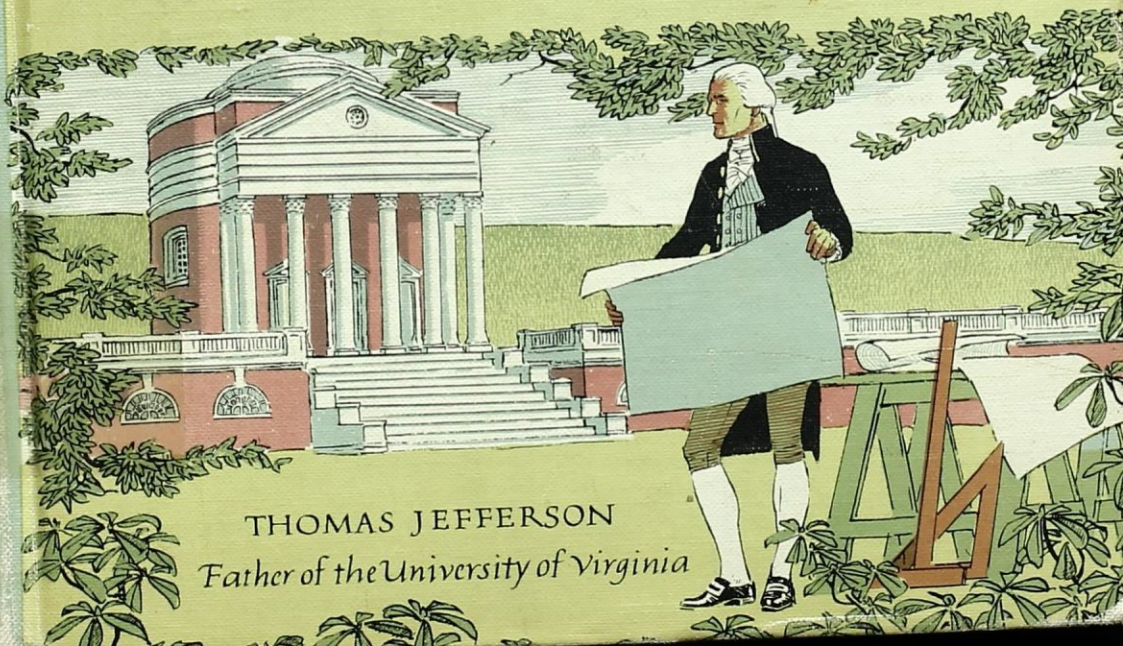






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THOMAS JEFFERSON  
*Father of the University of Virginia*