

Virginia's Historic Resources

Whether it's making an arrowhead or constructing a Capitol, much of what people create lasts long after they've departed. In this way, their creations become today's historic resources.

When it comes to the environment, we are so accustomed to thinking about the things we derive from nature—from minerals, forests, rivers, the land and the ocean—that we too easily overlook our *historic* resources. The things we derive from history. *Our* history.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources, however, keeps an eye on these things, since it is the state agency charged with documenting, preserving, conserving, and protecting Virginia's 16,000 years of accumulated historic treasures.

The Commonwealth has long been recognized for its rich heritage. Visitors from all over the nation and the world flock to Virginia to see Jamestown, Monticello, Mount Vernon, Williamsburg and a wealth of Revolutionary and Civil War battlefields and sites. The homes of eight U.S. presidents are found in Virginia; so, too, is the site of one of the oldest known dwellings in the Western Hemisphere.

Equally important, and increasingly sought after by residents and visitors, are the thousands of lesser known, authentic historic resources found in every community in the Commonwealth. These historic places—houses, stores, warehouses, train stations, iron furnaces, canals, barns, cultural landscapes and bridges—are woven into the fabric of our daily lives. They are part of what defines the character and spirit of this place we call Virginia. When properly preserved and cared for these resources enhance the quality of life in Virginia's communities and make Virginia a great place in which to live, work and play.

For these reasons and more, much of the Commonwealth's present and future prosperity depends upon conserving, protecting, and preserving its historic resources, both as a tool for ongoing and sustainable economic and community revitalization and as a basis for tourism.

The Department of Historic Resources and its staff of architects, architectural historians, archaeologists, historians and other specialists partner with local governments, private preservation organizations and individuals to provide planning information, management tools and guidance to work toward this goal of protection and preservation of historic places.

Department's Network of Educational Resources

The Department of Historic Resources offers a number of educational resources, gauged to a wide range of ages, and professional and general audiences and interests. A great place to start learning about the Commonwealth's historic resources and the Department's many preservation programs is through its Website (www.dhr.virginia.gov).

You can also stay abreast of history and preservation news in Virginia and beyond by visiting the Department's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Virginia-Department-of-Historic-Resources-383005701837393/?ref=hl>.

The Department's onsite Archives at 2801 Kensington Avenue in Richmond also provides another rich source of information.

DHR Archives

The department's archives house a trove of information for the researcher seeking descriptive and narrative reports that detail the significance of historic places and sites in Virginia.

Organized by city and county, the Archives' collection of data is contained in files, reports, and databases. Historic property-specific photographs, drawings, correspondences, newspaper clippings, and published and unpublished materials are also available in many of the files. In addition, the nomination forms for each of the individual historic places or historic districts listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR) or National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are contained in the Archives' files. Nomination forms for places listed in the VLR and NRHP also can be accessed on the Department's website (http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/register_counties_cities.htm).

The department archives are also the principal repository for historic survey and archaeological reports. A number of these reports are also available on the DHR website (http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/archives/archiv_Collections.htm). Databases and mapping for the files and reports are available in the archives, and most of these materials may be photocopied or printed for a small fee.

The department also has an excellent collection of photographic prints, negatives, slides and can produce digital images for a nominal fee. A search service is available for firms seeking information on the presence of previously identified cultural resources within a proposed project area: http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/archives/archiv_searches.htm.

The archives' research library includes a specialized selection of books, theses, and dissertations associated with Virginia history, county histories, historic preservation, architecture and archaeology. Professional periodicals on history, archaeology and architecture are also housed in the archives as are copies of historic maps. In addition to the department's website and archives, there are other media and venues providing educational and reference information.

For more information about the department's archives, visit this webpage: http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/archives/archiv_info.htm

Publications

The Department's print and online publications cover a variety of topics (www.dhr.virginia.gov/homepage_general/publications.htm).

On-line Publications

Among the publications of the Department that are available online as PDFs, the following are particularly noteworthy.

Use these two guides to become familiar with Virginia's architectural styles:

[Classic Commonwealth: Virginia Architecture from the Colonial Era to 1940](#): Completed in 2015, this publication is designed to aid professionals, students and readers in identifying and documenting the numerous types and styles of historic buildings in the Commonwealth. The guide opens with an overview of Virginia's architectural heritage within the context of larger historic trends, from its colonial-era settlement through to the economic, technological and cultural innovations of the early 20th century. The majority of the publication consists of "Style and Form" information sheets offering basic information about and character-defining features of the many historic architectural styles that have shaped Virginia's public and private spaces across more than three centuries. Because architecture is a visual medium, *Classic Commonwealth* relies heavily on photographs which exemplify or illustrate relevant styles. This guide will enrich one's understanding and appreciation of Virginia's historic architecture. Additionally, the guide complements the *New Dominion Virginia Style Guide* (see below).

[New Dominion Virginia Style Guide](#): The *New Dominion Virginia Style Guide* assists historic preservation professionals, local governments, preservation advocates, students and interested members of the public with

defining and documenting the numerous types and styles of post-WW II architectural resources in Virginia. Additionally, the guide offers an overview of the major historic and architectural trends in Virginia from 1946 to 1991 and instructions on improving entry of survey data in DHR's Virginia Cultural Resources Information System (V-CRIS).

Use the following on-line publication to research a historic site:

[**How to Research Your Historic Virginia Property**](#). Owners of old Virginia houses, commercial buildings, mills, and farmsteads, as well as historians of churches, schools, and businesses often want to learn more about the history of their property but are not sure how to go about it. In 2013, DHR updated this publication on how conduct research on a historic property. The publication introduces you to some of the useful sources available for learning about the history of a Virginia property.

The following books may also be of interest:

For Virginia Indian history:

Virginia Indians at Werowocomoco, NPS Handbook: An established Native American settlement as early as 1200 CE, Werowocomoco—located in Gloucester County, along the York River—was a secular and sacred seat of power of the Algonquian people in present-day Virginia, whom the English would call the "Powhatan." The site was identified in 2003. Only about one percent of the 58-acre site has been investigated; however, based on archaeological research conducted so far, it appears to be an unprecedented archaeological find for the eastern coastal region of the nation, and its significance to Virginia Indians today and our shared history is without parallel. Generously illustrated and informed by recent scholarship, this addition to the National Park Service Handbook series is an engaging and concise history of the site, its rediscovery, and what recent archaeology tells us about Werowocomoco. Order the book from the University of Virginia Press or on-line retailers such as Amazon. Priced at \$12.95, consisting of 148 pages with more than 100 color images, photographs, and maps, this book is intended for a general reader interested in Native American and Virginia history.

[**First People: The Early Indians of Virginia \(2nd Edition\)**](#) (1992, 2006) by Keith Egloff and Deborah Woodward. Incorporating recent events in the Native American community as well as additional information gleaned from publications and public resources, this redesigned and updated second edition of *First People* brings back into print this concise and highly readable

narrative. Full of stories representing the full diversity of Virginia's Indians, past and present, this popular book remains an essential introduction to the history of Virginia Indians from prehistory to the present day. The book is available through DHR, the [University of Virginia Press](#), or local bookstores.

For learning about basic stewardship issues for a historic property, try this publication:

A Handbook and Resource Guide for Owners of Virginia's Historic Houses by Camille Agricola Bowman, a former architectural historian and technical easement advisor with DHR. The book offers valuable information on the proper stewardship of a historic house as well as sources for additional expert guidance on various restoration repairs. The book is 64 pages, and includes more than 50 color photographs. The handbook is available for the cost of shipping. [Order form](#).

For information about various archaeological sites in Virginia, check out the department's *Archaeological Research Report Series*. This long-running series now boasts 18 titles featuring professionally prepared reports detailing the archaeological investigations conducted at important sites around the Commonwealth: www.dhr.virginia.gov/homepage_general/pubs_archaeology.htm

To learn about other publications, visit the Department website's publications page:
http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/homepage_general/publications.htm

Exhibits

The department routinely lends organizations and institutions select artifacts from its five million-plus collection for special exhibits and educational displays.

In addition, the department has a permanent exhibit in the learning center at the Virginia Historical Society that focuses on the unique settlement and sacred site of Werowocomoco, the place where paramount chief Powhatan, Pocahontas and Captain John Smith crossed paths.

Educational Tools

The department offers a number of educational packages, including those developed by other agencies and organizations:

- *Teaching with Historic Places*. This program (<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/>) developed by the National Park Service uses buildings and places listed on the National Register of Historic Places to enliven history, social studies, geography, civics, and other subjects. *Teaching with Historic Places* provides a variety of products and activities that help teachers bring historic places into the classroom. This website includes lesson plans for six historic sites in Virginia, as well as guidance in creating lesson plans.
- *Three Cultures, Three Stories*. This interactive web module developed by the Virginia Museum of Natural History and the Department of Historic Resources helps users explore and compare the cultures and artifacts of Powhatan, Lakota and Pueblo Indians.
<http://www.vmnh.net/three-cultures/viewsearchresult/1>
- *The Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation* offers many ways to explore the beginnings of our nation, from 1607 through the Revolutionary period, via tours of their living history museums and learning resources such as curricula and hands-on activities.
<http://www.historyisfun.org/learn/learning-center/>
- The website, *Virginia's First People, Past and Present*, was developed by the Department of Education to coordinate with Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL). It includes a link to the classroom video resource, *The Virginia Indians: Meet the Tribes*.
<http://virginiaindians.pwnet.org/>

Archaeology

Archaeological digs and surveys are an important part of the mandated work of the department in documenting, recording and conserving Virginia's belowground historic resources. In addition to the professionally targeted *Archaeological Report Series* (see above), the department offers other opportunities for teachers, students, and the general public to learn about the diversity of our state's archaeological wonders.

- "Virginia Archaeology Month"
(www.dhr.virginia.gov/arch_DHR/archaeo_index.htm) is a program coordinated by the Department of Historic Resources. One of the first such programs in the nation, it occurs in the Commonwealth every October, when Virginia archaeology is celebrated through exhibits, lectures, site tours, and special hands-on events for children at libraries, museums, historical organizations, clubs, and active archaeological sites around the state.
- ARKs, the Department's Archaeology Resource Kits (ARKs), are great teaching packages for educators. Two different kits are now available. One deals with Native Americans and the other with African-

Americans. The kits, which the department loans to schools and educational organizations at no cost, contain artifacts and replicas of items found at digs in Virginia as well as a variety of games, maps and plans, books, videos, and other materials designed to show how archaeology reveals Virginia's past.

- *The Paintings of John White* is an interactive online education module (www.dhr.virginia.gov/John_White/JohnWhite.html) that allows visitors to learn about the clothing, shelter, and food of the Indians of the mid-Atlantic coast whom Europeans, such as John White, first encountered when they arrived in North America.
- A *Lithic web module* interactive allows comparison of the forms and raw materials used through the millennia by Natives of our region for making projectile points. (http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/arch_DHR/archaeo_lpc.htm)

State Organizations Involved with Preserving Virginia's Historic Resources

- **Archeological Society of Virginia (ASV):** <http://www.archeologyva.org/> Through 16 local chapters, ASV volunteers have been conducting research and educational work in Virginia for over half a century.
- **Preservation Virginia:** <https://preservationvirginia.org/> is a nonprofit organization and a resource for public education and advocacy for historic preservation in Virginia.
- **Council of Virginia Archaeologists (CoVA):** <http://cova-inc.org/index.html>. CoVA members are professional archaeologists who publish *The Virginia Archaeologist* and are dedicated to the preservation and study of Virginia's archaeological resources.
- **Virginia Foundation for the Humanities** www.virginia.edu/vfh/. The interpretation and understanding of cultural traditions are enhanced through resources such as events, seminars and special programs on Virginia folk life and African American heritage.
- **Virginia Historical Society:** www.vahistorical.org/. VHS collects, preserves, and interprets the commonwealth's past for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations through exhibits, tours, distance learning programs and teacher workshops and institutes.
- **Virginia Main Street Program:** www.dhcd.virginia.gov/mainstreet/.

- **The Virginia Museum of Natural History:** www.vmnh.net. This institution in Martinsville uses exhibits, outreach programs, and publications to interpret the results of scientific research on our natural history and cultural heritage.

National Organizations Involved in Historic Preservation

- **National Park Service Cultural Resources Programs:**
<http://www.nps.gov/history/> Explore people, places, objects and events through NPS. .
- **Society for American Archaeology:** www.saa.org
Classroom materials are available from SAA's Public Education Committee.
- **Society for Historical Archaeology:** offers dozens of stories about the diversity of historical archaeology across North America.
<http://sha.org/unlockingthepast/>