The Virginia State Capitol

Capitol Square is a public park that changes with the seasons, the General Assembly Sessions, and the bustle of Richmond’s vigorous downtown. Beginning in January of each year, the Square pulses with activity as legislators from all parts of Virginia convene to conduct the business of the people. Throughout the year, visitors enjoy the magnificent grounds, walkways, monuments and magic of the historic Square. School children and tourists from around the globe use the Square as a starting point to visit downtown and statewide historical attractions.

Operating Hours
The Capitol building is open to visitors 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mon-Sat and Sundays from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Capitol Square is open to the public from 6:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. daily.

Tours
Free one-hour guided tours begin Monday through Saturday at 10:00 a.m. for walk-in visitors (9:00 a.m. for groups by appointment), with the last tour starting at 4:00 p.m. On Sunday, guided tours are available beginning at 1:00 p.m., with the last tour starting at 4:00 p.m. In addition, self-guided tours are available during operating hours each day.* Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Day.

Individuals and small groups are invited to tour the Capitol on their own or with a tour guide. Guided tours for groups of 10 or more may be arranged by calling Capitol Guides at (804) 698-1788.

The Capitol’s introductory film Keepers of the Flame is available for viewing on demand at http://virginiacapitol.gov/kotf.

Visitor Information
For more information about Capitol Square and about statewide historical attractions, visit the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation’s website at http://vabc.org or call 800-55-VA-HIST.

Executive Mansion
Home of Virginia’s Governor and First Family since 1813, the Executive Mansion is the oldest governor’s residence still used for its original purpose. Guided tours are available on a limited basis and vary according to the season. Call (804) 371-8447 for more information or to schedule a group tour.

*Times subject to change

It All Began in Virginia
American self-government began in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619, and it continues to thrive at the Capitol today. The Virginia General Assembly convenes here annually on the second Wednesday in January for 60 calendar days in even-numbered years; 45 days in odd-numbered years. Citizen-legislators represent the interests of over 8.5 million Virginians.

Forty State Senators are elected for four-year terms. The Lieutenant Governor is the President and presiding officer of the Senate. The Senate elects a senior member as President pro tempore and the Clerk, who serves at the pleasure of the Senate. The House of Delegates has 100 members, who are elected every two years. The Speaker of the House is elected from and by the membership, and the Clerk is elected by the membership, each for a two-year term.

“Whenever the people are well informed, they can be trusted with their own government.”
—Thomas Jefferson

For more information about Capitol Square over time please visit https://virginiacapitol.gov/capitol-square

(Map images: Copyright Richmond Times-Dispatch; used with permission. 1831 engraving of Capitol: Valentine Richmond History Center. All other images: The Library of Virginia. “This Capitol is a living landmark to American political ideals and a civic classroom for future citizens of the Commonwealth and the Nation.” A Visitor to the Capitol from France, 1796. 1788-1789. Visitor Guides, Capitol Guide and Office of the Attorney General.)

The Virginia State Capitol
1000 Bank Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
www.virginiacapitol.gov
(804) 698-1788

The Capitol
Built: 1858

Executive Mansion
Built: 1886-1894

Photography & Illustrations of Capitol and Interiors: Dick Kirkland, House of Delegates Clerk’s Office

Design & Illustrations of Capitol and Interiors: Dick Kirkland, House of Delegates Clerk’s Office

Map images: Copyright Richmond Times-Dispatch; used with permission. 1831 engraving of Capitol: Valentine Richmond History Center. All other images: The Library of Virginia

Richmond, Virginia 23219
A Home for Virginia’s General Assembly

The first session of the Virginia legislature took place in Jamestown in 1617. A year before the Jamestown settlement arrived in Plymouth, Massachusetts. The legislature met in churches, homes, a college, taverns and statehouses in Jamestown and Williamsburg for 160 years. In 1780 the capital was moved to Richmond. The General Assembly met in two frame warehouses at 17th and Cary Streets and appropriated funds to build a permanent home for the new seat of government. Lambskin was beginning in the new capital in 1783.

Jefferson’s Architectural Vision


What is a “Commonwealth”?

A “Commonwealth” is a government based on the consent of the people and guided by the rule of law. Virginia evolved from Royal Colony into a Commonwealth with a new written constitution in 1776. Massachusetts and Kentucky are also Commonwealths.

Notable Visitors to Capitol Square

Included among the hundreds of thousands of visitors to Capitol Square are many historic figures and notable personalities.


Andrew Jackson, Woodrow Wilson and Woodrow Wilson’s successors were expected at the capitol of Anne Burt in 1867. Chief Justice John Marshall presided.

The Menagerie of Lafayette, a novelty of the time, was made a full citizen of Virginia as a symbol of the Enthusiasm, sculptor, François-Joseph Duret, created the equestrian statue of George Washington.

President George Washington, Zachary Taylor, Millard Fillmore, James K. Polk, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, William Taft and Gerald Ford are some calling during their tenures of office.

Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler, Woodrow Wilson, Dwight Eisenhower and Bill Clinton received the Capital before or after their presidencies.

Other notable visitors include Charles Dickens, James A. Garfield, Lady Astor, Henry James, Frederick Douglass, Daniel Webster, Daniel Boone, Jefferson Davis, John-James Audubon, Muhammad, Margaret Thatcher, Vice President Al Gore and Queen Elizabeth II.

The Capitol Extension

The Capitol extension is a fact, Patrick Henry is commissioner. Three years later the General Assembly began meeting in the unfinished building, which was finally completed in 1796. The dome of the new Capitol is 408 feet high, and the lower level 55 feet high. The statue of George Washington is 25 feet high, and the statue of Patrick Henry is 23 feet high. The statue of General Washington is 20 feet high, and the statue of General Washington is 17 feet high. The statue of General Washington is 13 feet high, and the statue of General Washington is 11 feet high. The statue of General Washington is 9 feet high, and the statue of General Washington is 7 feet high. The statue of General Washington is 5 feet high, and the statue of General Washington is 3 feet high. The statue of General Washington is 1 foot high, and the statue of General Washington is 0 feet high. The statue of General Washington is 0 feet high, and the statue of General Washington is 0 feet high.

The Burning of Richmond

The capitol was burned in 1864 and the capitol city of the Confederacy is destroyed, citizens fleeing the fires along the James River and in Capitol Square as part of a series of battles. The Capitol and Executive Mansion received damage. President Abraham Lincoln would end the war, signed the day after the fall of Richmond. Lincoln would be assassinated 10 days later.

Creating Constitutions

The Capitol is an historic meeting place for amending and creating new constitutions. The United States Constitution was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1787, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1788, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1798, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1807, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1825, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1838, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1858, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1861, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1870, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1896, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1906, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1924, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1957, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1964, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1970, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 1982, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly. In 2007, the Constitution of Virginia was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly.

Virginia Civil Rights Memorial

The Virginia Civil Rights Memorial, a free-standing memorial, was inaugurated in 2009. It is a memorial to the victims of the Civil Rights Movement. The memorial is located in Capitol Square.

Virginia Indian Tribes

The Indian tribes who lived in Virginia for centuries were the Powhatan, the Algonquian, the Catawba, the Cherokee, the Iroquois, the Susquehannocks, the Nanticoke, the Quapaw, and the Cherokee. The Cherokee are the first tribe to be represented on the New York State Capitol building. The new state of the Cherokee was established in 1817. The Cherokee are the first tribe to be represented on the New York State Capitol building.

The Statue of Liberty

The Statue of Liberty was unveiled in 1886. It is a symbol of freedom and democracy.

The East and West Wings

The East and West Wings are part of the Capitol Complex. The East Wing is completed at a cost of $125,000.

The Capitol Restoration and Expansion Project

The Capitol Restoration and Expansion Project is completed at a cost of $104.5 million. Historic Capitol restoration is underway. The project was completed in 2007.