Exercises *and* Addresses *at the* Celebration *of the* 300th Anniversary *of the* First Law Making Body *on the* Western Hemisphere which convened at Jamestown July 30, 1619

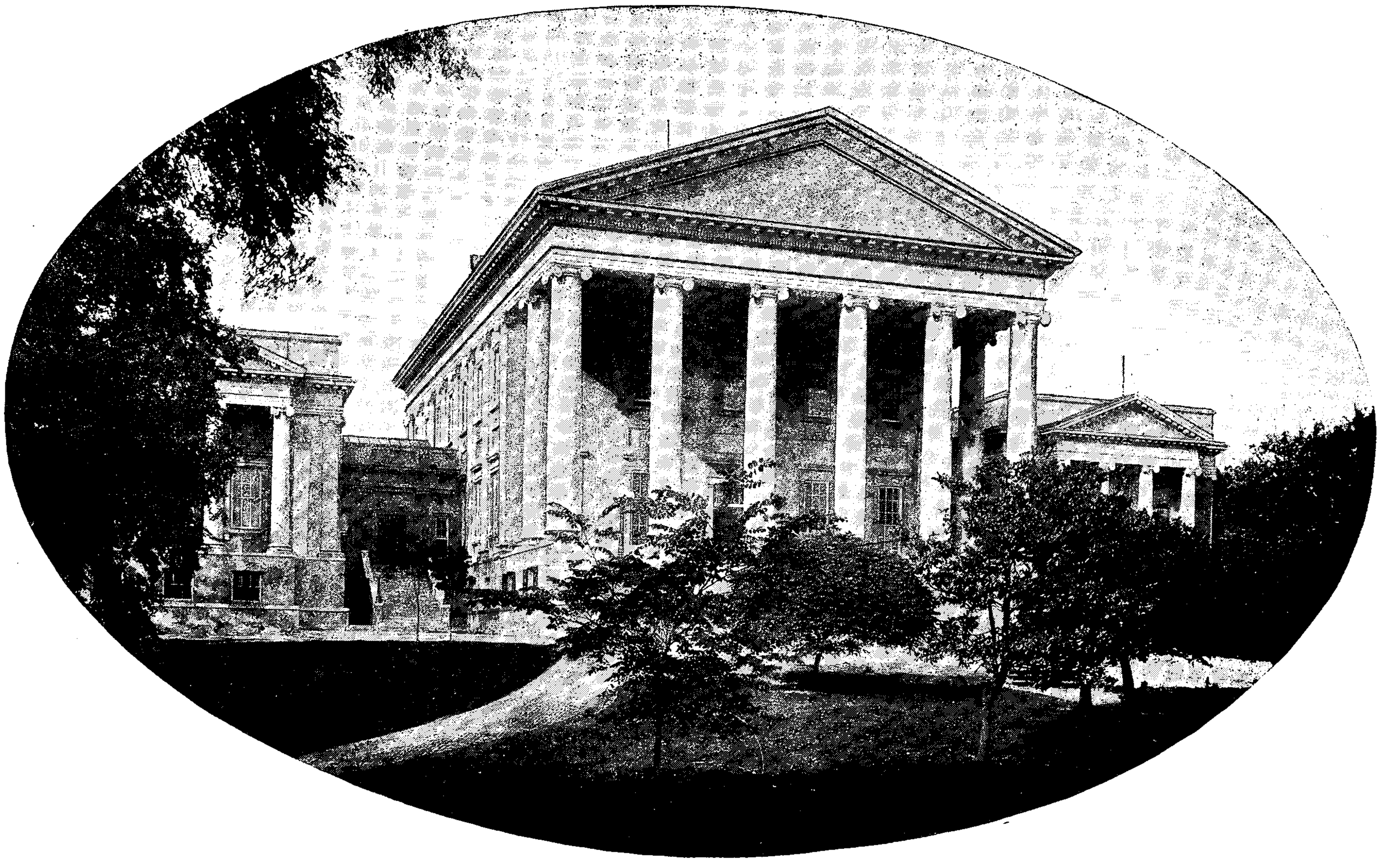
HOUSE OF DELEGATES, RICHMOND

AUGUST 15, 1919

JAMESTOWN
1619-1699

WILLIAMSBURG
1699-1780

RICHMOND
1780-1919



Capitol of Virginia

ORDER OF

EXERCISES AND ADDRESSES

AT THE

Celebration of the 300th Anniversary of the First Law Making Body on the Western Hemisphere

WHICH CONVENED AT JAMESTOWN

JULY 30, 1619

HOUSE OF DELEGATES, RICHMOND,

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JAMESTOWN
1619—1699

WILLIAMSBURG
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RICHMOND
1780—1919

ORDER OF EXERCISES

Senate and House of Delegates Convene at 11 A. M.

Joint Assembly Convenes at 11:15 A. M.

Joint Assembly receives—(a) Governor of Virginia.

(b) Dr. Thomas Nelson Page.

(c) Other Distinguished Guests.

Invocation.....REV. E. RUFFIN JONES
Rector of Bruton Parish

Presentation of Dr. John Leslie Hall.....HON. NORVELL L. HENLEY
of the House of Delegates

Address.....DR. JOHN LESLIE HALL
College of William and Mary

Presentation of the Governor of Virginia.....HON. HARRY R. HOUSTON
Speaker of the House of Delegates

Address.....HIS EXCELLENCY, WESTMORELAND DAVIS
Governor of Virginia

Presentation of Dr. Thos. Nelson Page.....HON. B. F. BUCHANAN
President of the Senate

Address.....DR. THOS. NELSON PAGE
of Virginia

Benediction.....REV. E. RUFFIN JONES

Reception by the Governor of Virginia to the General Assembly—9 *P. M*

COMMISSION

GOVERNOR WESTMORELAND DAVIS, CHAIRMAN.

W. W. BAKER, OF CHESTERFIELD.

JULIEN GUNN, FROM THE SENATE.

NORVELL L. HENLEY, FROM HOUSE OF DELEGATES.

INVOCATION

REV. E. RUFFIN JONES.

Lord, thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made, from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God, even our God. Our fathers trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them, yea, thou didst hear them what time they called upon thee. Thou didst show them the light of thy countenance and reveal to them the way in which they should walk, and thou givest them to know thy truth and to recognize thy hand in the affairs of men, and under thee to order their going in the way.

At this time our hearts rise in gratitude to thee as we remember how they assembled in thy name, in thy presence, and in thy house, and inspired by thee did recognize the divine birthright of man as the child of God—human dignity, private worth, individual responsibility, political equality—in the right of the people to govern themselves in thy sight; that thou didst give them the vision, and the wisdom, and the will to establish representative government upon the sacred soil of New America.

And upon this foundation thou hast built our nation and hast prospered our people. Still give us grace that we may look unto the rock whence we were hewn and to the hole of the pit whence we were digged. Make us true to the best traditions of the past. Keep our liberties inviolate, preserve the representative character of our government, and "for as much as men's affairs do little prosper when God's service is neglected," grant that the chosen delegates of thy people may in thy name continue to make laws, preserve peace, redress wrong, maintain right, and establish in every way, as much as in them lieth, that righteousness which exalteth a nation.

Especially do we invoke thy presence this morning. Make us deeply sensible of the occasion. Bring home to us its rich lessons, its solemn memories, and inspire us with its sacred traditions and bring us to nobler purpose and more exalted effort in thy name and for thy people. All which we ask in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and for the coming of His kingdom. Amen.

PRESENTATION OF DR. HALL

HON. NORVELL L. HENLEY.

Mr. Speaker, Fellow Members of the General Assembly of Virginia, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We are here for the purpose of celebrating the 300th anniversary of the meeting of this body on July 30, 1619, which was the first legislative body assembled on the Western Hemisphere.

Perhaps one of the most important, certainly one of the most lasting, things done by this body, almost in its infancy, was the act passed on October 10, 1693, providing for the erection of the College of William and Mary in Virginia, at Middle Plantation, later called Williamsburg.

This venerable institution, thus erected and established, has stood the test of time, and is still an important factor in the educational interests of this Commonwealth.

We are, indeed, fortunate in having with us on this occasion a distinguished citizen and scholar, who has won for himself fame and reputation, not only in this Commonwealth, but throughout the length and breadth of our country, and one who has given more than thirty years of his time and talent to the institution that he loves so well.

It, therefore, Mr. Chairman, affords me great pleasure to present to you Dr. John Leslie Hall, professor of English at the College of William and Mary, who has selected as his subject, "The Meeting Place of the First Virginia Assembly," and who will now address you.

THE MEETING PLACE OF THE FIRST VIRGINIA ASSEMBLY

DR. JOHN LESLIE HALL.

Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen of the General Assembly, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Colonial Dames, in their celebration of July 30, had the *date* of the First General Assembly. The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities on August 1st, at Jamestown, had the *place*. Your honorable body on this present occasion has the very presence of the Grand Assembly and of His Excellency, the Governor. All are felicitous occasions. The three together should prove to all reasonable minds that Virginia had the first permanent English settlement on this continent and the first law-making body that ever met on American soil. It may, however, take us several hundred years longer to win recognition in some other sections of our own country; for it is only a few days since one of our greatest Northern journals suggested, in an editorial, that King George might be persuaded to come as our national guest next year "when we celebrate the tercentenary of British settlement in America." A complete ignoring of Jamestown and 1607!

Massachusetts will bring all the world to Plymouth Rock in 1920. By that time, she may have heard some rumors of John Smith, Pocahontas, and 1607, and of our celebrations of 1619. All Virginians owe a debt of gratitude to the Colonial Dames, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, and the General Assembly of 1918, for celebrating the tercentenary of the First General Assembly of Virginia. This First American Congress met before "the Pilgrim Fathers" had sailed from Southampton, England, and the colonization of America by Englishmen was made at Jamestown thirteen years before Plymouth Rock was discovered and a year before Brewster and other fathers of New England went from England to Holland. If time permitted, we could prove from ancient records that "advancing the gospel in those remote parts of the world" was *only one* of several motives that led the New England colonists to migrate from Holland to America.

I am vain enough of my home to believe that I represent here today the most famous portion of our famous Commonwealth. I speak today for "The Cradle of the Republic"; the shrines of Jamestown; the tomb of Robert Hunt, "the true apostle of Virginia"; the tomb of Sir George Yeardley, who brought with him the Magna Charta of Virginia; the altar at which the Princess Pocahontas pledged her faith to John Rolfe, the Englishman; the church in which met the First Law-Making Body of America; the parapets of Yorktown and the place where Cornwallis surrendered his sword to Washington; the spot where the thundering tones of Henry cried, "Caesar had his Brutus"; the ancient college which gave us the Declaration of Independence and the Monroe Doctrine, and whose law professor trained John Marshall to interpret the Constitution. To some extent, also, I represent that noble band of women who are laboring

so indefatigably to preserve and to mark the antiquities of Virginia. Especially do I represent that immortal building in which the First Virginia Assembly met in 1619, and in six days enacted laws for a nation destined to teach England how to treat her colonies as children and to strike the decisive blow against the autocracy of the House of Hohenzollern. Yes, this little church is uppermost in my thoughts, my fellow citizens. It is our most precious building. It is our Acropolis, our Forum, and our Temple of Diana. It is our great Temple of Faith and our Temple of Justice. Will you ever again let it crumble into ruins? Shall it ever again become the habitation of the bat and the owl? Or will you Virginians preserve it as a sacred shrine for your unborn generations?

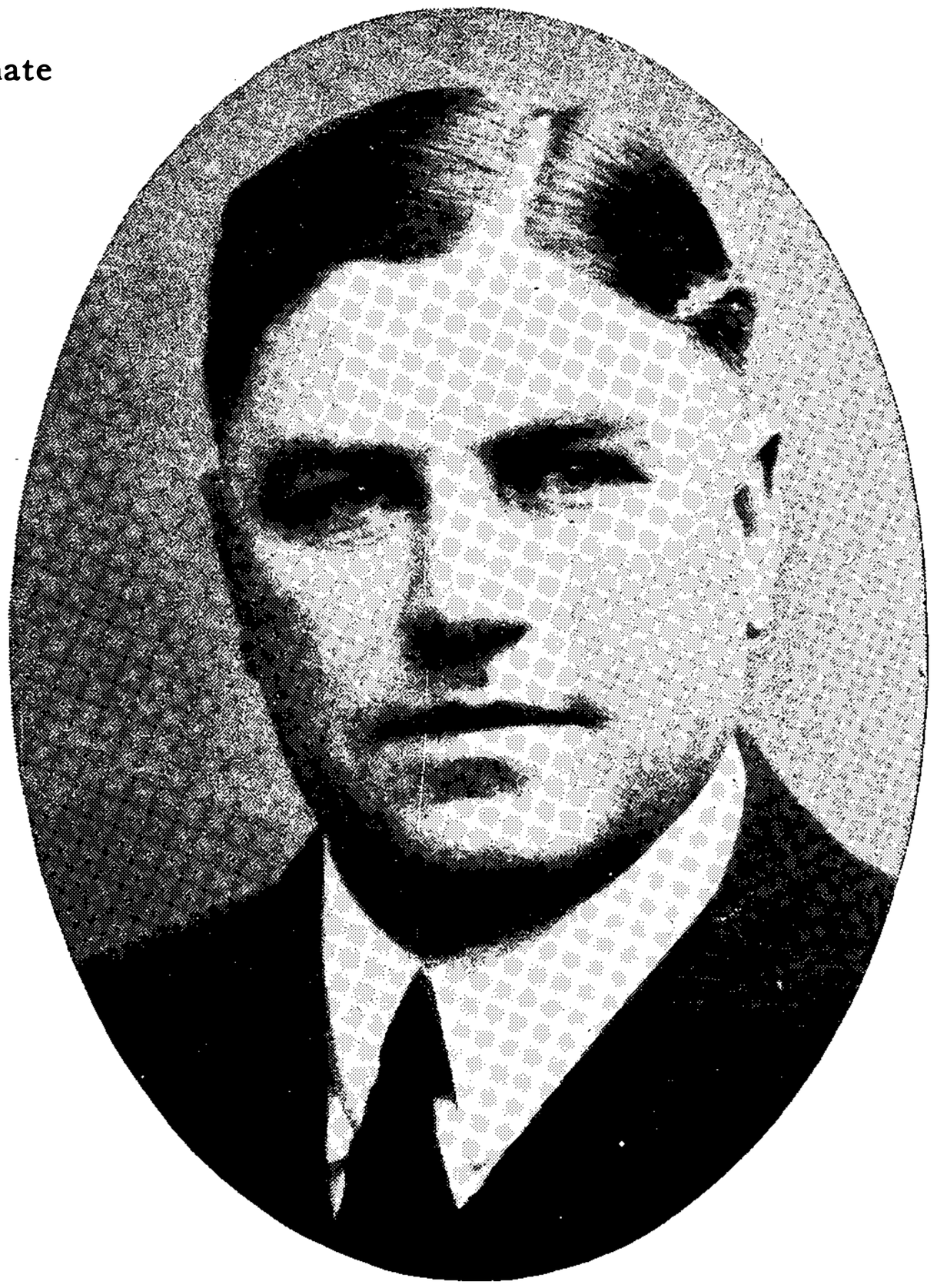
Your first meeting, gentlemen of the General Assembly, was held in the third church building. It was the first building on the present site of the Jamestown church. It was a wooden structure, "50 by 20 foote," as the old record puts it. The *Colonial Records of Virginia,* published by authority of your own Senate of 1874, declares in the clearest language that the Assembly of 1619 was held in this old church, but only historians now consult its musty pages. May I suggest that you take immediate steps to fill the press, the libraries of the country, with propaganda literature, reminding all of our sister commonwealths that Virginia, the eldest of the colonies, had become a permanent English settlement before Robinson, Brewster, and Bradford, had thought seriously of migrating to the New World, and had drafted a code of laws more democratic than Hampden ever dreamed of, before the Mayflower had turned her prow towards the continent of America?

It is an interesting fact that churches are famous in American history. The Old South Church in Boston dates from 1669, becoming famous about 1775; St. John's, Richmond, became famous in 1775; while the fame of the Jamestown churches dates from 1607 and 1619.

It was most fitting that the First Virginia Assembly should meet in the church; for, as we are told by one of our best historians, "among the first enactments of the legislature were those which concerned the church." They had the cause of religion in their minds. Their instructions, as I shall show you, were to fear God and spread His kingdom in the New World. Take this spot under your loving care forever. There met the first parliament of America. There your pious forefathers unrolled the Magna Charta of Virginia, while invoking the blessing of Divine Providence. If New England cherishes her Old South Church, shall we neglect our Jamestown church, the cradle of American legislation? It is now silent and deserted. No more does it re-echo the voice of the priest or of the statesman; only the dead are there; but James Blair speaks only from the tomb; Yeardley delivers no messages to the Grand Assembly. When great highways bring untold thousands of pilgrims to the sacred shrines of Virginia, shall they find our noble Marys and Marthas, the dear women of Virginia, standing by the tottering walls of the First Temple of America begging a pittance from the sneering Diveses of other sections? When Jamestown Island is turned into a national park, shall the old church bell hang silent in its tower?

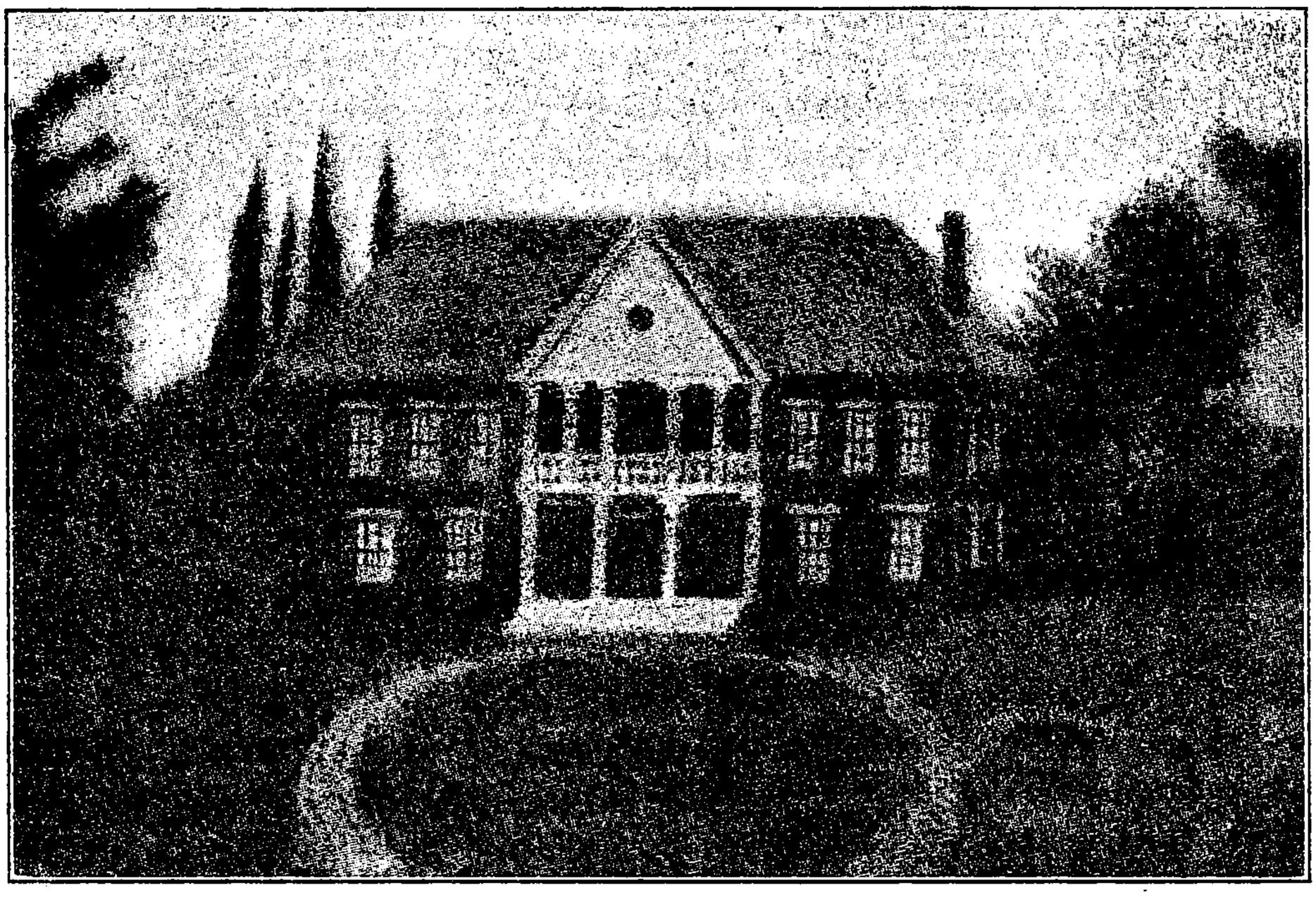
But some Puritan critic will say, "Why did your Virginia Assembly

B. F. Buchanan
President of the Senate



Harry R. Houston
Speaker of the House of Delegates

meet in a church? Certainly they were not men of piety. *We* had all the Christians in our country; the colonists of Virginia were mere butterflies of aristocracy." So say many of the histories. So says our own historian, warped by his Puritan sympathies. Let history answer. The Virginians were not all aristocrats; the New Englanders not all vestal virgins of holiness. As men of the same English stock, they both inherited the Anglo-Saxon tenacity for freedom, and the same Anglo-Saxon reverence for religion. "To worship God as I please" has been the battle-cry of Englishmen for untold generations. With the English race, freedom and religion are inseparably connected. All freedom with us is religious free-



The Capitol at Williamsburg As It Appeared About 1830.
From a painting owned by Mrs. Anne Munford, of Richmond, Va.
Reproduced from "Williamsburg, The Old Colonial Capital" by permission of the author, Lyon G. Tyler.

dom. With some races, religion means servitude; but with us Americans it means liberty. We look with horror upon those brief periods in our English past when men were persecuted for their religious opinions; to escape this persecution, our forefathers came to Jamestown and to Plymouth. With us Virginians, religion and government have always gone hand in hand. In our mother country, too, the church is but the state in its religious aspect. So in days of old. Moses was both the greatest lawgiver and the greatest religious legislator of the Old World; Jesus, of the new. If men would keep the second half of the decalogue, we might close our courts and turn our jails into factories. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," as enunciated by Jesus, is the divine slogan of democracy. Jesus was a democrat two thousand years ahead of His time; therefore the Jews crucified Him as an anarchist. True democracy is but religion translated into action; love is the truest democracy. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." We need no laws to make us care for wife and children.

This religion, our Virginia forefathers always respected and many of them practiced it. Many of the histories teach us otherwise. They represent the settlers of New England as all holy elders looking for a prayer-meeting, and the colonists of Virginia as fox-hunting squires, ready for a julep. The phrase, "Pilgrim Fathers," with its magic ring, its psychological fascination, has become standard; while we have tamely accepted for our fathers the colorless phrase, "Virginia colonists." This gives New England a great advantage. "A good name is better than great riches" is true in more senses than one. Juliet tells Romeo that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet; but she was talking poetry. Lord Bacon, "the wisest of mankind," says in prose, "Words exercise a reciprocal and reactionary power over our intellect." So the title "Pilgrim Fathers" has captured the imagination of all Americans. "Pilgrim" has a solemn, a religious connotation. It calls up reminiscences of literature; we think of the pilgrim,

"With naked foot and sackcloth vest,
And arms enfolded on his breast,"

seeking sacred shrines for purposes of devotion. Again we think of one or more of the sublimest passages in the English Bible. "Father," too, is redolent of holiness. It calls up sweet memories of home; reminds us of a classic scene in English literature, how "the priest-like father reads the sacred page"; reminds the devout churchman of the church fathers; and to many pious souls calls up the Holy Father, to them the vice-regent of Heaven. But "colonists!" What sweet memories cluster around that word? What sacred associations gather about that term? It has neither poetry nor piety to help it. Any man with an axe and a hammer can be a colonist. In Virginia history it smacks of oaths at so much a dozen for penalty. The New England genius for invention did not stop with the cotton gin; it invents phrases which make history and tune the poet's harp.

In spite of their name, the founders of Virginia *were* religious men; they should be called the patriarchs of the New World. The first words of King James I. to the London Company; the voice of the pious Hakluyt; the earliest acts of our Assembly—all prove that our pioneers in England and in Virginia were anxious to spread the Christian religion. For instance, King James, in his instructions to the London Company, says: "That the said presidents, councils, and the ministers, should provide that the true word and service of God be preached, planted, and used, not only in the said colonies, but also as much as might be among the savages bordering upon them." In the instructions of the company to the first supply of colonists in December, 1606, after the advice as to site and other material matters, we read: "Lastly, and chiefly, the way to prosper and achieve good success is to make yourselves all of one mind for the good of your country and your own, and to serve and fear God, the Giver of all goodness, for every plantation which our Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted out." Those instructions were probably written by the Reverend Richard Hakluyt, who came near being the first Anglican mis-

than a hundred years, the mother church of English America could offer no shelter to the way-worn pilgrim; only the dead could find rest. In 1907 the Colonial Dames restored the building. Shall it in turn be chipped by the vandal and the monuments of your fathers be carried off by travelers? Shall we hear no more the reverberating peals of holy bells calling us to prayer and worship?

Gentlemen of the Grand Assembly, and Your Excellency, on the 19th of September, 1676, Mr. Bacon set fire to our church. I need not tell you that he thought he was doing a service to the cause of Virginia. He said that William Berkeley should never again enter that sacred building. You know Mr. Bacon used very strong language, stronger than might bear repetition in this presence. Our fathers almost impoverished themselves to rebuild the church so dear to them. We children of Yeardley, of Pocahontas, and of other members of Master Hunt's and Master Bucke's congregations wish to relight the golden candlesticks of those apostles of Virginia. We need your sympathy and your assistance. We long to hear the songs of praise and thanksgiving, the penitential prayers and psalms as read by the holy Hunt and others, resound through those sacred precincts. We long for the sound of the bells that called our fathers to prayer and meditation. We believe that thousands of devout men and women would thrill with rapture if they could hear those holy bells pealing again from our venerable tower.

Let them roll, roll, roll,
Holy bells.
What a world of solemn thought their melody compels,
While our hearts are keeping time
In palpitating rhyme
To the throbbing of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells,
To the rolling and the tolling of the bells,
As they pour from out their golden throats
The story of the days of old when God's abounding grace
Was poured upon that holy spot and filled that holy place.

The women were first at the tomb of their Master. The men were slow to believe and slower of action. Is it so with us in our generation? Have we left our dear women to stand lone sentinels at the tomb of the prophets? Here they are today, the guardians of our shrines and meccas. They have reared monuments to the heroes of their girlhood. They have sent their sons to the front of the battle. Now they are standing, "like Niobe, all tears," watching our crumbling fanes and temples. Shall we make them beggars? Must they hold up supplicating hands to ignorant parvenus for farthings and pennies? Or will our mother State, in this new era of her prosperty, say, lovingly, to them, "Daughters of Virginia, why weep ye? Go in peace"? Burgesses of Virginia, I know your answer.

PRESENTATION OF THE GOVERNOR

HON. HARRY R. HOUSTON.

Governor Davis, Members of the Joint Assembly of Virginia,
Our Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Among all men there are days set apart to perpetuate the memory of great events.

The most barbarous and uncultivated hold in the devoutest reverence the glorious memories of the past and love to pay the homage of their adoration at the shrine of departed heroes.

To a reflecting mind, however, there could be no day more justly celebrated than this which we are now convened to honor.

We look upon those American patriots, who have just been described with such grace and eloquence, as not only possessed of those qualities which distinguish other heroes, not only as warriors and statesmen, but combining with these great virtues a true wisdom and nobleness of mind which dignify and exalt them far above the followers of Caesar and Napoleon.

More than this: we honor them as the ones to whom we owe the benefits of a free government, who not only defended their country's rights by the valor of their arms, but to whose wisdom, counsel and example as the directors of its infancy we are indebted for the peace and prosperity we have ever enjoyed.

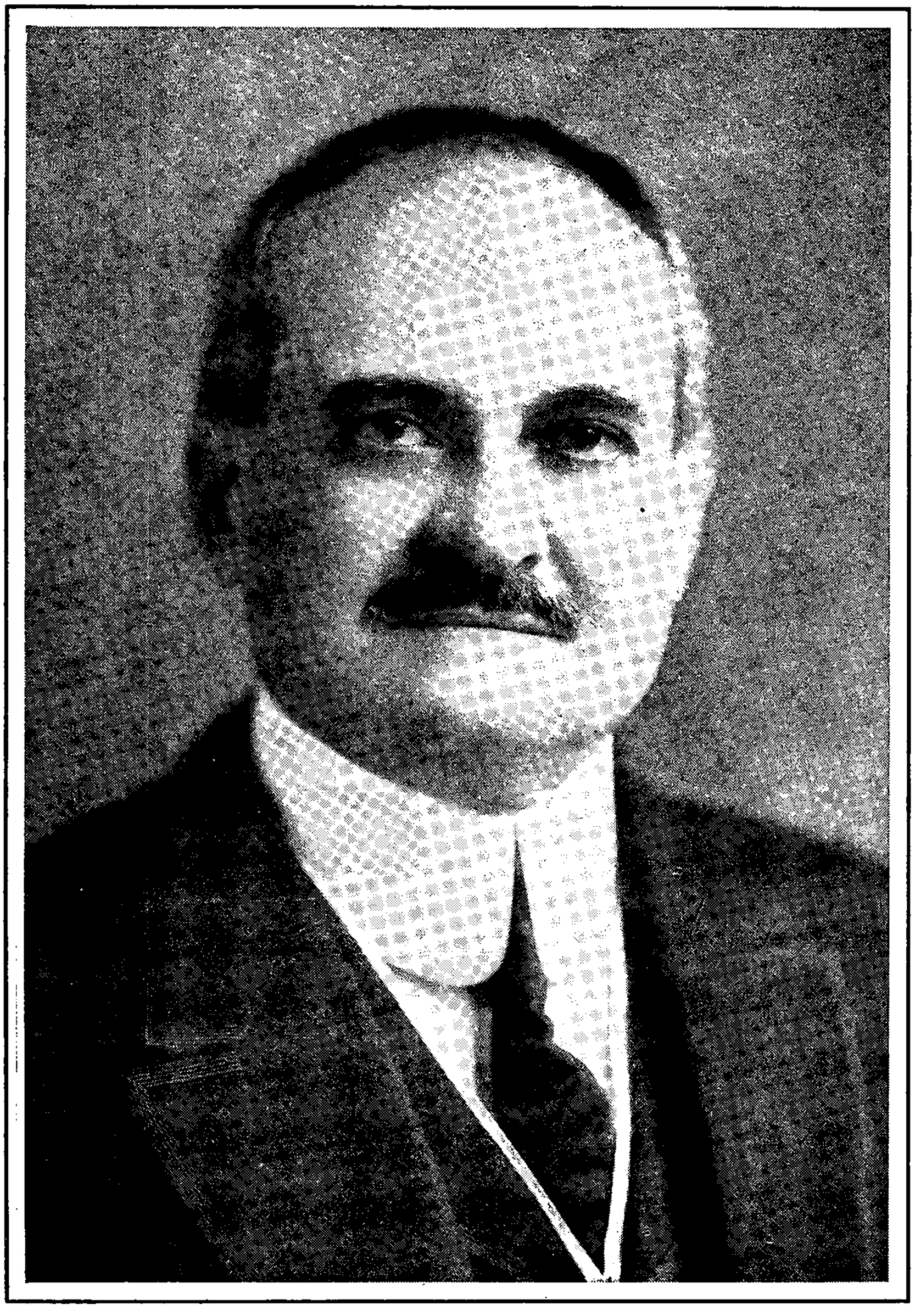
Surely there were never heroes like these! They were the creators of a nation. They first proved to mankind the capacity of man for self-government and are thus destined to be recognized as the reformers of the world! Today their spirits move in Europe and encourage the afflicted, impoverished and broken-hearted people of all those war-torn lands to stand forever against autocracy and tyranny and amid the thunders of this passing storm, the cry "Liberty" is heard hopefully while its aspirants look for sympathy and example to the land of the American patriots, the members of the first House of Burgesses of Virginia, where was first heard the voice of real freedom.

If, with the lamp of history, we look down the vista of the past and call in review the long line of patriots of this old Commonwealth, there is perhaps no particular class who have played a more acceptable and conspicuous part in the development of their State and country than those who have presided over the destinies of Virginia in the executive chair.

Beginning with him, whose impassioned cry, "Give me Liberty," rang around the world and fired the souls of his fellow countrymen to the defense of their rights, including also him who was the founder of public education in Virginia and high upon the Acropolis of human rights builded the citadel of Virginia liberties, and many others of splendid courage and ability down to their worthy successors in the memory of our own times, we have found among the chief executives of the Commonwealth of Virginia the ablest, the truest and the bravest of her sons.

It is my pleasure at this Three Hundredth Anniversay of the founding of the House of Burgesses, to introduce to you one of this distinguished line, who lives up to the best traditions of the Old Dominion and who exemplifies the highest ideals of our beloved State.

Gentlemen of the Joint Assembly and our guests, I have the honor of presenting to you at this time that distinguished son of Loudoun, His Excellency, the Honorable Westmoreland Davis, Governor of Virginia.



Westmoreland Davis
Governor of Virginia

ADDRESS OF GOV. WESTMORELAND DAVIS

Mr. Speaker, Gentlemen of the General Assembly, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I had not expected to have made an address today, although I appear upon the programme, because I had felt that I had only too recently addressed the General Assembly at length and that we had provided ourselves with a distinguished son of Virginia—an historian, a diplomat—who would speak to us of the lessons to be drawn from the meeting of that assembly at Jamestown which has grown famous throughout the world.

As Governor of Virginia, I always feel a spirit of pride and exultation when the great deeds of those who have gone before us are accounted, and I always love to join in the song of praise for those who have made possible in this country the great liberty which we enjoy. We frequently hear the causes of the Great War given. We are told that it was the sinking of the Lusitania. We are told that infractions of certain rights of ours required that we should punish the German government. But to my mind that conflict was inevitable from the time when the sturdy barons of England wrested from King John the Magna Charta; from the time when kings were forced to recognize that representation was necessary to taxation; from the time when that little assembly at Jamestown, receiving its commission from Yeardley, was advised that in the future it would have to do with its own affairs, there was a spirit of liberty and of progress throughout the land growing and thriving until at the end of all these years, in response to the call of humanity abroad and in aid of the salvation of the world, millions of our young men, whose breasts were filled with courage and of patriotism unsullied with lust of power, crossed the sea in the great battle that was inevitably to come in the world between autocracy and democracy. And that battle has come and has been won and I am not going to talk to you about those stories of valour of our soldiers and accomplishments by our statesmen that are now household words.

In that assembly, that little assembly in the church, with a few members of the Government there the thought of progress was dominant. They dreamed of universities; they talked of vital statistics and of the census; they looked to self-government for the future.

I am proud of Virginia and of her traditions, but I am proud of them only as they find expression in the future of equal accomplishment by our own people. I glory in the memories which stand for the past, but I look to the time when in the future the members of this General Assembly, aided by my humble efforts, will have accomplished for mankind and for our people something that may not be commemorated in stone or in brass, but will find its expression in the feeling and affection of a people for whom we have striven.

I am not going to keep you. I am going to tell you, however, that as you come here in this General Assembly, imbued, I say, with the spirit of Yeardley and the Burgesses who have gone before us, that we should remember that we are called in the spirit of co-operation and sympathy to build up this old Commonwealth.

I wish the members of the General Assembly to feel that I am anxious always to co-operate with them; that while I think for myself I do not insist upon thinking for them. I hope that we may henceforth be inspired by the spirit of this meeting and take it to our people.

Moved by the purpose of the gathering at Jamestown that we commemorate, we must improve all of our schools, especially the rural schools, and help the teachers of Virginia; we must build roads and improve rural conditions. Our spirit must be one of achievement, building the spiritual man upon the bettered material man. If we would maintain our institutions we must educate our people to understand and appreciate what these institutions mean to us and we must improve their environment, giving practical illustration of what our government means to our people. These truths are fundamental. Our people must feel that there is one law in the land and that the strong as well as the weak must obey. At this time when our people are in distress because the prices of the necessities of life are fast passing beyond the power of those not blessed with riches to possess them, we must be brave enough to legislate for the protection of the weak that they be not preyed upon by the strong.

Something has been said here of the pretentions of New England in the matter of the early settlement of this country. I have no quarrel with her. My chief concern is not who landed here first, but who has best used the opportunities that God has given a free people in a free country. Having drunk at the fountain of liberty, and with the inspiration of the ideals of Yeardley, it becomes interesting only to know how we, as compared with New England, have executed the trusts that these people three hundred years ago, coming with the message of liberty, have brought to us.

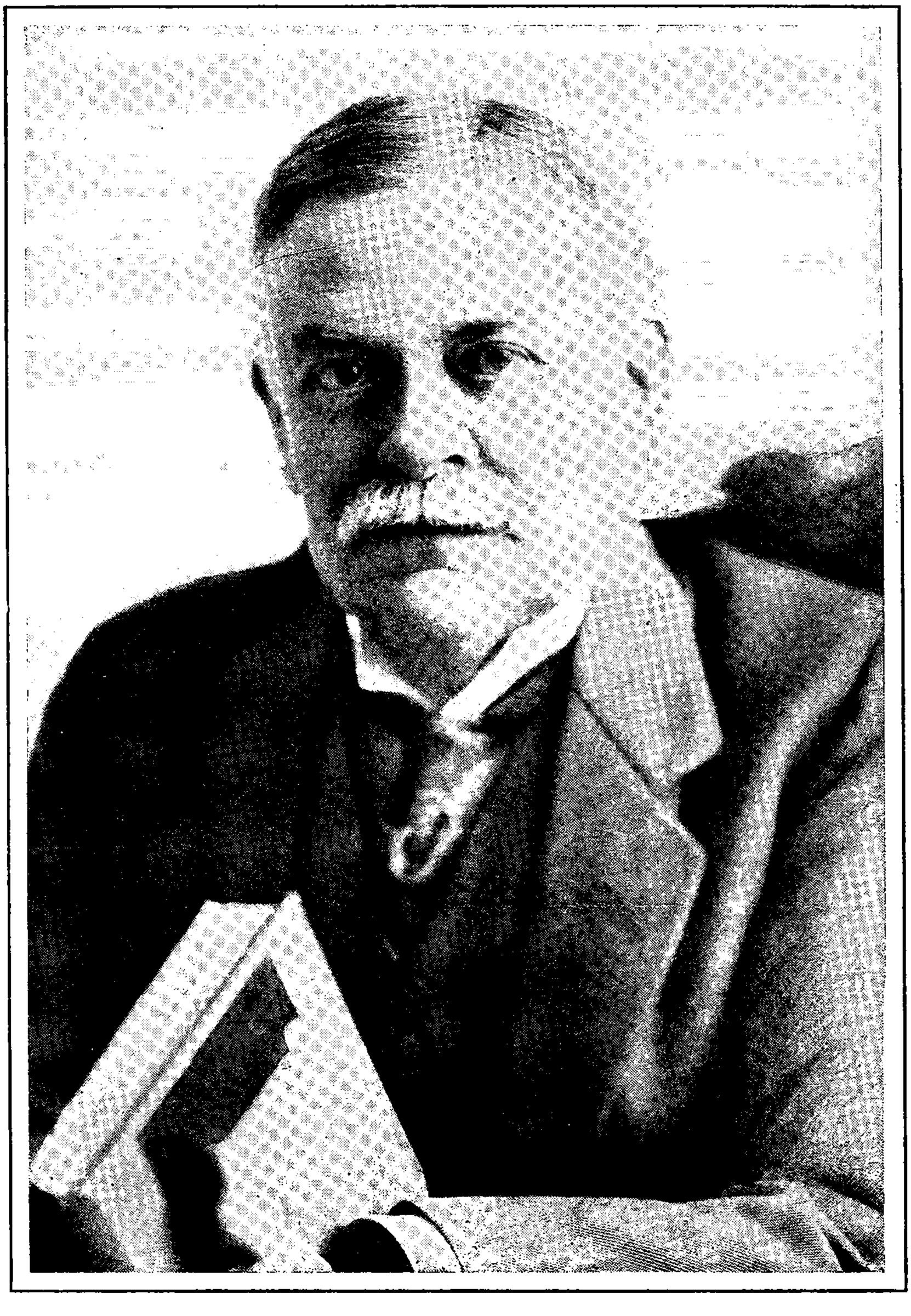
Just one word. I am deeply sensible of the honor that has come to me as Governor of this great Commonwealth. I am impressed beyond measure with its history, its traditions, and the character of the great men who made her name illustrious, and it is my purpose in my humble way, as best I may, to emulate their example, for one thought has actuated from the beginning her distinguished sons and her people, and that has been with loyal and true hearts, as devoted Virginians, to preserve sacred the honor and to secure the progress of this great Commonwealth. May this thought always possess us!

From the date of this assembly 300 years ago Virginia has maintained in some form a representative government and has always asserted the right of the people to rule. She has not only asserted this right, but her sons have been willing to fight and to die for it. It is and has ever been with her a passion. It is the spirit of Virginia, and by reason of this spirit she has been called upon to assume leadership in every great epochal event in this country's history.

In 1776, her Washington led the patriot band to victory and established this republic. In 1812 her Madison was commander in chief of the Army and Navy that established the right of America to the freedom of the seas. In 1845 her Scott and Taylor dictated the terms of a victorious peace in the halls of the Montezumas. In 1861-65 her sainted Jackson and immortal Lee led as patriotic a band of soldiery as ever bared its breast in defense of a principle, a soldiery that fought with a valor unsurpassed in the world's history and with a courage and devotion which would have been impossible if they had not believed their cause just. It was a lost cause, it is true, but a cause for which no head has ever bowed in shame. In 1917-18 it was the leadership of Woodrow Wilson, Virginia born and Virginia educated, that rescued a frenzied war-maddened world from anarchy and choas and preserved her liberties.

This proud heritage, Virginia, is ours, ours to hold and ours to cherish. No other Commonwealth can claim it and it is the offspring of the event which we celebrate today. It is an event worthy of our commemoration and its story should be told by one well fitted for the purpose. It has been made my pleasant duty to present to you such a man, a Virginian bred in the bone, distinguished as author, diplomat and historian, qualified by birth and inheritance, by education and training, and more than all by a loving and filial devotion, to speak for his mother State, of her traditions, her achievments and her magnificent history.

I take pleasure in presenting, for he needs no introduction to a Virginia audience, Ambassador Thomas Nelson Page, who will make the principal address of the day.



Thomas Nelson Page

ADDRESS OF DR. THOMAS NELSON PAGE

In the presence of this Assembly one may well feel that it is good to be a Virginian. And as we look back along the track, now shining, now obscure, which marks the progress of civilization from the great occasion whose three hundredth aniversary we are now celebrating in this honored and historic Capitol, the hearts of all of Virginia's sons must swell with pride to reflect how much Virginia has contributed thereto.

Events, however important they may appear in passing, lack the perspective requisite to give them their true relation to other events. It is only where the march of history has stretched sufficiently to give us a wide horizon that we can judge their just relation to its complete progress. There has been enough in the twelve years experience of the Virginia Colony, with its trials and its errors; its heroic sacrifices; its failures and its providential deliverances, to convey some idea to those few deputies of the Virginia Colonists, summoned to Jamestown by Governor Yeardley in 1619, of the importance of that assembly of Virginian representatives. But their view must have been limited, indeed, beside ours who know the whole course which stretched from that first assembly of representatives in the western world, on through three hundred years of struggle for liberty, down to the time when their descendants on the historic battle-fields of Europe but a year ago bared their breasts as the final barrier against the steadily advancing forces of the Imperial Tyranny that strove to destroy human liberty forever.

We, who know something of the history of Virginia, can now judge in what measure the Old Dominion has contributed in this long struggle to the ultimate victory which we trust is to establish finally the fruits of the efforts and the sacrifices which have won it at so precious a price.

Unhappily for us, the Virginians were given to contenting themselves with high performance, without troubling themselves to see that their history was transmitted either to the contemporary outside world or to posterity. "It was a grievous fault." It was simply throwing away the title-deeds to our birthright. Self satisfied—too well satisfied—we wrapped ourselves in our reserve and refused to appeal in any way to the outside world. But the outer world is the judge when it comes to standing at the bar of history. And its public opinion is the atmosphere in which light grows luminous.

The summer home from which I have come at your gracious invitation is on a coast which in old maps was laid down as "Northern Virginia." It looks across a few miles of blue water on a line of small islands which were named "Smith's Islands" and which bear a monument, visible on clear days, erected to John Smith, the same doughty captain who was ere while the renowned Governor of Virginia, and whose great work still survives in the hearts of the people of this ancient Commonwealth—Mother of States and of statesmen. If, with swelling heart, I shall speak on this occasion of that old Virginia, or of that larger Virginia, whose first charters guaranteed to her the privileges and rights of freeborn Englishmen; whose confines stretched "to the farthest seas;" of that greater Virginia whose sons, ever enlarging her charters, gave her

spirit to the American Republic, as its most precious heritage, and have but now spoken to the democracies of the world through the battle cry of the American armies, I trust you will believe that I am not unmindful of this present and ancient Commonwealth, which is the heart and soul of it all and which, I have, as her devoted son, come to celebrate with you here today on this honored and sacred spot.

Small and insignificant as it may have appeared at the time and even later to the outside world, that little Assembly of Burgesses, as they were termed, gathered together from the western frontier of the world, with what destiny of liberty for humanity was it fraught? Who could have then foretold what its influence would be on the future progress of civilization, in Virginia, in the New World, in the Old World, throughout the World! Liberty took a step forward that day unsurpassed in any single day of the history of progress. Jealous of every right conceded to them in the charters granted to the first lord and Governor, the settlers in Virginia had already in 1612, while that lord and first Governor was a prisoner in the Tower of London, petitioned for and as far as they might, demanded enlarged rights and more secure guaranties from their rulers in the mother country. And now their new Governor and old friend, Sir George Yeardley, had brought them a guaranty for greater than either he or they knew, the right to meet in General Assembly through their representatives and legislate for themselves, the right to levy taxes on themselves and be free from all others, the inestimable concession of the right of self-government. Like the Genii's gift of the Arabian tale, it was a tent so small that it might be compressed and concealed in the palm of the hand, but it might be expanded to cover an army. No wonder the Spanish Ambassador warned James that those Virginia people were "a school for a seditious Parliament!"

So, they were summoned duly by writs and assembled at Jamestown, twenty-two representatives from eleven Burroughs, on July 30, 1619, one or two more than a score of frontiersmen meeting in a raw. crude, frontier village on the edge of a vast wilderness, to legislate about the affairs of the fifteen-year old colony. But the principles applied by them were those on which liberty for mankind has been founded.

The eleven Burroughs were, James City; Charles City; the City of Henricus; Martin Brandon; Martin's Hundred; Lawne's Plantation; Ward's Plantation; Argall's Gift; Fleuerdieu Hundred, Smith's Hundred, and Kecoughtan. Smith's Hundred named after the treasurer, Sir Thomas Smith, soon afterwards became "Southampton Hundred;" and Kecoughtan became Hampton, both names referring to Shakespeare's friend.

The functions of the new General Assembly were legislative, and to some extent, also judicial. It possessed full power of legislation for the Colony, and although its acts to become valid required to be approved by the General Court of the London Company; on the other hand, in the sequel, no enactments of the Company for the Colony acquired validity until approved by the General Assembly.

And here, a word of the Royal Governor, of whom too little has been made in our histories.

Virginia's real progress as a State may be said to have begun with Yeardley's administration. Before Yeardley's time there was but one plow in Virginia. Before Yeardley's time the Colony was subject to the despotic government of the Governor appointed in England, as all colonies of all countries had been from time immemorial. Sir George Yeardley was several times Governor of Virginia, and between his first term in 1616, when he became the acting governor, and his death in 1627, Virginia grew under his zealous fostering care from a straggling and struggling colony, subject to martial law, and barely able to maintain itself on the edge of the perilous waterways, to a thriving colony with a steadily extending frontier and increasing population; with agriculture developing and commerce beginning; with a university projected and a General Assembly established and working on principles which not only laid deep the foundations for liberty in America; but was influencing strongly the progress of liberty in the mother country.

If under the high patronage of men like Southampton and Cavendish and the provident and unflagging zeal of Sir Thomas Smith, Edwyn Sandys, and Nicholas Ferrar, Virginia expanded from that precarious existence between the sea and the forest to a land that had begun to flow with milk and honey, let us not forget that earnest, zealous, liberal-minded Governor who, sprung from a merchant's family, gave his life to building up Virginia on the permanent foundations of self-government.

The Assembly, called together by drum-beats an hour after sunrise, was held in the little wooden church, a fitting place for so pious a labor, the Royal Governor and the Council sitting in the choir, the Governor in a green velvet chair, and the Burgesses in the pews; and, of course, the session was opened with prayers. It is a procedure which lasted on through the years. And may it ever continue! In those days, indeed, attendance on prayers was obligatory and absence was punishable with a fine of a shilling, while absence from duty all day was punishable with a fine of half a crown. Thus started, under the invocation of the protection of God, we know with what affairs they were occupied. The credentials verified; the House duly organized and the address delivered, they proceeded to business. Questions of the internal and external policy of the Colony were before them and were dealt with boldly. Happily, amid the well-nigh general negligence of our people touching the preservation of records, there were shining exceptions, and we have in the collection of "Hening's Statutes at Large," and of some few other pious collectors, records of the matters dealt with in this and succeeding assemblies.

All were in full dress, starched cuffs and silk or velvet coats; gold braid, etc. In fact, so highly was this parade and pomp esteemed that only two years later a statute was passed making the wearing of gold-braid unlawful by any save the Governor, Council, and other high officials. The Burgesses sat with hats on, a token of high privilege, as continues down to today in the British House of Commons, though the practice is falling somewhat into desuetude.

Among the rights which the Virginians esteemed, and justly, the most precious was the right of exemption from all taxation save as it

might be levied by their representatives, that is, by themselves. This was a power greater than the crown, greater than the sword. The crown and the sword were held in check by it and this they cherished and fought for down to its smallest fraction; for it underlay all the rest of their liberties. It had been wrested from the Crown in England and had become an established right of the English people as far back as the time of Edward I. And the Virginia charter had conceded it among the rights of freeborn Englishmen to the Colony. And now the Virginians had their "Parliament" in their General Assembly, and among their earliest measures was their assertion of this great right.

As early as 1623 the General Assembly enacted that "The Governor shall not lay any taxes or ympositions upon the Colony, their lands or commodities, other way than by the authority of the General Assembly to be leveyed and employed as the said Assembly shall appoynt."

A little later (in 1631) they re-enacted this law, adding now the Council in the prohibition. For the Council, though Virginians, were appointed by the crown and represented a privileged class, while the Burgesses represented the people of Virginia. And again and again they reasserted this right to be the sole power authorized to "lay any taxes or ympositions." We find the assertion of this right re-enacted in 1632; in 1642; in 1651, when they provided against Cromwell's Commissioners "that Virginia shall be free from all taxes, customs, and ympositions whatsoever and none to be imposed on them without consent of the General Assembly."

And so, on down through the years, the successors of these free Burgesses asserted and defended their liberties against Governors, and Kings, and Parliaments. Against Governor Berkeley (in 1666) as against King George (in 1765) they stoutly withstood all aggression, and for their own liberties and those of their descendants, established the inestimable principle that, "The General Assembly of this Colony have the sole right and power to lay taxes and ympositions upon the inhabitants of this Colony; and that every attempt to vest such power in any person or persons whatsoever other than the General Assembly aforesaid has a manifest tendency to destroy British as well as American Freedom." This was a part of the famous "Resolves" offered and voted in the then capital of Virginia, Williamsburg, when King George III, and his Parliaments, little recking of the Virginia spirit, attempted to levy a stamp tax on the people of the Colonies without the consent of the people of the Colonies.

And here it should be said that possibly the greatest contribution which our race has contributed to the world is the right of self-government through representatives of the people. All other forms of government, including absolute Democracy, had been tried and had failed; this only, the right to be governed by their representatives, chosen by themselves and answerable to them, had never been fully tried till our forefathers established it. So long as this endures, with its kindred rights, such as trial by a jury of the vicinage; freedom of speech and of the press; so long liberty is safe. It may in times of stress be shaken; but it cannot be destroyed.

From steps towards the establishment of a far-reaching educational institution the laws extended to the prevention of forestalling, or "profiteering," as we say.

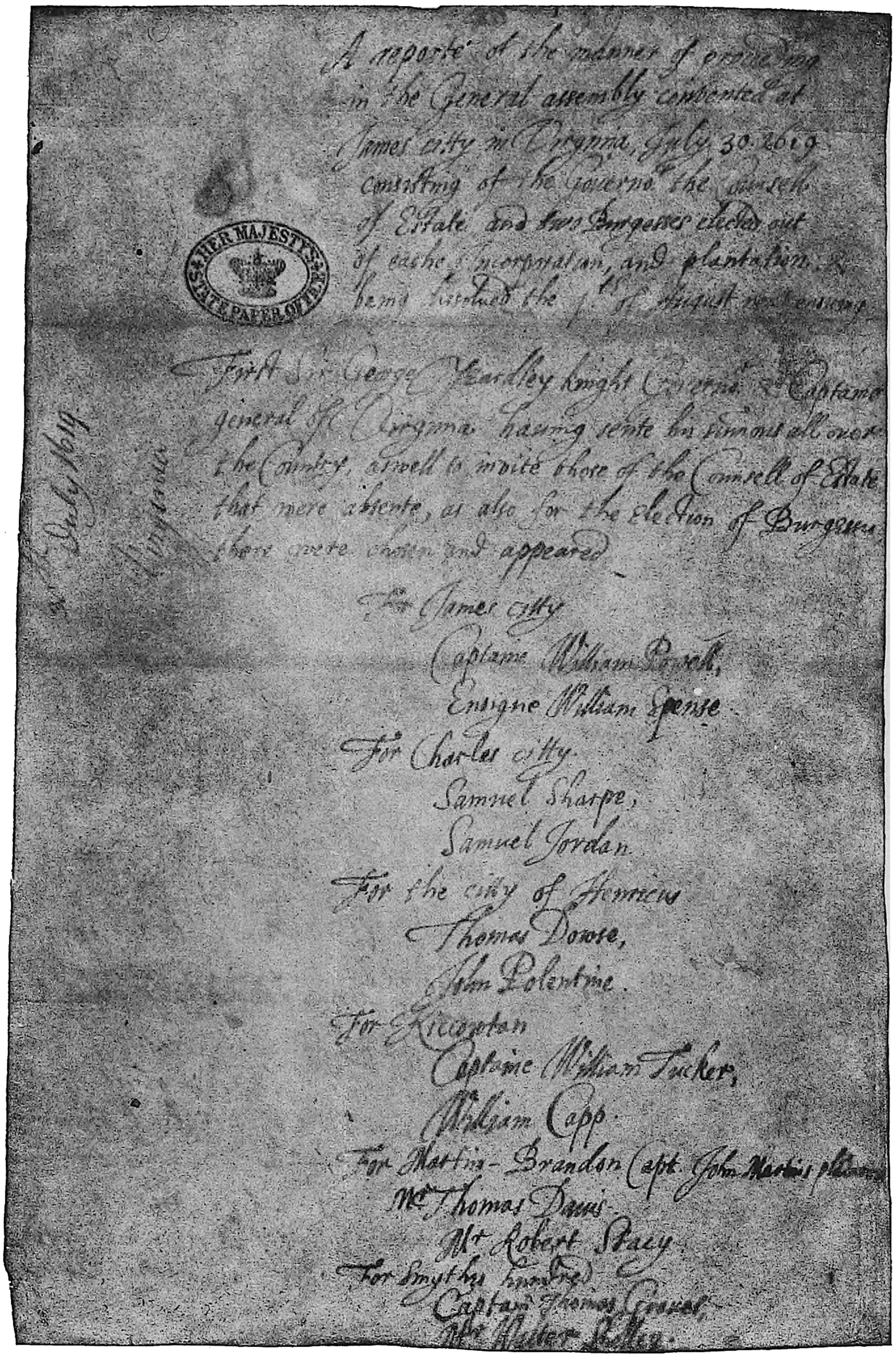
But they also went, like our modern legislatures, into other matters more private and personal. They provided stringently against, if not the use, at least the abuse of liquor, prescribing definite penalties; from private admonition by the minister, on to public rebukes; imprisonment in irons and, finally, severe "punishment at the discretion of the Governor and Council." I wonder if our modern Burgesses have improved on this legislation?

But as they were entering on the way of moral reformation they did not flinch from pressing their protection of the public interest further. It was therefore provided early in the history of the Colony that, "Every minister should give notice in his church that what man or woman soever should use any word or speech tending to contract of marriage to two several persons at one time, as might entangle or breed scruples in their consciences, should for such their offense undergo corporal correction, or be punished by fine or otherwise according to the quality of the person so offending." Cooke, as I recall it, cites an instance of a violation of the law with its due reward. It is possibly one of the evidences of the progress of the spirit of, shall we say, liberty, that later on, some of the old laws appear to have had a tendency to fall into abeyance. I shudder to think what would have been the result in the capital of the Old Dominion at a later day had it not been so.

But as the parson was selected as one of the moral instruments to call with authority men from the error of their ways, he was on the one hand protected by a provision which enacted that "No man shall disparage a minister whereby the minds of his parishioners may be alienated from him and his ministerie prove less effectual, upon payne of severe censures of the Governor and Council." (Hening, Vol. I. 156.) On the other hand, there was a sort of counter-balancing provision regarding the clergy, which might to evil minds bear an inflexence of practical application. It runs: "Ministers shall not give themselves to excess in drinking and ryott, spending their time idlie by day or night, playing at dice, cards, or any other unlawful game; but at all times convenient they shall hear or read somewhat of the Holy Scriptures or shall occupy themselves with some other honest studies or exercise, always doing the things which shall appertayne to honestie and endeavor to profit the church of God; having always in mind that they ought to excel all others in puritie of life, should be examples to the people to live well and Christian like." (Hening's Statutes at Large, Vol. I, 158, 183.) I am glad that they got one in on the clergy, with their power of public admonition, those pious Burgesses.

Also they were occupied in questions of how to increase revenues, the perennial question, whether we figure it in thousands as they did or in billions as we do now.

Besides these, there were the questions of defense against foes by land and by sea; for they lived in daily and hourly imminent peril from dangers both from the sea and from the land. And only three years



Fac-Simile of First Page of Journal of House of Burgesses.
By Courtesy of the United States History Co. From
"Avery's History of the United States
and Its People."

George Yeardley

afterwards this latter peril was to oversweep the Colony and by a stroke well-nigh destroy it root and branch, cutting off some of these very representatives. With questions also, were they occupied, of privilege and right under their charters, of the preservation and even the extension of their liberties; with other kindred questions.

It was doubtless all apparently trivial and insignificant enough in the eyes of Europe; for what could these widely scattered settlements amid the forests and swamps of Virginia amount to? Who cared anything about Sir George Yeardley and the Virginia Assembly? Even the Royal Governor was accorded scarcely a half dozen lines in our former histories and the assembly was mainly disposed of in a paragraph. Even more than a hundred years later the British Solicitor General had the insolence to say to the commissary of William and Mary College, who was arguing in favor of aiding Virginia educationally and morally, "Damn their souls! Raise tobacco." It expressed the whole attitude of the old country to the new. And yet, from this grain of seed hidden in the Virginia soil has sprung through the years a plant so great that the peoples lodge under its branches and the nations find shelter in its shade.

Let us have the contemporary account of the Assembly as it was reported to England.*

"The most convenient place we could find to sett in, was the Quire of the Church, where Sir George Yeardley, the Governor, being set down in his accustomed place, those of the Counsel of Estate sate nexte to him on both handes, except only the Secretary, then appointed speaker whc sate right before him; John Twine, Clerk of the General Assembly, being placed next the speaker, and Thomas Pierse, the Sargeant, standing at the barre to be ready for any service the Assembly shoulde command him. But foreasmuch as men's affaires do little prosper where God's service is neglected, all the Burgesses tooke their places in the Quire till a prayer was said by Mr. Bucke, the minister, that it would please God to guide and sanctify all our proceedings to His Glory, and the good of this plantation. Prayer being ended, to the intent that as we had begun at God Almighty, so we might proceed with as ful and due respect towards the Lieutenant, our most gracious and dread Soverigne, all the Burgesses were entreated to retyre themselves into the body of the church, which being done, before they were freely admitted, they were called to order and by name, and so every man (none staggering at it), took the oathe of supremacy and then entered the Assembly."

You know what this oath of supremacy was: It was a sort of spiritual Monroe Doctrine for the English and American people.

And now let us call the roll, "by name," as was done on that occasion three hundred years ago, with Sir George Yeardley, the Governor, in his green velvet chair in the "quire," "in his accustomed place," "with the Counsel of Estate nexte him on both handes, except only the Secretary, John Pory, then appointed speaker, who sate right before him; John Twine, Clerk of the General Assembly next the speaker and Thomas Pierse, the Sargeant, standing at the barre ready for any service the Assembly shoulde command him."

*(Quoted from Wm. Wirt Henry's Paper on the first Legislative Assembly in American Magazine of American History Association. 1594.)

The "Counsel of Estate" seated on either hand of the Governor were all gentlemen and mostly scholars. They were Captain Francis West, son of Sir Thomas West, Second Lord De La Warr, and had held high office in the Colony including the command at the falls of James river; Captain Nathaniel Powell, who had accompanied Newport in his exploration of the Virginia waters. He and his wife perished March 22, 1620, in the great Indian massacre. John Rolph came to Virginia with Governor Gates and he needs no introduction to this Assembly in which are so many of his descendants. The Rev. William Wickham, one of the pious clergy, whose lives and teaching honored our early history. Captain Samuel Maycock, scholar and gentleman, who, like Captain Powell, perished later in the Indian massacre. John Pory, the secretary, now holding the new dignity of speaker.

And now we come to the Burgesses, representatives of those Boroughs or Burghs of Defense situated along the margins of the Virginia rivers; but constituting the first fortress of the rights of all Americans from that time forward.

Captain William Powell and Ensign Spence sat for James City. Samuel Sharp and Samuel Jordon, of "Jordon's Journey," sat for Charles City. It was the latter's widow, Mistress Cicely Jordon, who in 1623 used with the Rev. Greville Pooley and Mr. William Farrar, two several persons, "such words or speech tending to a contract of marriage at one time as might entangle or breed scruples in their consciences," that the matter was brought before the Council and, having been found too knotty for them, was actually referred to the Council in London.

Thomas Dawse and John Palentine sat for the City of Henricus. where the University was projected. Captain William Tucker and William Capp represented Kecoughtan. Captain Thomas Graves and Walter Kelley sat for Smith's Hundred. Later the former sat for Accomack. The latter died three days after he had taken his seat in this first House of Burgesses.

John Boys and John Jackson sat for Martin's Hundred. Captain Thomas Pawlett and Mr. Gourgainy sat for Argall's Guifte. Ensign Rossingham and Mr. Jefferson represented Fleuerdieu Hundred. Captain Christopher Lawne and Ensign Washer represented Lawne's Plantation, afterwards the Isle of Wight. Captain Warde and Lieutenant Gibbes sat for Warde's Plantation. Thomas Davis and Robert Stacy represented Martin's Plantation, but later were unseated on Captain Martin's refusal to surrender his privilege of exemption from the Virginia laws save in time of war.

Such is the roll of the first membership of this historic Assembly, whose acts formed a link in the golden, unbroken chain of Virginia's self-government and struggle for liberty. They were nearly all men of education, nearly all gentlemen, and all were men of action. Their names may not for the most part still survive in Virginia; but if their names have passed away, their work still survives to bless their descendants and the descendants of their successors throughout this broad land.

So great was the effect of this work of the Virginians in the mother country that the fool pedant, King James already scared into believing that the Colony was "a school of sedition," attempted under the instiga-

tion of Spain to suppress the charters of the Virginia Company and, indeed, succeeded for a time; but they were wrung again from his ill-fated successor and, as ever in such struggles, were more highly prized than before. Nothing in all our history is more notable than the courage and tenacity with which the responsible heads of the Virginia Company, braving the tyrannous decision of the Crown labored night and day and finally saved the records on which depended the continuity, if not the existence, of the Colony's liberties.

A little more than a year from the assembling of this first legislature another colony reached Virginia and established a permanent settlement. Headed for these shores it was driven by the winds and by fate to the shores of Northern Virginia, and, settled on that "stern and rock-bound coast," it developed along lines rather resembling pure Democracy, with a strong theocratic tinge. If much more has been made of this latter colony than of that which preceded it and had already rooted representative government in America; it is our own fault. Why should we complain of them for magnifying themselves. The facts are here at hand. Let us apply ourselves to setting them before the world, rather than to railing against those who, more industrious than ourselves, relate only what they know and know little of that which we are celebrating.

It might prove an interesting study for those who have time to give to it to ascertain how far the Puritan Fathers were influenced in their decisions by the establishment in the Old Dominion of this representative Legislative Assembly, which we celebrate today.

That it exercised an influence on these seekers after freedom cannot be doubted. We have already seen how the Massachusetts Bay Colony some years later set up a Legislative Assembly, evidently copying the Virginia General Assembly. However, in their religious nonconforming fervor they may have given the lead in all discussion and in all records to this phase of religious freedom, their knowledge of Virginia was what headed the Mayflower and the Anne for these shores and their action in drawing up their Pact on the Mayflower places the effect of this Assembly beyond the range of conjecture.

In this same year, 1619, according to the records, two other events took place which with their consequences in the sequel had an effect on the progress of Virgina's political and economic development. The first was the importation of a cargo of "certaine chaste widows and maids" as wives for the Virginians. The other was the bringing to Virginia of the first cargo of African slaves by Argall's Privateer, "The Treasurer," which captured them from a Spanish vessel trading to the West Indies.

From the inception of Legislative Assemblies in the Colony the contest was on between the settlers of the new country and the government of the old. It could not be otherwise; for with the vast distance that stretched between them, the new conditions in the new land, demanding ever instant, immediate care and the fixed conditions in the mother country set in established tradition, there could neither remain that clearness of apprehension of the colonists' needs; that community of interest between them, nor that smilarity of sentiment which are the breath of life of all union between peoples.

It was a high assertion of privilege when John Sharpless, the clerk of the Assembly, was stood in the pillory and had his ear clipt by order of the House of Burgesses for disobeying their order not to surrender the records to King James' Commissioners. A little later, Governor Harvey was thrust out by them, an act of substantial magnitude in the history of our people's fight for self-government. He was reinstated; when the Virginians had shown the temper of their spirit.

The government of the mother country soon had too much to do to attend to her own Legislative Assembly to permit her to continue her policy of control over the legislatures of her Colonies. The fight for the liberties of the Virginians had its repercussion in the old country, and the resolute, democratic, theocratic tendencies of the Puritans in New England had their influence in Old England. So, after a little time, came revolution in England. The King was brought to judgment; the Commonwealth was set up and in the room of the government of the King was set up that of the Lord Protector based on the fusion of the Democratic and theocratic ideas. This lasted no long time, though Cromwell, greatest of British rulers, raised England's prestige abroad immeasurably.

Virginia, her own legislative power now established, defied the new government which was fane to send commissioners and make a treaty with her almost, if not quite, as with an independent State, and later, on the restoration of the House of Stuart, Virginia was added as a new power to King Charles' realm, realizing what Edmund Spenser had in his imagination forecast when he dedicated his "Faery Queen" to Elizabeth, Queen of England, France, Ireland and Virginia.

In the reaction that succeeded the upheaval in England, the Old Dominion was sufficiently involved and her liberties neglected or invaded to cause her people under the leadership of her young Tribune, Nat Bacon, to assert her liberties and to fling her into revolution. Bacon, the rebel, died, and so, for a time, perished her cause, her revolution being stamped out, as revolutions mainly are, in blood. But, mark! that this was a revolution of the people based on the people's rights against the government supported by the privileged class. And Virginia never forgot that her people had fought for their inalienable rights. Twelve years later came England's revolution and the last King of the House of Stuart was driven from the throne.

His two daughters succeeded him and the House of Hanover came in, with increased guaranties of liberty to the British people in which Virginia participated. The British Bill of Rights bore in every paragraph the mark of the influence of the Virginia struggle for the right of self-government.

I give these facts not because they are not known to all of you, but because the very tracing of them in chronological sequence shows their relation, and expresses in even their bare outline how the progress of liberty in the Old Dominion, ever impeded as it was, influenced and bore upon the progress of liberty in the old world. And so we come on down to the next great step that Virgina made in the age-long struggle for the rights of man, the Revolution of 1776.

This is the date that we set, and we fix even a day as that of our

laid down the doctrine that no European power shall impose on any country in America a different form of government without the latter's consent, a bar which for a hundred years has sufficed to maintain liberty on the Western Hemisphere.

And so we come to the last step in the march of liberty, which shows the sequence during these three hundred years from this first Legislative Assembly in the Old Dominion in the year 1619. No wonder that the British and Spanish believers in the divine right of kings considered the Virgnia Company and Assembly "a school of sedition."

For some years this march of liberty with its steady movement across the world has disturbed the dream of the exponents of the divine right of kings, in the Imperial Houses of Hohenzollern and Hapsburg, and also of their subservient slaves and obsequious pretorian guards, and to it they had planned deliberately to oppose the tramp, tramp of their imperial armies. They recognized clearly that the world, their world, could not contain these two opposing forces in equilbrium, and they set themselves—they and their obedient servitors—to destroy that which threatened the permanency of their autocratic system. They began far back; planned carefully; laid their foundations deep and broad; developed their science, their commerce, their military; perfected their organization, military and civil—perfected it beyond anything ever dreamed of, and prepared for Armageddon in absolute assurance of success. While the rest of the world thought and dreamed of peace and liberty and worked earnestly therefor, the exponent of imperial power planned and prepared and worked for war continuously, coldly, deliberately, and at the auspicious moment, as they deemed it, they sprang at the throat of the world. Tyranny, the slavement of man, imperial enmity to liberty, has many crimes to its account, but this is the greatest in history.

Much has been written of the crimes committed in this war, and they have been such as to shock the conscience of mankind, but the one supreme and all-comprehending crime was the deliberate, cold-blooded, carefully planned attempt on the part of Germany to overthrow the liberty of the world and subject it to German imperialism. All the other; all the rest—scornful contempt of solemn treaties; shooting of hostages; Lusitania and hospital ship sinkings; bombing of unfortified towns; deportation of civic populations; brutality to women and children; all pale into insignificance beside, and are merely incidental to, the supreme crime of deliberately, cold-bloodedly, plotting against a world free and at peace; its subjugation to German lust of conquest. It was charged against the Indians that decimated the colony of Virginia in 1620 that they employed the guise of friendship to throw the colonists off their guard that they might strike them the more suddenly and certainly. They were savages and their lands had been ravished from them. But what did those responsible for Germany do? They had plotted and planned everything. Organization, military and civic, had been raised to the Nth power. So far as science could assure and mathematics could calculate, the result was certain. It was all planned to move like clock-work. Only one factor in the vast problem they overlooked; the forces latent in free institutions; the incalculable power of the spirit of liberty. But for this they

would have won; with this arrayed against them they were fated to lose. What brought us, against all our traditions, the unbroken habitude of our entire history, to enter this war? Just this, that the liberty of mankind was imperilled, ours included. This changed the entire situation. What secured the victory? Just this—the power that the spirit of freedom imports, whether it be in the breasts of a few backwoodsmen settled along the banks of the Virginia rivers, like our Burgesses in this first Assembly at Jamestown, or in their descendants and successors, ranging from the President of the United States, the first man in all the world today, down to the simplest private in the ranks of the armies of freedom or the humblest worker in our factories or our fields. We were rich, we were great, we were strong in numbers and resources, but it was not our wealth nor our resources nor our numbers that won in this world struggle. We might have been all these, we might have been even richer and mightier and have lost. It was the incalculable spirit of freedom; the soul of Liberty that animated the great American Democracy that President Wilson spoke to and in whose name he spoke to the spirit of liberty that lived, however suppressed, among the democracies of the world. It was this that won, as against all defeats and setbacks it has won since the day when our first Virginia General Assembly met in Jamestown and devoted their energies to safe-guarding the liberties set forth in their charters; and as it will win in the years to come against all enemies, all the forms of reaction the world over.

If any think that without those who led in these early years the fight for their chartered rights, we should have had the champions who wrested freedom from the transplanted German potentates who ruled over England; or that without those who in Virginia led in our great struggle against England we should have won in this war, the thought is vain. It was that which I venture to term the Virginia spirit that won. In those years this spirit, this incurable, unappeasable thirst for liberty, sufficiently guided and inspired by the Virginians, to justify our terming it "the Virginia Spirit" had spread throughout America, had indeed flown like the seeds of the plant creation across the lands and taken root among the peoples of the world.

It was to this spirit that in the crucial contest between the two systems for their very life, a son of Virginia appealed when in the winter of 1916-17 he spoke to the democracy of the world to arise and face the peril that threatened its existence the world over.

I say he was a son of Virginia, not simply because he was born on Virginia soil, but because wherever he might have first seen the light, the spirit in which he spoke is that which he got from Virginia, from her great apostles of liberty. He got his democracy from those apostles and he learned it as a science at her University at the feet of that Gamaliel of the law who in his time and mine taught the young men of the South the principles of jurisprudence and their relation to liberty.

It has become in some sort the fashion to denounce the President. Hardly anything that he does escapes acrid criticism. I say that he saved the world. He may not have done it in a way that all desired, but he saved it, as much as George Washington saved the cause of liberty in

the first decade of this nation; as Jefferson saved democracy in those decades that followed; Woodrow Wilson saved democracy, not only in Europe, but in America. Others might have done it in his place, but he was there and his was the work. Speaking in the name of that Virginia, which has become the United States of America, he called forth from the peoples of the world that latent, but supreme force, which our fathers received from their fathers and transmitted throughout the world to all the sons of liberty of whatever people or clime; and in its majestic exercise it has saved the world.

And now he has returned from his arduous labors at the peace table and brought you peace, or at least the promise of peace, and the only promise of durable peace discernible in all the wide horizon of this distracted world. And what do we hear? Only cavilling and criticism; only objection and denunciation and threats and efforts to force the rejection of the treaty of peace so laboriously and patriotically negotiated. No one claims that the treaty and the league of nations on which it is based are perfect. But they are the one ark of safety of the world. If it be rejected the consequence will be the flinging of Europe into immediate chaos and America will follow or be forced to become a great military power with all the burdens of great armanent like those which caused this vast war and peace and democracy and liberty will in no long time be swept away and it will all have to be fought over again. That the fight will be won there is no question. The forces of free institutions will win in the long run. But why impose on posterity the curse of another such struggle as this in which we have just won at so great a sacrifice? Why, in face of the terrible experience through which the world has just passed, reject the one hope of escape offered for our children and our children's children? To do so will be to insult not merely those who have brought us the peace treaty with its sanction of the league of nations; but all the patriots and martyrs who have through the years given their lives in the holiest of all causes—the struggle for liberty.

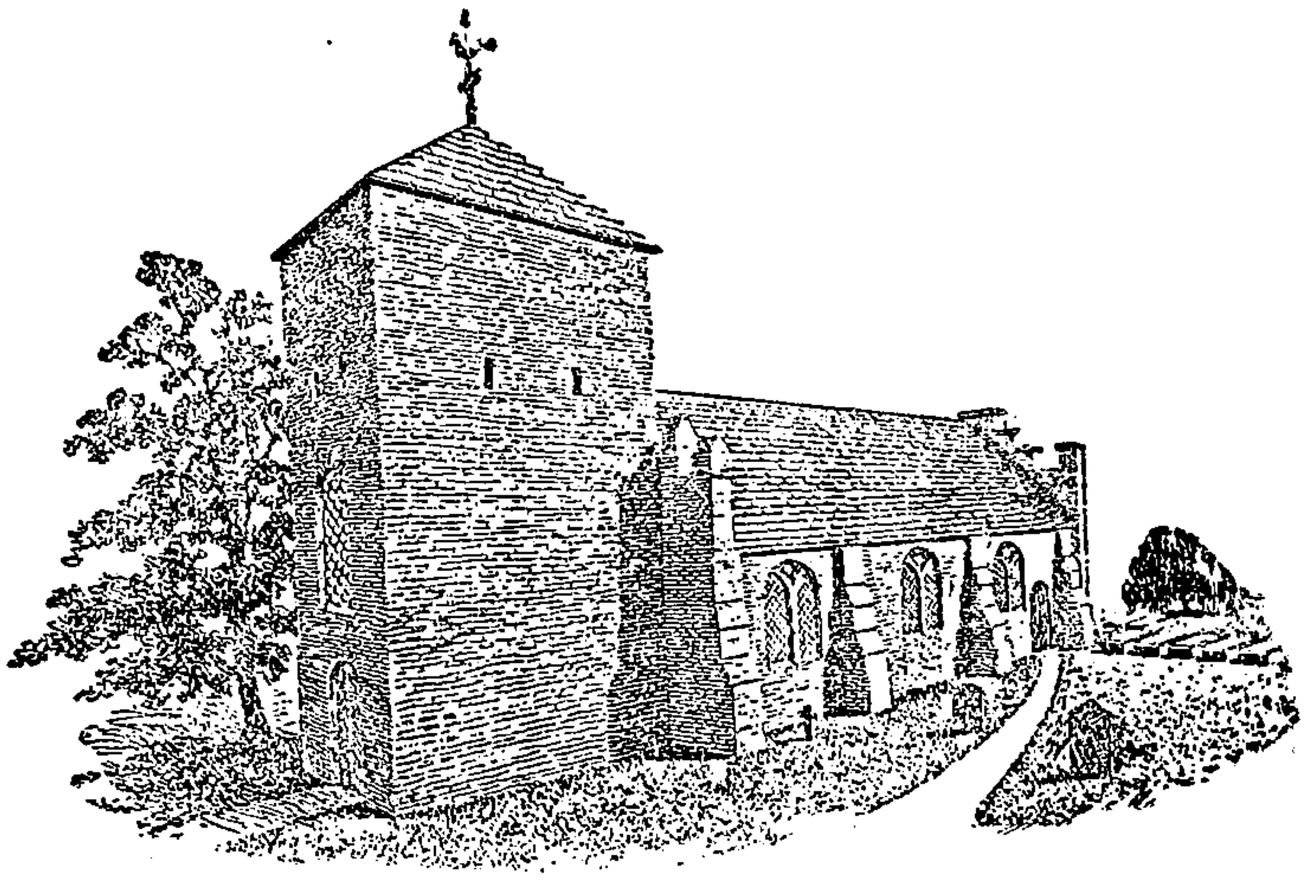
It is because of this mighty work of the spirit of liberty and of its direct connection with it that I have come to celebrate with you here today the three hundredth annversary of that first Virginia House of Burgesses.


VIRGINIA
SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS

BANCROFT'S ACCOUNT OF FIRST LAW-MAKING BODY IN AMERICA

Virginia, for twelve years after its settlement, languished under the government of Sir Thomas Smith, Treasurer of the Virginia Company in England. The Colony was ruled during that period by laws written in blood; and its history shows how the narrow selfishness of despotic power could counteract the best efforts of benevolence. The colonists suffered an extremity of distress too horrible to be described.

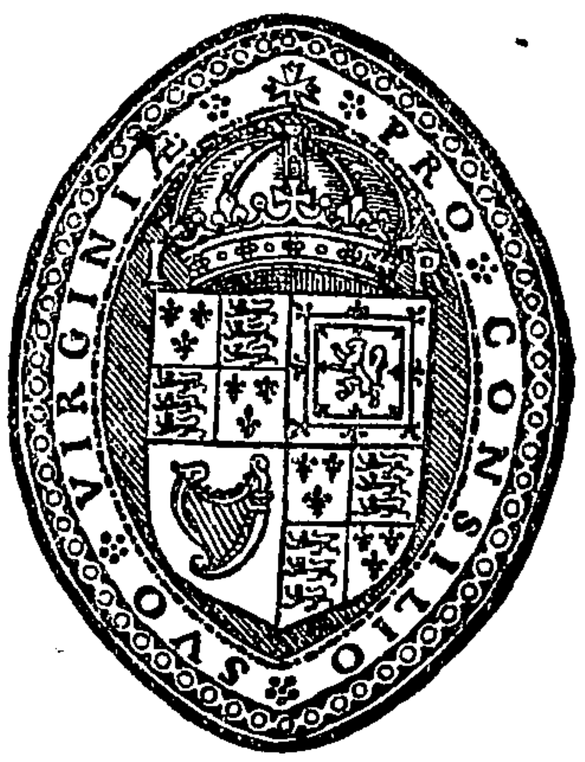
In April, 1619, Sir George Yeardley arrived. Of the emigrants who had been sent over at great cost, not one in twenty then remained alive.



JAMESTOWN CHURCH
By courtesy of the United States History Co. From "Avery's History of the United States and Its People."

"In James Citty were only those houses that Sir Thomas Gates built in the tyme of his government, with one wherein the Governor allwayes dwelt, and a church, built wholly at the charge of the inhabitants of that citye, of timber, being fifty foote in length and twenty foot in breadth." At Henrico, now Richmond, there were no more than "three old houses, a poor ruinated Church, with some few poore buildings in the Islande." "For ministers to instruct the people, he founde only three authorized, two others who never received their orders." "The natives he founde uppon doubtfull termes;" so that when the twelve years of Sir Thomas Smith's government expired, Virginia, according to the "judgements" of those who were then members of the Colony, was "in a poore estate."

From the moment of Yeardley's arrival dates the real life of Virginia. He brought with him "Commissions and instructions from the Company for the better establishinge of a Commonwealth heere." He made proclamation, "that those cruell lawes by which we" (I use the words of the Ancient Planters themselves) "had soe longe been governed, were now abrogated, and that we were to be governed by those free lawes which his Majesties subjectes live under in Englande." Nor were these considerations made dependent on the good will of administrative officers.



Reverse of Seal of Virginia 1619
By courtesy of the United States History Co. From "Avery's History of the United States and Its People."

"And that they might have a hande in the governinge of themselves," such are the words of the Planters, "Yt was graunted that a generall Assemblie shoulde be helde yearly once, whereat were to be present the Govr and Counsell w^th^ two Burgesses from each Plantation, freely to be elected by the inhabitants thereof, this Assemblie to have power to make and ordaine whatsoever lawes and orders should be them be thought good and profitable for our subsistance."

In conformity with these instructions, Sir George Yeardley "sente his summons all over the country, as well to invite those of the Counsell of Estate that were absente, as also for the election of the Burgesses;" and on Friday, the 30th day of July, 1619, the first elective legislative body of this continent assembled at James City.

Obverse of Seal of Virginia 1619

By courtesy of the United States History Co. From "Avery's History of the United States and Its People."

In the relation of Master John Rolfe, inserted by Captain John Smith in his History of Virginia, there is this meagre notice of the Assembly: "The 25 of June came in the *Triall* with Corne and Cattell in all safety, which tooke from vs cleerely all feare of famine; then our gouernor and councell caused Burgesses to be chosen in all places, and met at a generall Assembly, where all matters were debated thought expedient for the good of the Colony."

This account did not attract the attention of Beverley, the early historian of Virginia, who denies that there was any Assembly held there before May, 1620.

The careful Stith, whose work is not to be corrected without a hearty recognition of his superior diligence and exemplary fidelity, gives an account of this first legislative body, though he errs a little in the date by an inference from Rolfe's narrative, which the words do not warrant.

The prosperity of Virginia begins with the day when it received, as "a commonwealth," the freedom to make laws for itself. In a solemn address to King James, which was made during the government of Sir Francis Wyatt, and bears the signature of the Governor, Council, and apparently every member of the Assembly, a contrast is drawn between the former "miserable bondage," and "this just and gentle authoritye which hath cherished us of late by more worthy magistrates. And we, our wives and poor children shall ever pray to God, as our bounden duty is, to give you in this worlde all increase of happines, and to crowne you in the worlde to come w^th^ immortall glorye."

A desire has long existed to recover the record of the proceedings of the Assembly which inaugurated so happy a revolution. Stith was unable to find it; no traces of it were met by Jefferson; and Hening, and those who followed Hening, believed it no longer extant. Indeed, it was given up as hopelessly lost.

Having, during a long period of years, instituted a very thorough research among the papers relating to America in the British State Paper