

Virginia's Economic Development after the Civil War

After the Civil War, the building of railroads, the development of new industries, and the growth of cities contributed to Virginia's economic development.

The population of Virginia's cities grew rapidly after the Civil War as people arrived in search of jobs in the many new and expanding businesses and industries. The railroad industry played an important role in the growth of businesses and industry in the state. Virginia's once small towns grew into cities and bustling railroad centers, where clothing, furniture and other useful items were made and shipped by rail all over the state. Some of these railroad centers included the present-day cities of Richmond, Roanoke, Norfolk, Newport News, Petersburg, Alexandria, and Lynchburg.

Other parts of Virginia also grew after the war. Coal deposits, discovered in Tazewell County after the war, helped to stimulate the growth of the mining industry and new jobs in the Appalachian Plateau region of the state. The discovery of coal also affected the economy of other parts of the state as trains carried it east to be shipped from the growing seaports of the Coastal Plain region to the rest of the world.

Tobacco farming was also becoming an important industry in Virginia. With the help of the railroad industry, tobacco once again became a cash crop that could be sold and shipped in large amounts. This increased supply of tobacco in turn stimulated the growth of industries that produced tobacco products such as cigarettes and pipe tobacco.

After the Civil War, the growth of industries, cities, and railroads boosted Virginia's economic growth. This growth continues today.

Virginia's transportation system (highways, railroads, and air transportation) moves raw materials to factories and finished products to markets. The state continues to produce and export agricultural and manufactured products, including tobacco, poultry, coal, and large ships. In addition Virginia has become known for its tourism, communications, and technology industries. Many federal workers live and work in Virginia due to the presence of numerous government agencies and military installations.

All of these advances in transportation, communication, agriculture, and technology have increased migration to the state and led to increased economic development. Virginia now plays a major role in the global economy of our modern world.