

Excerpt from A History of Virginia Conventions The original purpose in the preparation of this work was the publication of a substantially bound volume comprising the official imprint of the Constitution of Virginia ordained by the Convention of 1901-2, together with the list of members and a brief resume of the issues that claimed their attention. The text of the Constitution drafted by the convention that adjourned June 26, 1902, is identical with that published by order of the convention - its precise language and punctuation - and it is therefore official. Supplementary thereto is a summary of the movement for a new Constitution and of the efforts made by the people of Virginia through the General Assembly, from time to time, to amend the old or Underwood instrument. From the day that the alien Constitution was thrust upon the powerless people of the Commonwealth by the Federal authority, fastening negro suffrage upon the State, there had been dissatisfaction, which found expression in various legislative enactments designed to diminish the power of the blacks by limiting their participation in elections. The culmination of this effort to insure white supremacy was the calling of a convention to revise and amend the Constitution. While many reforms were wrought in the organic law of the Commonwealth by the Convention of 1901-2, the great issue of the convention was the suffrage and the effort to restrict it without contravention of the Federal Constitution and with the least practicable reduction of the number of white suffragans. Reform in the system of taxation, the regulation of corporate power, and the provision of a judiciary system that would reduce the cost and increase the efficiency were some of the other improvements upon the old Constitution. At last, after months of discussion devoted to reconciling opposing views, the convention adopted and ordained the Constitution. During the convention the need of a concise history of the early Constitutions of Virginia was frequently demonstrated. As the work of preparing the history of the movement for the present Constitution progressed the idea of supplementing it with a condensed summary of the prior conventions of Virginia, from 1774 down to the present, was conceived. In the prosecution of this work it has been found no easy task to secure and compile the data necessary therefor. Of the revolutionary conventions there was little information to be had. Especially was this true of the Convention of 1774. Many writers make no mention of this body or its work, if, indeed, they were aware of it. Nowhere could the list of members of that pioneer convention be had. At last, almost by chance, there was found among the archives of the State, in a file of the old Virginia Gazette, printed at Williamsburg in that year, mention of the election of a delegate to this convention. Patient and laborious search through the files of this colonial newspaper was at last rewarded by the discovery of the entire list of the members of that body. The publication now made is the first complete roster of members of the Convention of 1774. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at www.forgottenbooks.com This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast majority of imperfections successfully; any imperfections that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works.

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