

## **The Economic and Social Transitions of Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Virginia**

The twentieth century was a time of transition for Virginia. During this time Virginia changed from a rural, agricultural society to a more urban, industrialized society. There were two reasons for these changes: farming began to change and cities began to grow.

### **Farming Changes**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, life was not easy for Virginia's farmers. Old-fashioned ways of farming were too slow and required too many workers. Virginia's farmers also found themselves competing with large farms out west and in the south. Because of the expanding railroad system, these newer, larger farms were sending their goods to Virginia to sell. This caused crop prices to fall and Virginia's farmers were having a hard time making a living. These problems caused many Virginians to give up their farming jobs and move to the growing cities.

### **Growth of Cities**

City populations began to grow as more and more people moved away from the rural farmlands looking for jobs and a better future for their families. Improvements in transportation also caused Virginia's cities to grow. Improved roads and railroads brought lots of goods and raw materials to city factories and businesses, while streetcars moved people quickly from home to work. As the factories and businesses grew, more and more Virginians moved to cities in search of job opportunities. Improved methods of transportation also spurred the growth of coal mining in western Virginia. Trainloads of coal were shipped east to growing port cities such as Norfolk and Newport News.

### **Moving to Virginia**

During the Twentieth Century people moved to Virginia from many other states and nations looking for jobs, freedom, and a better quality of life. The natural beauty of the state also drew many here. Since the end of World War II, Northern Virginia has experienced much growth due to the large number of government jobs located in that region. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, Northern Virginia and the Coastal Plain region have grown due to computer technology. People from many nations now call Northern Virginia home. Both Northern Virginia and the Tidewater region have also grown due to an increase in computer technology industries.