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Ould Virginia

by Wynne Dough, 2006



Map of 'Ould Virginia' from *The Generall Historie of Virginia* by John Smith, 1624. Image from Documenting the American South.

"Ould Virginia" as a term enjoyed brief currency in the seventeenth century as a name for territory south of the Chesapeake Bay covered by Sir Walter Raleigh's 1584 patent of discovery. John Smith ^[4] may have coined the name, and Robert Vaughan's map of "Ould Virginia" in Smith's *General History of Virginia* ^[2] (1624) accelerated its spread. William Strachey had used *South Virginia* in the same sense around 1612. While the two names were interchangeable, confusion sometimes occurred because "South Virginia" also referred to the land holdings of the Virginia Company of London (34°-41° N). By midcentury the use of both names was in decline. North Virginia, the holdings of the Virginia Company of Plymouth (38°-45° N), had come to be known as New England (perhaps another of Smith's coinages), so there was no further need for a South Virginia to balance it. Meanwhile, the most populous part of South Virginia had been partitioned into Virginia and Maryland, and the Royal grants of 1629 and 1663 officially named the sparsely settled area below the 36th parallel "*Carolana*" ^[5] and "Carolina," respectively. Virginia's nickname of "Old Dominion" refers to the predominant royalism of Virginia in the Commonwealth Period and has nothing to with Ould Virginia.

References:

Matthew Page Andrews, *Virginia: The Old Dominion* (1949).

John Fiske, *Old Virginia and Her Neighbours* (1897).

William S. Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries* (1989).

Additional Resources:

Rasmussen, William M. S. and Tilton, Robert S. *Old Virginia: The Pursuit of a Pastoral Ideal*. Charlottesville, Va.: Howell. 2003.

Image Credits:

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