

Virginia Electric & Power Company ^[1]

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by James L. Hunt, 2006; Revised December 2021

The Virginia Electric & Power Company was organized in 1909 and initially owned and operated electric street railways and streetlights in Richmond, Va. In the 1920s the company expanded its business into northeastern North Carolina. By 1928 Virginia Power operated approximately 30 miles of electric distribution lines in the state, all near the Virginia border in eastern North Carolina. By 1950 the company served about 30,000 North Carolina customers through more than 2,000 miles of distribution lines.

In the 1950s and 1960s Virginia Power greatly expanded its North Carolina operations. Most significantly, after a protracted legal contest that was resolved in 1953 in the U.S. Supreme Court, Virginia Power built a dam and power plant on the Roanoke River ^[2] at Roanoke Rapids. A second large hydroelectric dam, Gaston, was also constructed by the company on the Roanoke River.

Despite long-term growth in revenue and customers, the North Carolina operations of Virginia Power suffered several significant setbacks after 1970. Nonetheless, the company remained one of the state's leading utilities. In 1983, Dominion Resources, Inc. was created as a holding company, with Virginia Power, also known as VEPCO, operating as its electric power subsidiary. During the same time period, Dominion became a Fortune 500 company, and the company's North Carolina utility began doing business as North Carolina Power. In 1991 North Carolina Power (after 1985 the name of an unincorporated division of Virginia Power that oversaw North Carolina operations) had more than \$140 million in annual sales in 20 northeastern counties, including the northern Outer Banks ^[3]. North Carolina Power provided electricity to more than 94,000 customers. In 2000, Dominion merged with Consolidated Natural Gas of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in a \$9 billion merger. Since that time, the parent company Dominion has continued to expand its power and utility holdings through a series of purchases and mergers, and by the early 2000s the company was the third-largest privately owned supplier of electric service in North Carolina. Today the company, now known as Dominion Energy, includes natural gas as well as energy exploration operations. They operate locations in Idaho, North Carolina, Ohio, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming. In 2009, the company celebrated its centennial.

Reference:

Erwin H. Will, *The Past, Interesting; the Present, Intriguing; the Future, Bright: A Story of Virginia Electric and Power Company* (1965).

Additional Resources:

Dominion Energy: <https://www.dominionenergy.com/> ^[4]

Dominion Energy. "History." <https://www.saveonenergy.com/utility/dominion-power/> ^[5] (includes company timeline)

Subjects:

21st Century (2001-present) ^[6]

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World War II (1941-1945) ^[12]

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From:

Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press. ^[14]

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