

## NEIGHBORHOODS: NORFOLK TO 1845

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In 1680 at the insistence of King Charles II, the Virginia Assembly passed an act requiring the creation of a town site in each county. The lower Norfolk County Court ordered John Ferebee, the county surveyor, to locate and lay out a town site of 50 acres. The site selected was the point where the Eastern Branch joined the Elizabeth River, a location which provided convenient water access to a large portion of the surrounding area. In 1682 the county purchased the land from Nicolas Wise and established "Norfolk Town." The Elizabeth River was named for Princess Elizabeth Stuart, daughter of England's King James I. In modern terms the area of the original town was bounded roughly by City Hall Avenue on the north, Harbor Park on the east along Lovitt Avenue, and the Elizabeth River on the south and west. The early plan is reflected in the oldest surviving map of Norfolk which was drawn by George Nicholson in 1802.

In 1736, the rapidly growing town was awarded borough status. Prior to this date, Norfolk had been governed by the county. When Norfolk became a borough, the town gained its own local government. Norfolk experienced its most significant period of growth during the French and Indian War as England defeated France in North America. The population grew from 1000 to 6000 by the time of the American Revolution. During the Revolutionary War, Norfolk suffered extensive destruction. Lord Dunmore fired on rebels in Norfolk, who in turn burned buildings in retaliation. St. Paul's Episcopal Church is the only surviving original structure.

In the years immediately following the Revolutionary War, shacks were erected next to the charred timbers of former houses. Merchants and new settlers, such as William Willoughby and Moses Myers, launched rejuvenated or new commercial enterprises and built dwellings in the downtown core next to the commercial center. Norfolk began to slowly emerge from its war-ravaged state. By 1800, the borough began to resemble a permanent settlement. Eventually, Norfolk resumed its role as an important seaport and prospered by providing ships for both sides in the war between England and France. Prosperity was short-lived, however; the British attacked Norfolk's ship, The Chesapeake, which resulted in Thomas Jefferson ending export trade. This period of prosperity and growth, slowed by Jefferson's action, virtually came to a halt when the newly formed United States declared war on Britain in 1812.

In 1845, with a population of more than 10,000, Norfolk successfully petitioned to incorporate as a City. This was a period of stability and great prosperity, reflected in the construction of several substantial public buildings. Architect, Thomas U. Walter, who designed the dome of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, also designed City Hall, now known as the MacArthur Memorial. The cornerstone was laid in 1847, and the "Worshipful Court" of the City of Norfolk sat here for the first time on May 29th, 1850.

Boroughs Established:

Calvert Square

Central Business District

Freemason Harbor

Young Terrace

Church Street

Tidewater Gardens