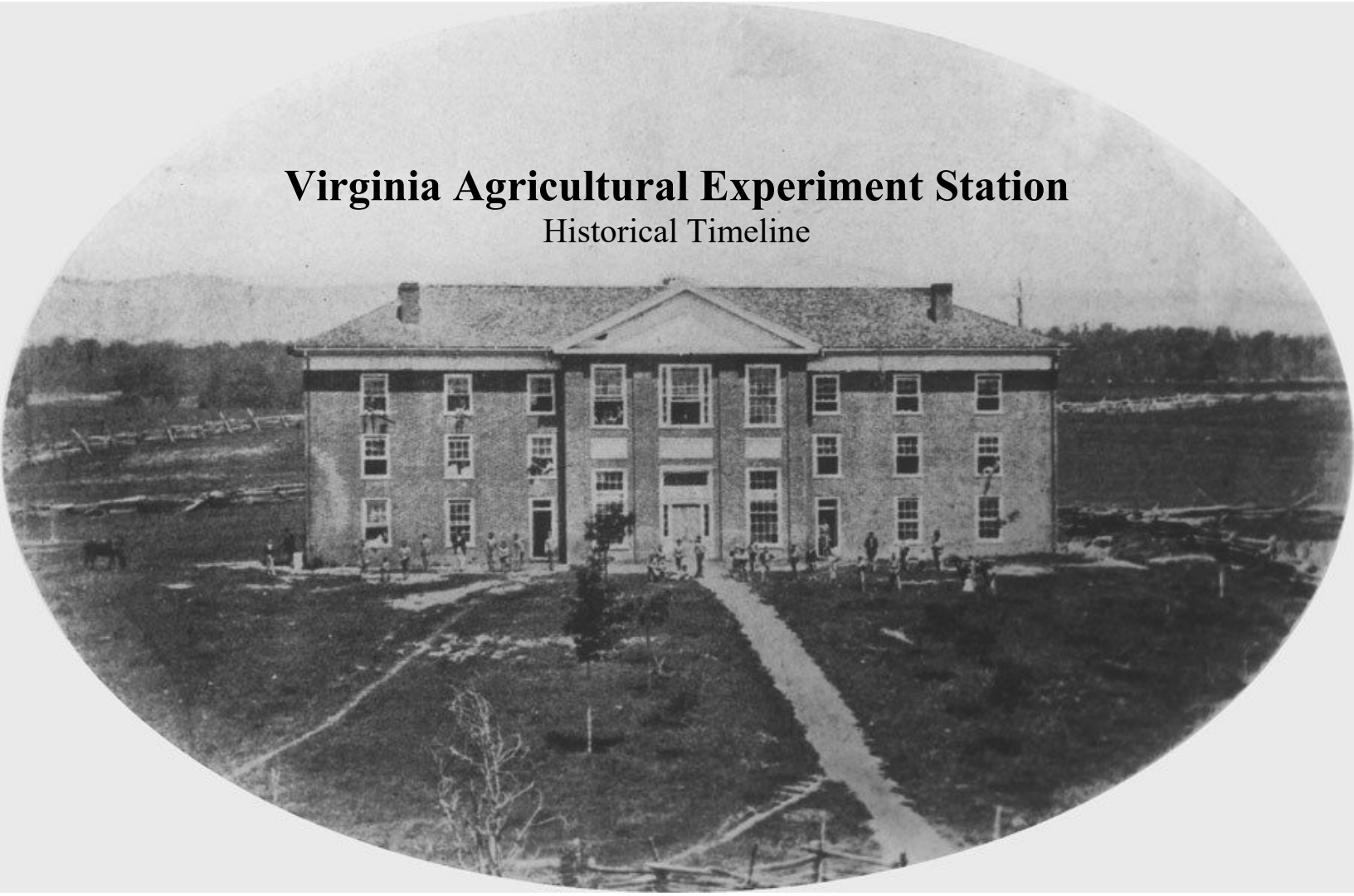
Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station

Historical Timeline



1870s

- 1872: Name of Preston and Olin Institute changed to Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College in order to make it eligible to receive U.S. government funds from the 1862 Morrill Land-Grant Act, which supported colleges for the benefit of agriculture and mechanic arts.

1880s

- 1886: In anticipation of the passage of the Federal Hatch Act, the Virginia General Assembly creates the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station (VAES) at Blacksburg as a part of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College.

- 1887: Federal Hatch Act passed, which provided $15,000 to Agricultural Experiment Stations at land-grant institutions.

- 1888: Col. William B. Preston appointed as first VAES Director. He was also professor of Agriculture, Commandant of the Corps of Cadets, and treasurer of VAMC.

1890s

- 1890: Congress passed the second Morrill Land Grant-Act, which provided additional funding.

1900s

- 1906: First District Substation established on rented land in Appomattox to conduct research on dark fire-cured tobacco and crops grown in rotation with tobacco.

1910s

- 1910: Virginia General Assembly appropriated $5,000 to establish and maintain District Experiment Stations. (The Experiment Station was established to serve the entire state, not any particular section of it. Dr. W.S. Fletcher, 1910)

- 1915: Extension specialists cross the state by a train dedicated to Extension by Norfolk & Western, "teaching by demonstration" about crops, machinery, and family to citizens near their homes.

1920s

- 1920: Highly productive peanut varieties, Holland Virginia Runner and Holland Jumbo, are developed at the Tidewater AREC.

- 1928: Blight-resistant spinach cultivars, Virginia Savoy and Old Dominion, are developed at the Virginia Truck Experiment Station (Now the Hampton Roads AREC and the Eastern Shore AREC) and save the spinach industry.

1930s

- Scientists working at Chatham (now the Southern Piedmont AREC) help control tobacco blue mold, which had been reducing tobacco yield by 50 percent.

- Research to control aphids and codling moth, both serious apple pests, is conducted at Winchester fruit laboratory (now the Alson H. Smith Jr. AREC).

1940s

- 1949: Land donated for Middleburg Forage Research Station

1950s

- Work at the Northern Piedmont AREC on clay mineralogy and fixation of phosphorus adds to the understanding of soil chemical and physical reactions that are vital to plant nutrition.

1960s

- 1962: Congress passed the McIntire-Stennis Act to promote forestry research.

- 1966: The Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station was incorporated into the university's Research Division.

1970s

- 1976: Virginia's oyster is saved millions of dollars when work at the Virginia Seafood AREC demonstrates that oysters transplanted from the James River were free of Kepone, a toxic insecticide that had polluted the river.

- 1977: Congress provided funding for the Continuing Animal Health and Disease Research program.

- 1978: Administration of the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station was returned to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

1980s

- 1980: The Peanuts Advisory telephone "hotline" at the Tidewater AREC provides immediate crop maturity and disease advisory notifications to peanut producers.

- 1987: Soybean variety Hutcheson is released from the Eastern Virginia AREC. It became the most extensively grown soybean variety in the nation for a time.

1990s

- 1995: Cooperative Extension/Agricultural Experiment Station Division (Agency 229) is established by the Virginia General Assembly.

- 1999: Evaluation of hair-type breeds of sheep in easy-care production systems at the Southwest Virginia AREC demonstrates the viability of sheep production enterprises as an alternative to tobacco production.

2000s

- 2000: Work at the Shenandoah Valley AREC shows that beef can be produced efficiently in Appalachia and that pasture-finished beef is as acceptable to consumers and actually contains more of one of the fatty acids important in a healthy diet than feedlot-finished beef.

- 2005: Techniques to raise yellow perch using recirculating water tanks developed at the Southwest Aquaculture AREC help local farmers create new businesses, enhancing economic development in the region.