RICHMOND—Capital of the Cavaliers—a city that is mellow and yet modern, where the rustle of the past may still be heard amid the bustle of the present.

To appreciate Richmond one must, before all else, remember that this old town has roots planted deep in the history of our country. Richmond was founded in 1737 by William Byrd II, of Westover on the James, forefather of two of Virginia’s illustrious sons of today, Admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd and Senator Harry Flood Byrd. But even before Father Byrd laid off his lots and established Richmond, this site at the falls of the James River had held a certain degree of importance. Just a few weeks after the Virginia settlers landed at Jamestown on May 13, 1607, to found the first permanent English settlement in America, Captain Newport pushed off up the James to find the route to the gold of the Indies. The barrier of rocks, known as the falls of the James, must have been an unwelcome sight to the eyes of that little band of intrepid explorers as it shattered their dream of easy passage to their expected El Dorado. Captain Newport, however, was the first of the Virginians to believe that no hoped-for golden future should stop a man from doing the sensible, practical things of the moment. Before very long, Captain Francis West had established a frontier post at the point where the falls interrupted further navigation of the river. It is hard to realize that Richmond was once on the western frontier of our country, but such was the case until about 1660, when settlers began that westward push that only ended when the Pacific was reached.

Richmond has seen much of the thrilling history of our country unfold. She was a promising village when George Washington and the son of her founder, Colonel Byrd, successfully led Virginia’s two regiments with the troops of her sister colonies and the British regulars in the French and Indian war. She was hostess to that brilliant group of patriots who gathered in St. John’s Church in 1775 to discuss what methods could be taken to avert
war with England, only to have Patrick Henry, grown sick of futile measures which obtained no justice for the colonists, rise to advocate the arming of the Virginia militia and utter those words which made him the embodiment of man's immortal will to freedom: "Give me liberty or give me death." She was the capital of the State from which Thomas Jefferson, Governor of Virginia, had to flee to prevent capture when Benedict Arnold swooped down on Richmond in 1781 and occupied the city for the British in America's war for independence. Cornwallis visited it later in the same year. She was a thriving center of commerce in 1812 when the city was often alarmed by the news that the British were coming again, and in 1846 when her "Grays" were accepted for service in the Mexican War. She was the capital of the Confederate States of America from 1861-65, the hope of the South and the despair of the North for those four long, bloody, heart-breaking years. The best commanders, the most immense armies the Federal government could furnish, hammered, hammered at Richmond, while the South's bravest hearts and keenest minds stood with their backs often at the very walls of the city, but would not let them pass. No city in America ever has or ever will be again so completely the goal of the whole American people. Those years and the ones that followed taught Richmond something that as a city she will never forget—that courage can rise above everything. The incredible sacrifices of Richmond people in that time knit the citizens together with bonds that even time cannot sunder. She was again prompt to the call of duty in 1898 when the country was challenged with outside danger, and once more poured forth her sons and funds in World War I; also in World War II she gave liberally of her sons and daughters and resources.

Those wars through which Richmond has lived are but distressing landmarks on the long trail our country has traveled. Her contribution has been equally as great in times of peace. In fact, probably her greatest contribution has been her way of life—a way based on the belief that the best of the old must be kept and adapted to fit in with the best of the new. The city has grown steadily; has been rebuilt after three destructions by fire. Today Richmond is a commercial, industrial, financial, medical and educational center of the South, and one of the fastest growing industrial centers in the nation. Richmond's industry has been stable and resistant to wide fluctuations in business cycle.

Cities, after all, are but larger patterns of individual people. People who have been tested by time and tribulation and yet come out smiling, full of faith and courage, never fail to command our admiration. That Richmond has done this, we submit as our plea for your appreciation of our old city.

The people of Richmond have made the city and in turn been made by it. No one can long live in the mellowness of Richmond without feeling