Monticello, Thomas Jefferson’s home, is one of many historic estates in Virginia. Photo courtesy www.virginia.org

This row of historic oast houses is located on the Hop Farm in Kent. Photo courtesy the Hop Farm Country Park

Farmers dried crops with controlled heat in oast houses in England and in bright tobacco barns in Virginia. Many of the barns can still be seen in rural Southside, Virginia. Photo courtesy DLA/Virginia Tech

Roots of Virginia Culture: 400 Years of Building Arts Facts

- Virginia Native Americans built homes, called longhouses (yehakin in Virginia Algonquin) from saplings and reeds; some were large enough to house twenty extended family members. Captain John Smith described these houses as snug and rainproof. Jamestown Settlement includes reproductions of these dwellings.

- All of the thirty-three plantations along the James River in Virginia are on the National Register of Historic Places. Built in 1613, Shirley Plantation is the oldest.

- Germans started settling in Virginia in 1714. Their contributions to Virginia architecture include types of log construction and the distinctive two-story “bank barn.”

- The state capitol in Richmond, Virginia, was designed by Thomas Jefferson and was completed in 1780. In 1870, due to lack of upkeep, the second-floor balcony collapsed and killed over sixty people.

- Booker T. Washington, an African American educator born in Virginia, designed public schools for African American children using local donations and funds from Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Company. By 1928, one in five rural African American schools in the South was a Rosenwald School; 367 alone were in Virginia.

- In 1895, Sears, Roebuck and Company began selling building plans, materials, and house kits in their catalog. The kits cost between $695 and $4,115. Many of these houses were erected in the expanding suburbs of Northern Virginia; over 100 still stand.

- At the Hop Farm in Paddock Wood, Kent, England, some of the former hops-drying buildings (called “oasts”), originally built in 1936, were converted into museum buildings and a huge play area for children.