

Lionism began in Virginia on November 14, 1921, when the Lynchburg Lions Club was organized. Lion William H. Black served as president of Virginia's first Lions club.

Lions International established Virginia as District 24 in March, 1922, following the organization of the Richmond Lions Club on January 30, 1922, and the Norfolk Lions Club on February 9, 1922. By May 31, 1922, three additional clubs received charters:

Roanoke( March 31), Danville (May 19), and Portsmouth (May 26).

The first district governor of Virginia District 24, was Lion W.L. Petty, Norfolk, appointed by Lions International President Ewen W. Cameron. Although Lion Petty started out vigorously, business reasons compelled him to resign on April 26, 1922. In tendering his resignation, District Governor Petty recommended as his successor, the deputy district governor, Lion Ben A. Ruffin, from Richmond.

International President Cameron appointed Lion Ruffin to serve the unexpired term; however, at the international convention in Hot Springs, June, 1922, Lion Ruffin was elected an international director. Lion Ruffin immediately recommended to newly elected International President Ed S. Vaught, Lion William M. Black from Lynchburg as district governor.

In 1923, District Governor Black, convened a district governor's conference in Richmond for officers of the six Virginia clubs. All were represented.

District Governor Black was re-appointed to serve another year, and early in 1924 called another "executive conference" of the officers of the eight Lions clubs in the state. The conference was held in Lynchburg on February 19, 1924, and the delegates voted to hold a district convention later that year.

The first district convention of District 24 Lions clubs was held in Richmond on May 13, 1924, with District Governor Black presiding. International Director Harry A. Newman from Canada was the guest speaker, and Lion Leon T. Seawell, representing the Norfolk Lions Club, was elected district governor. The district consisted of 505 members. The eight clubs in attendance voted to hold the next convention in Norfolk.

The second district convention was held in Norfolk on June 18, 1925. Lion Leon T. Seawell was re-elected district governor. The number of clubs had increased to 14 during the year and membership had increased to 729.

The third convention was held in Roanoke, June 25-26, 1926. Lion T. Gilbert Wood was elected district governor. International Third Vice President Ben A. Ruffin and International Director Earle W. Hodges from New York attended. The district had grown to 15 clubs and 756 members.

The fourth annual district convention was held at Farmville on May 13-14, 1927. Every club in the district was represented. Again, International Vice President Ruffin and International Director Hodges attended. Lion William M. Kemper, Danville, was elected district governor. There were now 827 members in Virginia's 15 clubs.

The fifth annual district convention was held at Petersburg, May 10-11, 1928. Each of the 15 clubs in the district sent delegates to the convention. Principal speakers were International President Irving L. Camp and International First Vice President Ben A. Ruffin. Lion W.T. Shepherd, Richmond, was elected district governor. The district recorded a gain of seven members for the year.

Our sixth annual district convention met in Lynchburg, on April 18, 1929, and elected Thomas M. Brown, Lynchburg, District Governor; D. Roy Winsted, District Secretary; and Dr. George Boskerville, District Treasurer.

The seventh district convention was held in Suffolk, May 8-9, 1930. Due to the illness of District Governor Thomas M. Brown, the convention was chaired by Deputy District Governor William K. Brock of Farmville. International Third Vice President Robert L. McKeever, Washington, D.C., was guest speaker. Lion William K. Brock was elected district governor. A decrease of in membership of 76 was reported with no increase in the number of clubs.

At the eighth district convention in Danville on May 14-15, 1931, every club in the district was represented. International President Earle W. Hodge, New York, was guest speaker. Dr. Elbyrne G. Gill of Roanoke was elected district governor. Despite adverse economic conditions, the district showed a gain of two clubs and 107 members.

The ninth district convention was held in Bristol, May 19-20, 1932, with 15 clubs represented by over 350 members. The guest speaker was Past International President Earle W. Hodges. The convention authorized zone plans with regional deputy district governors, and abolished the offices of 1st and 2nd deputy district governors. Dr. Gill was re-elected district governor. The district showed an increase of six clubs and 106 members. Lionism had secured a firm foothold in Virginia, and its future growth in both members and clubs was assured. Lions clubs were now located in every part of the state.

By June 30, 1940, there were 67 Lions clubs in Virginia organized in a single district under the jurisdiction of one district governor (see map 1). On July 1, 1940, the state was divided into two districts, 24-V and 24-D (see map 2), with separate district governors, and remained so organized until June 30, 1947.

The next change came on July 1, 1947, when Virginia was divided into four districts with a district governor elected for each District, 24-A, 24-B, 24-C, and 24-D. At the time there were 113 clubs in the state.

**The last re-districting occurred on July 1, 1955, when Virginia's 201 clubs were divided into six districts, 24-A, 24-B, 24-C, 24-D, 24-E, and 24-F, each with a separate district governor.**