

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer Bebel Proust
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke George
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Schiller Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Strachwitz Katharina II. von Rußland Bellamy Schilling Kralik Gibbon Tschechow
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
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Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntatz
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Virginia: the Old Dominion

Frank W. Hutchins

Imprint

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**VIRGINIA:
THE OLD DOMINION**

As seen from its Colonial waterway, the Historic River James, whose every succeeding turn reveals country replete with monuments and scenes recalling the march of history and its figures from the days of Captain John Smith to the present time.

By

FRANK AND CORTELLE HUTCHINS

*With a map, and fifty-four plates, of which six are in full color,
from photographs by the authors.*

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The Portico of Brandon, from the Garden.
(See page 119)

TO THE HONOURABLE FRANCIS E. HUTCHINS, THE FATHER OF ONE AUTHOR, THE MORE THAN FATHER-IN-LAW OF THE OTHER, AND THE EVER-STAUNCH FRIEND OF GAD-ABOUT, THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

This volume was formerly published under the title, "Houseboating on a Colonial Waterway"; but its appropriateness for inclusion in the "See

America First Series" to represent the State of Virginia is so obvious that the publishers have, in this new edition, changed the title to "Virginia: The Old Dominion," and reissued the book in a new dress, generally uniform with the other volumes in the series.

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CHAPTER I

ALL ABOUT GADABOUT

It was dark and still and four o'clock on a summer morning. The few cottages clustering about a landing upon a Virginia river were, for the most part, sleeping soundly, though here and there a flickering light told of some awakening home. Down close by the landing was one little house wide awake. Its windows were aglow; lights moved about; and busy figures passed from room to room and out upon the porch in front.

Suddenly, with a series of quick, muffled explosions, the whole cottage seemed carried from its foundations. It slipped sidewise, turned almost end for end, then drifted slowly away from its neighbours, out into the darkness and the river. Its occupants seemed unconscious of danger. There was one of them standing on the porch quite unconcernedly turning a wheel, while two or three others were watching, with rather amused expressions, two little engines chugging away near the kitchen stove.

And thus it was that the houseboat Gadabout left her moorings in the outskirts of old Norfolk, and went spluttering down the Elizabeth to find Hampton Roads and to start upon her cruise up the historic James River.

But to tell the story we must begin before that summer morning. It was this way. We were three: the daughter-wife (who happened to see the magazine article that led to it all), her mother, and her husband. The head of the family, true to the spirit of the age, had achieved a nervous breakdown and was under instructions from his physician to betake himself upon a long, a very long, vacation.

It was while we were in perplexed consideration as to where to go and what to do, that the magazine article appeared—devoted to houseboating. It was a most fetching production with a picture that appealed to every overwrought nerve. There was a charming bit of water with trees hanging over; a sky all soft and blue (you knew it was soft and blue just as you knew that the air was soft and cool; just as you knew that a drowsy peace and quiet was brooding over

all); and there, in the midst, idly floated a houseboat with a woman idly swinging in a hammock and a man idly fishing from the back porch.

That article opened a new field for our consideration. Landlubbers of the landlubbers though we were, its water-gypsy charm yet sank deep. We thirsted for more. We haunted the libraries until we had exhausted the literature of houseboating.

And what a dangerously attractive literature we found! How the cares and responsibilities of life fell away when people went a-houseboating! What peace unutterable fell upon the worn and weary soul as it drifted lazily on, far from the noise and the toil and the reek of the world! All times were calm; all waters kind. The days rolled on in ever-changing scenes of beauty; the nights, star-gemmed and mystic, were filled with music and the witchery of the sea.

It made good reading. It made altogether too good reading. We did not see that then. We did not know that most of the literature of houseboating is the work of people with plenty of imagination and no houseboats.

We resolved to build a houseboat. There was excitement in the mere decision; there was more when our friends came to hear of it. Their marked disapproval made our new departure seem almost indecorous. It was too late; the tide had us; and disapproval only gave zest to the project.

As a first step, we proceeded to rechristen ourselves from a nautical standpoint. The little mother was so hopelessly what the boatmen call a fair-weather sailor that her weakness named her, and she became Lady Fairweather. The daughter-wife, after immuring herself for half a day with nautical dictionaries and chocolate creams, could not tell whether she was Rudderina or Maratima; she finally concluded that she was Nautica. It required neither time nor confectionery to enable these two members of the family to rename the third. They viewed the strut of plain Mr. So-and-So at the prospect of commanding a vessel, and promptly dubbed him Commodore.

An earnest quest was next made for anybody and everybody who had ever used, seen, or heard of a houseboat; and the Commodore

made journeys to various waters where specimens of this queer craft were to be found. All the time, three lead pencils were kept busy, and plans and specifications became as autumn leaves. We soon learned that there was little room for the artistic. Once Nautica had a charming creation, all verandas and overhanging roofs and things; but an old waterman came along and talked about wind and waves, and most of the overhanging art on that little houseboat disappeared under the eraser.

"That's all good enough for one of those things you just tie to a bank and hang Chinese lanterns on," he said. "But it would never do for a boat that's going to get out in wide water and take what's coming to it."

When we concluded that we had the plans to our satisfaction (or rather that we never should have, which amounted to the same thing), we turned over to a builder the task of making them into something that would float and hold people and go. The resulting craft, after passing through a wrecking and some rebuilding, we called Gadabout. She was about fifty feet long and twelve feet wide over all, as the watermen say; and was propelled by twin screws, driven by two small gasoline engines. Though not a thing of beauty, yet, as she swung lazily at her moorings with her wide, low windows and the little hooded cockpit that we tried hard not to call a porch, she looked cozy and comfortable. Her colouring was colonial yellow and white, with a contrast of dark olive on the side runways and the decks.

Inside, Gadabout was arranged as house-like and, we thought, as homelike as boating requirements would permit. There were two cabins, one at either end of the craft. Between these, and at one side of the passageway connecting them, was what we always thought of as the kitchen, but always took care to speak of as the galley.

At first glance, each of the cabins would be taken as a general living-room. Each was that; but also a little of everything else. At customary intervals, one compartment or the other would become a dining-cabin. Again, innocent looking bits of wall would give way, and there would appear beds, presses, lavatories, and a lamentable lack of room.

Both cabins were finished in old oak, dark and dead; there is a superabundance of brightness on the water. The ceilings showed the uncovered, dark carlines or rafters. The walls had, along the top, a row of niches for books; and along the bottom, a deceptive sort of wainscoting, each panel of which was a locker door. Between book niches above and wainscoting below, the walls were paneled in green burlap with brown rope for molding. The furnishing was plain.

The kitchen or galley was rather small as kitchens go, and rather large as galleys go. It would not do to tell all the things that were in it; for anybody would see that they could not all be there. Perhaps it would be well to mention merely the gasoline stove, the refrigerator, the pump and sink, the wall-table, the cupboards for supplies, the closet for the man's serving coats and aprons, the racks of blue willow ware dishes, and the big sliding door.

One has to mention the big sliding door; for it made such a difference. It worked up and down like a window-sash, and always suggested the conundrum, When is a galley not a galley? For when it was down, it disclosed nothing and the galley was a galley; but when it was up, it disclosed a recess in which two little gasoline motors sat side by side, and the galley was an engine-room.

It was a very ingenious and inconvenient arrangement. Operating the stove and the engines at the same time was scarcely practicable; and we were often forced to the hard choice of lying still on a full stomach or travelling on an empty one.

There yet remains to be described the crew's quarters. The crew consisted of two hands, both strong and sturdy, and both belonging to the same coloured man. Though our trusty tar, Henry, had doubtless never heard "The Yarn of the 'Nancy Bell'" and had never eaten a shipmate in his life, yet he had a whole crew within himself as truly as the "elderly naval man" who had eaten one. There was therefore no occasion for extensive quarters. Fortunately, an available space at the stern was ample for the crew's cabin and all appointments.

All these interior arrangements were without the makeshifts so often found in houseboats. There were no curtains for partition walls nor crude bunks for beds. People aboard a houseboat must at

best be living in close quarters. But, upon even the moderate priced craft, much of the comfort, privacy, and refinement of home life may be enjoyed by heading off an outlay that tends toward gilt and grill work and turning it into substantial partitions, real beds, baths, and lavatories.

Gadabout was square at both ends; so that the uninitiated were not always sure which way she was going to go. Indeed, for a while, her closest associates were conservative in forecasting on that point. But that was for another reason. The boat was of extremely light draft. While such a feature enables the houseboater to navigate very shallow waters (where often he finds his most charming retreats), yet it also enables the houseboat, under certain conditions of wind and tide, to go sidewise with all the blundering facility of a crab.

At first, in making landings we were forced to leave it pretty much to Gadabout as to which side of the pier she was to come up on, and which end first, and with how much of a bump. But all such troubles soon disappeared; and, as there seemed no change in the craft herself, we were forced to believe that our own inexperience had had something to do with our difficulties.

To Gadabout and her crew, add anchors, chains and ropes, small boats, poles and sweeps, parallel rulers, dividers and charts, anchor-lights, lanterns and side-lights, compasses, barometers and megaphones, fenders, grapnels and boathooks—until the landlubberly owners are almost frightened back to solid land; and then all is ready for a houseboat cruise.

CHAPTER II

OUR FIRST RUN AND A COZY HARBOUR

Daylight came while Gadabout was lumbering down the Elizabeth, and in the glory of the early morning she followed its waters out into Hampton Roads, the yawning estuarial mouth of the James emptying into Chesapeake Bay.

She would probably have started in upon her cruise up the historic river without more ado if we had not bethought ourselves that she was carrying us into the undertaking breakfastless. The wheel was put over hard to port (we got that out of the books) and the craft was run in behind Craney Island and anchored.

While our breakfast was preparing, we all gathered in the forward cockpit to enjoy the scene and the life about us. The houseboat was lying in a quiet lagoon bordered on the mainland side by a bit of Virginia's great truck garden. Here and there glimpses of chimneys and roof lines told of truckers' homes, while cultivated fields stretched far inland.

The height of the trucking season was past, yet crates and barrels of vegetables were being hauled to the water's edge for shipment. The negroes sang as they drove, but often punctuated the melody with strong language designed to encourage the mules. One wailing voice came to our ears with the set refrain, "O feed me, white folks! White folks, feed me!" The crates and barrels were loaded on lighters and floated out to little sailing boats that went tacking past our bows on their way to Norfolk.

It was a pretty scene, but there was one drawback to it all. Everything showed the season so far advanced, and served to remind us of the lateness of our start. We had intended to take our little voyage on the James in the springtime. It had been a good deal a matter of sentiment; but sentiment will have its way in houseboating. We had wished to begin in that gentle season when the history of the river itself began, and when the history of this country of ours began with it.

For, whatever may have gone before, the real story of the James and of America too commences with the bloom of the dogwood some three hundred years ago, when from the wild waste of the Atlantic three puny, storm-worn vessels (scarcely more seaworthy than our tub of a houseboat) beat their way into the sheltering mouth of this unknown river.

That was in the days when the nations of Europe were greedily contending for what Columbus had found on the other side of the world. In that struggle England was slow to get a foothold. Neglect, difficulty, and misfortune made her colonies few and short-lived.