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Dominion Resources

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Introduction

Dominion Resources: The Story of An American Company chronicles the remarkable evolution of one of America's cornerstone energy companies. Tracing its lineage to the late 18th century, when the facilitation of waterways and the ambitions of Virginia's early industrialists shaped the economic geography of the young republic, Dominion's story is fundamentally entwined with the history of American infrastructure, innovation, and growth. Today, Dominion Energy stands among the nation's largest and most influential utility companies, a testament to more than two centuries of transformation in how Americans generate, distribute, and consume energy.

This book aims to provide a comprehensive narrative that weaves together the economic, technological, regulatory, and social threads that constitute Dominion's long history. From water-powered mills and canal construction, through the dawn of electrification, to the emergence of an integrated electric and natural gas energy giant, Dominion's journey mirrors the changing priorities and aspirations of American society itself. The company's path has been shaped by bold leadership, market consolidation, shifting regulatory landscapes, and persistent efforts to meet the complex, evolving demands of industry and consumers.

Crucially, Dominion's history is not a linear march. It is marked by acquisitions and divestitures, regulatory challenges, environmental controversies, and societal debates over the future of energy. The company's growth into new regions and energy sectors—whether through landmark acquisitions like Consolidated Natural Gas or Questar, or through its forays into renewable energy and innovative infrastructure—reflects both the potential and the peril of operating in a sector intimately tied to public policy and public trust.

Equally important are the internal dynamics that have guided Dominion's strategy and shaped its culture: its leadership transitions, organizational restructures, and the balancing act between profitability, reliability, and social responsibility. The company's engagement with issues such as sustainability, regulatory compliance, customer needs, and community wellbeing have all played pivotal roles in its ongoing adaptation to the needs of the American economy and society. Controversies, whether over environmental practices, political influence, or infrastructure development, have forced Dominion to reevaluate and sometimes fundamentally transform its approach to both business and public engagement.

In recent years, Dominion's response to the shifting landscape of climate policy, technological revolution, and changing customer expectations has been closely observed as an indicator of where the American utility sector might be headed. From

coal plants and nuclear reactors to solar, wind, battery storage, and advanced grid management, Dominion's investments and strategic choices offer a window into the opportunities and risks facing American energy companies at the start of a new era.

By telling the story of Dominion Resources, this book also tells a broader American story: one of ambition, adaptation, and the ongoing search for a balance between growth and stewardship. Whether you are a student of history, a business professional, an investor, or simply interested in the forces shaping your energy bills and local environment, this exploration of Dominion's legacy, current trajectory, and future prospects provides essential insight into a company—and an industry—at the heart of modern American life.

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CHAPTER ONE: The Colonial Origins: Waterways and the Appomattox Trustees

The story of Dominion Resources, now recognized as Dominion Energy, Inc., begins not with sparks of electricity or the hum of natural gas pipelines, but with the gentle currents of an American river in the late 18th century. Before the age of power grids and intricate energy networks, the lifeblood of commerce and community in colonial Virginia flowed through its waterways. The Appomattox River, a modest but vital artery rising in the Piedmont and winding eastward to meet the James River, served as a conduit for the burgeoning agricultural economy of the region.

In an era when transportation was slow and arduous, navigable rivers were prized possessions, acting as natural highways for goods and people. The bountiful tobacco, wheat, and corn harvested by planters in counties adjacent to the Appomattox—such as Amelia, Powhatan, Dinwiddie, Prince George, and Prince Edward on the south side, and Chesterfield, Goochland, Cumberland, and Buckingham on the north—relied heavily on the river for transport to markets. Petersburg, strategically located at the fall line of the Appomattox, emerged as a key hub, connecting inland agricultural production with the wider world via the Chesapeake Bay.

The challenges of river navigation, however, were considerable. Natural obstructions, such as rapids and shallow stretches, hindered the efficient movement of the bateaux, the flat-bottomed boats commonly used for river transport. Mills, vital for processing grains, also often featured dams that, while serving local industry, further impeded navigation. The necessity of improving these waterways for economic prosperity became increasingly apparent to Virginia's leaders.

It was against this backdrop of colonial ambition and practical necessity that the first threads of Dominion's corporate lineage were spun. In 1787, a mere four years after the Treaty of Paris formally ended the American Revolutionary War and established the United States as an independent nation, the Virginia General Assembly took a decisive step. This legislative body, which traces its own origins back to the House of Burgesses established in Jamestown in 1619, was acutely aware of the importance of infrastructure to the young state's development.

The General Assembly, recognizing the strategic importance of the Appomattox River, established the Appomattox Trustees. This body was formally created to "promote navigation along the Appomattox River." Their mandate was clear: to enhance the river's capacity for commerce, ensuring that agricultural products could flow freely from the interior to the port of Petersburg, and manufactured goods could make their

way upstream.

Among the notable individuals associated with this early endeavor were figures who would become titans of American history: George Washington and James Madison. While their direct involvement in the day-to-day operations of the Appomattox Trustees might have been limited by their national responsibilities, their association underscores the significance placed on internal improvements during the formative years of the United States. It was understood that a strong economy, facilitated by efficient transportation, was crucial for the fledgling republic's stability and growth.

The work of the Appomattox Trustees laid a foundational understanding of the intricate relationship between infrastructure, economic development, and public welfare—a relationship that would continue to define the evolution of Dominion. While the scope of their early efforts was confined to the improvement of a single river for bateaux, the principle of a corporate entity dedicated to enabling commerce through the management of vital resources was firmly established. The trustees' initial focus on water rights and the development of navigational infrastructure was, in essence, an embryonic form of what would later become large-scale energy production and distribution.

The establishment of the Appomattox Trustees in 1787 marked the very genesis of Dominion's corporate journey, even if the concept of a modern "energy company" was still centuries away. It was a time when the power of a river, harnessed for transport and eventually for early industry, represented the cutting edge of economic development. The foresight of these early Virginians, in organizing a formal body to manage and improve a natural resource for the collective good, set a precedent that would echo through the company's long and winding history, adapting to new technologies and new demands, but always rooted in the fundamental need to power society.

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