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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**400-YEAR-OLD REMAINS UNEARTHED IN JAMESTOWN, VA  
BELIEVED TO BE GOVERNOR SIR GEORGE YEARDLEY**

*Governor Presided Over Virginia's First Representative Legislative Assembly and Established the  
Foundation for American Democracy*

JAMESTOWN, VA (July 24, 2018) – Today, Jamestown Rediscovery, a 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution partner, announced the discovery of 400-year-old human remains at the site of the Jamestown 1617 church. A world class team of archaeologists, geneticists and forensic scientists have been assembled to identify the individual, who is believed to be Virginia Governor Sir George Yeardley. According to Jamestown Rediscovery, a preliminary forensic analysis in the field indicates that the individual is a male around 40 years of age, which is in line with what is known about Governor Yeardley.

Governor Yeardley presided over the [first representative legislative assembly](#) in English North America in 1619, which continues today as Virginia's General Assembly and was the basis for the democratic government of the United States of America. Today, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam visited the Jamestown archeological site to view remains that are believed to be of one of Virginia's first governors.

The grave the archaeological team is excavating is located in the church's central aisle, just in front of the chancel step to the altar and where it intersects with the choir, which would have been reserved for a prestigious person. Yeardley, who was governor at the time of his death in 1627, was one of the most notable people to die while the 1617 church was in use.

"This is an exciting discovery for Historic Jamestowne and we were pleased to welcome Governor Northam to the archaeological site today to meet one of the first governors of Virginia," said Dr. Jim Horn, President of Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation and Chief Officer of Programs at Historic Jamestowne. "This is a complicated site but the remains are in remarkably good shape and this will aid in identification of this individual. Also, working with our wonderful partners, the Jamestown Rediscovery archeological team has been able to apply new science and techniques to this project that will change the trajectory of future archaeology."

Over the next six to eight months the Jamestown Rediscovery team will work with specialists across the globe to collect evidence to try and prove whether the man buried in the aisle grave is Governor Yeardley. The team includes the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History's Skeletal Biology Program team; Ground Penetrating Radar specialists; the University of Leicester's Dr. Turi King, who led the genetic analysis for the King Richard III Identification Project; and dental specialists Dr. Josh Cohen of Virginia Commonwealth University and Dr. Martin Levin of the University of Pennsylvania. Additional information about the project can be found at [historiciamestowne.org](http://historiciamestowne.org).

Once the excavation is complete, forensic testing will be conducted by the FBI, and final identification results will be available in late spring 2019. The Smithsonian Channel has been following this excavation for the last year and will release the final results in a documentary that will air in 2019. Once all research is completed, Jamestown Rediscovery archaeologists plan to reinter the remains, giving proper recognition to one of Virginia's first governors. Raw video selects from the excavation are available from the Smithsonian Channel and can be viewed here <https://cbs.box.com/s/h0o6wy5vw3sx4g96upbpvs1r9zmxajo1>. Video Credit Smithsonian Channel.

"This discovery is an important part of telling our nation's history," said Kathy Spangler, Executive Director of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution™. "Governor Sir George Yeardley presided over the first legislative assembly in the New World; a pivotal event and individual in the formation of American democracy. Virginia's General Assembly is the longest standing representative government body in the United States."

On July 30, 2019, the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution will host the [Commemorative Session of the First Representative Legislative Assembly](#) in Jamestown, Va. The 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative event will convene members of Virginia's General Assembly and other special guests.

American Evolution commemorates the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of several pivotal events that took place in 1619 Virginia, which have had an enduring impact on Virginia and America's history. These important events set the state and the nation on a course towards the ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity. These 1619 events include the First Representative Legislative Assembly in the New World, the Arrival of the first recorded Africans to English North America, the recruitment of English women in significant numbers to the Virginia colony, the first official English Thanksgiving in North America and the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit of the Virginia colony.

For more information about the 2019 Commemoration, visit [AmericanEvolution2019.com](http://AmericanEvolution2019.com).

**About the 2019 Commemoration**

The 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution™, highlights events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 that continue to influence America today. Featured programs, events and legacy projects will position Virginia as a leader in education, tourism and economic development. American Evolution™ commemorates the ongoing journey toward the key ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity. Dominion Resources is an American Evolution Founding Partner and Altria Group and TowneBank are Virginia Colony Partners.

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