



Background Information

WHAT IS AMERICAN EVOLUTION™

The Commonwealth of Virginia is inviting all Americans to commemorate the 400th anniversary of key historical events that took place in Virginia in 1619 that continue to influence America today. Featured events, programs and legacy projects will inspire local, national and international engagement through the themes of democracy, diversity and opportunity.

WHAT MAKES 1619 AN IMPORTANT YEAR IN AMERICAN HISTORY?

The year 1619 was a pivotal year in the establishment of the first permanent English Colony in North America. 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, the first official English Thanksgiving in North America, and the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit of the Virginia colony.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF AMERICAN EVOLUTION?

The Commonwealth of Virginia along with notable Virginia institutions and national partners will launch a series of education programs, signature events and legacy projects of national and international significance to build awareness of Virginia's role in the creation of the United States and to reinforce Virginia's leadership in education, tourism and economic development.

WHY IS COMMEMORATING HISTORIC EVENTS IMPORTANT?

A core element of civics education is commemorating formative events in our nation's history. As a society, we need to fully understand the foundation for today's America. Learning about the challenges, successes and inequities of the past enables a full appreciation of the difficult path our nation has taken to arrive at today's America. The honest historical perspective empowers and motivates citizens, both current and future generations, to take an active role in shaping the course of our nation's future.

1619 HISTORICAL EVENTS

First Representative Legislative Assembly in the New World

The first "General Assembly," composed of men from each of Virginia's eleven major settlements met for the first time at Jamestown from July 30-August 4, 1619, planting the seed of democracy in America.

Arrival of the First Recorded Africans to English North America

The first enslaved Africans arrived at Old Point Comfort, Virginia in late August 1619, marking the moment when African history became a powerful and indelible influence on the development of our nation.

Recruitment of English Women in Significant Numbers

In November 1619, 147 English women were recruited to join Jamestown's male settlers, building permanence in the Colony.

First Official English Thanksgiving in North America

Upon safe arrival at Berkeley Hundred on December 4, 1619, a group of English settlers held a ceremony of Thanksgiving, which was to be observed annually and perpetually.

Entrepreneurial and Innovative Spirit of the Virginia Colony

A series of new laws passed in 1619 allowed Virginia colonists to experiment with various industries, helping to set the groundwork for America's free enterprise system.

CONNECT WITH AMERICAN EVOLUTION

America is one nation with many stories. We invite you to connect with us and join the conversation to share your perspectives about our ongoing American Evolution.

- Website - AmericanEvolution2019.com
- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram - [@Commemorate2019](https://www.instagram.com/Commemorate2019)