



CONTACT
Elizabeth Bement
2019 Commemoration
Elizabeth.bement@finnpartners.com
PH: (703) 915-5830

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**VIRGINIA'S 2019 COMMEMORATION, AMERICAN EVOLUTION, JAMESTOWN SETTLEMENT
AND HISTORIC JAMESTOWNE COMMEMORATE 400 YEARS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY IN
JULY**

Multiple events in Jamestown and Williamsburg will center on the first representative legislative assembly in the Western Hemisphere which took place in 1619 Virginia

Jamestown, VA (July 10, 2019) – Timed to coincide with the 400th anniversary of the first representative legislative assembly in the Western Hemisphere, Virginia's [2019 Commemoration, American Evolution, Jamestown Settlement](#), [Jamestown Rediscovery](#) and [Colonial National Historical Park](#) will host several events in the Historic Triangle to commemorate the beginning of 400 years of American democracy. The meeting of the first assembly took place from July 30 through August 4, 1619, and was comprised of two male settlers representing each of the 11 major settlement areas in Virginia. Governor Sir George Yeardley presided over the first convening of this new form of government in the church in Jamestown, VA, forming the basis of today's representative system of government in the United States of America.

This July, Jamestown Settlement will offer a month-long schedule of programming called "Origins of American Democracy." Between July 1 and August 1, visitors can explore museum gallery exhibits and interpretive living-history programs that examine the various forms of governmental rule that evolved at Jamestown leading to the formation of the first representative legislative assembly in 1619. From July 1 through September 30, the public can view the original minutes of the first legislative assembly that convened on July 30, 1619, which are on loan for the first time from the National Archives of the United Kingdom. On July 27-28, "Democracy Weekend," visitors are invited to participate in Jamestown Settlement's themed tours, interpretive programs, military exercises, and re-enactments of the first assembly of 20 "burgesses" who convened at Jamestown.

From July 29 - August 4 at Historic Jamestowne at Jamestown Island, Jamestown Rediscovery and Colonial National Historical Park will offer special programming related to 1619. Commemorative events, which will highlight the significance of both the first assembly as well as the arrival of the first Africans in English North America, will include walking tours, lectures, and family-friendly activities. Guests will also be able to witness the "moment of discovery" at archaeological sites related to the church where the first assembly met and at the Angela site, where one of the first Africans lived and worked. One of the week's signature events, "A Laudable form of Government" featuring Sir George Yeardley and many of the representatives at this historic first General Assembly meeting will be offered twice daily, except Thursday.

On July 30 at 8 p.m., plan to attend the free American Evolution Fanfare to Democracy concert featuring the Richmond Symphony at Historic Jamestowne and Jamestown Island. The concert is

presented by Riverside Health System with support from Colonial National Historic Park, Jamestown Rediscovery and Preservation Virginia.

On Wednesday, July 31, the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution , in partnership with William & Mary will host the [American Evolution Forum on the Future of Representative Democracy](#). The Forum will feature captivating discussions about civic engagement and the current, as well as future, state of democracy around the world. Featured speakers will include former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates; philanthropist David Rubenstein; Andrea Mitchell; Dr. Jeffrey Rosen; and other thought leaders on the evolution of democracy. The Forum will highlight the historic impact of democratic ideals on our nation and their impact on the world.

“America’s system of representative government began 400 years ago in the church on Jamestown Island. This first meeting of the 22 burgesses and Governor Sir George Yeardley sparked the evolution of our nation’s democratic principles and influenced the creation of democracies around the world,” said Kathy Spangler, Executive Director of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution. “American Evolution along with our partners are honored to host events that commemorate 400 years of American democracy.”

For more information on the 400th Anniversary of the First Representative Legislative Assembly events in America’s Historic Triangle visit Americanevolution2019.com/events/400thceremony.

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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 Energy is an American Evolution Founding Partner and Altria Group and TowneBank are Virginia Colony Partners.

About Jamestown Settlement

Jamestown Settlement, an official partner of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution, is a year-round stage for special exhibitions, events and programs honoring the 400th anniversary of key historical events in Virginia in 1619. This living-history museum of 17th-century Virginia, administered by the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, features world-class exhibitions, immersive galleries and films, and interactive living-history experiences in re-creations of a Powhatan Indian village, three 1607 ships and a 1610-14 fort.

About Historic Jamestowne at Jamestown Island

Historic Jamestowne, which is jointly administered by the National Park Service and Jamestown Rediscovery, preserves the original site of the first successful English settlement in North America. Entrance to the site is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Historic Jamestowne Visitor Center is open

from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., and the grounds remain open until dusk. General admission is \$20.00 per adult (which includes both Historic Jamestowne and Yorktown Battlefield for seven consecutive days). Children 15 & under are free. National Park Passes and Preservation Virginia Memberships are accepted; however a \$5 per person fee may apply. For further information, visit www.historicjamestowne.org or call (757) 856-1250.

About Jamestown Rediscovery

The Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation (JRF), a private non-profit organization, is committed to supporting preservation, education, and the archaeological investigation of Historic Jamestowne. JRF is affiliated with Preservation Virginia, a statewide historic preservation leader. In 1893 Preservation Virginia acquired 22.5 acres of Jamestown Island and in 1994 began the Jamestown Rediscovery archaeological project, which is still ongoing today.

About Colonial National Historical Park

Colonial National Historical Park (U.S. National Park Service) administers two of the most historically significant sites in English North America. Historic Jamestowne, the first permanent English settlement in North America in 1607, jointly administered with Jamestown Rediscovery, and Yorktown Battlefield, the final major battle of the American Revolutionary War in 1781. These two sites represent the beginning and end of English colonial America. Situated on the Virginia Peninsula, these sites are connected by the 23-mile scenic Colonial Parkway. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/colo.

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