



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: What is the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution™?

A: American Evolution™ commemorated the 400th anniversary of key historical events that occurred in Virginia in 1619, that continue to influence America today. Featured events, programs and legacy projects inspired local, national and international engagement in the themes of democracy, diversity, and opportunity. This Commemoration was not just about Jamestown or Fort Monroe – it in fact elevated the history and stories from cities and towns across the Commonwealth that had an enduring influence in shaping today’s America.

Q: What was the goal of American Evolution™?

A: The Commonwealth of Virginia, along with notable Virginia institutions and national partners, hosted 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.

Q: What did the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution™ commemorate?

A: American Evolution™ highlighted pivotal events of 1619 Virginia that have had an enduring impact on the Commonwealth and America’s history. American Evolution™ also explored the 400 years of intervening history and how 1619 issues that faced the English colonists, Africans and Indians are still relevant today.

The year 1619 was pivotal in the establishment of the first permanent English Colony in North America. A list of 1619 historical events include:

- First representative Legislative Assembly in the New World
- Recruitment of English Women in Significant Numbers
- Arrival of The First Recorded Africans To English North America
- First Official English Thanksgiving in North America
- Entrepreneurial and Innovative Spirit of The Virginia Colony

Q: How did the 2019 Commemoration benefit cities across the Commonwealth?

A: The Commemoration included education programs, events and legacy projects that generated significant and long-lasting economic development and tourism in cities across Virginia. The Commemoration engaged partners across the Commonwealth to explore Virginia's rich history and its impact on American Evolution™. See the Economic Impact Study Report [here](#).

Q: Why did we need to commemorate the events of 1619?

A: A core element of civics education is commemoration 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. This 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.