



## Building Democracy: The Story of Legislatures Episode 1: The Virginia Legislature of 1619

### Description:

Welcome to Our American States. You're about to listen to the first episode of a special 6-part mini series from the National Conference of State Legislatures called Building Democracy: The Story of Legislatures. This mini series will highlight the events that shaped the way we govern today and consider what the future may hold for America's first branch of government. This episode covers the first assembly in Jamestown, Virginia in 1619.

### Key Takeaways:

- In 2018, the Jamestown Rediscovery and the Smithsonian have stumbled upon something amazing. The bones of Sir George Yeardley. [0:35]
- One of the most influential characters in the history of American colonies, and no one has heard of him; Edwin Sandys. [3:20]
- Virginia - The first American startup. [7:05]
- John Smith - Not the charming young man Disney's Pocahontas makes him out to be. [8:55]
- The original colonists experienced extreme hardships, sickness, and death; and some of them resulted to cannibalism during their first winter at Jamestown. [10:30]
- Sir George Yeardley carries a document known as *The Great Charter* from London to Jamestown. [14:10]
- In 1619, 30 men gather to create the first general assembly, but they each leaned heavily on John Pory's experience, a former member of England's House of Commons [15:35]
- Human cargo from Africa arrives. The first of its kind to English North America. [21:40]
- The assembly created a set of laws and procedures for the colony and its inhabitants [24:45]
- Despite tobacco and slavery providing an economic boost to Jamestown, that wasn't enough to save it. [28:15]

### Guest List:

[Dr. Jim Horn](#): President of the Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation

[G.Paul Nardo](#): Clerk of the House and Keeper of the Rolls for the Virginia House of Delegates.

[Mary Elliott](#): Curator of American Slavery at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

[Nicholas Birdsong](#): NCSL policy specialist

Resources:

[Ncsl.org](#)

[Historicjamestowne.org](#)

[Si.edu](#)

[Edwin Sandys](#)

[George Yeardley](#)

[John Rolfe](#)

[John Smith \(explorer\)](#)

[James VI and I](#)

[Virginia's First Africans](#)