

Jamestown's System of Government

As Jamestown grew, the system of government developed and changed. In 1619 the Governor of Virginia called a meeting of the General Assembly. The General Assembly included two representatives called burgesses from each of the divisions of Virginia, along with the governor's council and the governor. They met as one legislative, or lawmaking body. Only certain free adult ~~men~~ men had the right to take part in the government.

By the 1640's, the burgesses became a separate legislative body called the **House of Burgesses**. They met separately from the governor's council, as one of two legislative bodies of the General Assembly. The House of Burgesses was the first elected legislative body in English America giving settlers the opportunity to control their own government.

Currently, the Virginia General Assembly is based on the establishment of the House of Burgesses at Jamestown in 1619.

1619 General Assembly

1 legislative body

two burgesses

Governor's Council

governor

1640's General Assembly

2 legislative bodies

House of
burgesses

+

Governor's
Councils