

dent." In 1623 he was reported by no less an authority than George Sandys to be inferior to none as "an expert in the country."³

There were, by 1614, four principal settlements in the colony: Jamestown, Kecoughtan (Elizabeth City after 1621), Henrico, and Charles City, but none was accorded institutional status until 1618, except the tentative move in that direction with the appointment of George Percy by Governor Dale. As an integral part of the Great Charter, the Company at London instructed Governor Sir George Yeardley in November that, upon arriving in Virginia, he should erect these four "ancient" communities into "cities or boroughs." Obviously Sir Edwin Sandys and his associates intended that colonial and local government should be developed simultaneously.⁴

Ten days before Sir George landed, Governor Argall anticipated matters by proclaiming on April 7, 1619: "I hereby give leave and license for the inhabitants of Jamestown to plant as members of the Corporation and Parish of the same." He also fixed the territorial limits of the corporation to include "the whole island," as well as part of the mainland and Hog Island in the James River. This was a definite advance in separating local concerns of the village (grandly termed the chief city of the Company) from those of the colony. At the first session of the new legislative Assembly, two men, both from the military forces, sat as members representing "James city."⁵

Uncertainty about just what this "Corporation" was still bothers us today. Was it merely an area—a parish; did it have a legal institutional basis; or was it, perhaps, a local court that conducted its affairs in the manner of an English court of general sessions? The few surviving records are confusing. In a