

chise. In every instance, as one might expect, the burgesses chosen were the leading planters, probably by acclamation in an open forum. Seven of the thirty-one men who attended the first meeting lived in Jamestown or the immediate vicinity and exemplify the composition of the body. The burgesses elected to represent the town were Captain William Powell and Ensign William Spense who had been in command there under the military rule and who continued to govern the post in that respect for several years. John Pory had lived in the village but a short time but was secretary of the Council; Thomas Pierce acted as sergeant-at-arms for the Assembly, and the Reverend Richard Buck served as chaplain. The Governor, Sir George Yeardley, was present, as was John Rolfe, both of them members of the Council and both residents of Jamestown.⁴

The first session of the General Assembly was held from July 30 to August 4, 1619—"the most convenient place we could find to sit in was the choir of the church," John Pory informs us. The Governor took his accustomed place with the councilors on either side of him. Secretary Pory, having been appointed speaker, sat in front of the Governor with John Twine, the clerk, on one side and Thomas Pierce, the sergeant, on the other. While Master Buck offered a prayer, the burgesses stood in the choir; afterward they took regular places in the body of the church. Like all Englishmen, these dignitaries cherished ceremony, and, guided by John Pory who had been a member of the House of Commons, they followed the procedures of that body as closely as they could. In one respect, however, they copied the court of the Company, whose treasurer, councilors, and adventurers sat as one body; not until 1663 did they divide and sit as two houses.⁵

Convening in Jamestown in the last days of July, which in