



The Colony of Virginia was partitioned into eight shires in 1634. The eight original shires were

1. Accawmack Shire,
2. Charles City Shire,
3. Charles River Shire,
4. Elizabeth City Shire,
5. Henrico Shire,
6. James City Shire,
7. Warwick River Shire, and
8. Warroaquoake Shire.

In 1642 the name of Charles River Shire was changed to York Shire, as was the name of the River; the name of Warroaquoake Shire was changed to Isle of Wight Shire; the name of Warwick River Shire was changed to Warwick Shire; and the name of Accawmack Shire was changed to Northampton Shire.

As Virginia grew, many counties were established by cutting off parts of the eight original shires. Today there are 95 counties and 39 independent cities. Also, several counties were established, later dissolved, and are extinct today. Every county and independent city that exists today can be traced back to one of the eight original shires. The map of Virginia above shows the region covered by all of the present-day counties and cities that were off-springs of each of the eight original shires.

I have chosen to limit the western and southern boundaries to those of the present-day state of Virginia. In 1634, the colony extended to the Ohio River and included the land currently in the states of Kentucky and West Virginia, and the southern boundary was not well established.