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On December 6, 1800, Clermont County was established in the Northwest Territory by a proclamation of General Arthur St. Clair, Governor of the Territory, two years and three months before Ohio became a state. The county was created in part from the eastern portion of Hamilton County and did not become Clermont County, Ohio until March 1, 1803.

All of Clermont County was in the Virginia Military District, which was an area of over four million acres of land reserved by Virginia and used as payment for veterans of the Revolutionary War. This area was bordered by the Ohio River in the south, the Little Miami River in the west, and the Scioto River in the east and the north. Virginia issued bounty land grants in this District until Ohio became a state.

William Perry, born in about 1775, was appointed as the first Sheriff of Clermont County by the Governor of the Northwest Territory in 1800. It is believed that he emigrated to the area of northern Kentucky in the area of what is now Campbell County.

He was married to Nancy Ward in Hamilton County in 1798.

The first court ever held in Clermont County, the General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, convened on the fourth Tuesday in February 1801 with Sheriff William Perry empaneling the first grand jury.

William Lytle II, a land speculator, was appointed by Governor St. Clair as the Clerk of Courts at the same time as Perry's appointment. Lytle had been commissioned to survey the western portion of the Virginia Military District. Later becoming a general with the Ohio Militia and serving in the War of 1812, he platted the village of Williamsburg around 1800. William Perry, a skilled surveyor, was instrumental in developing the infrastructure of the village used to connect it to the outside world. He was among the early purchasers of village lots when Lytle began selling them in July of 1800.

Perry moved westward from Williamsburg to Hamilton County and sold his 82 acres of land in Clermont County to Joseph Beckelshimer on August 13, 1809. According to the deed transfer, the land had been part of a Tract granted to William Lytle bearing the date of July 5th, 1799.

Around 1809, Perry settled in Hamilton County in a rural community named Madison (named after President James Madison), now renamed Madisonville after annexation to Cincinnati in 1911. There, he built a log structure and entered the tavern business. Perry's father-in-law, Joseph Ward, was the first permanent settler in the town.

Perry died about 1826. His will was probated on May 22, 1826 in Campbell County, Kentucky. While the exact whereabouts of his grave is unknown, his wife Nancy died on July 31, 1853 and is buried in the Evergreen Cemetery, Southgate, Kentucky.

