

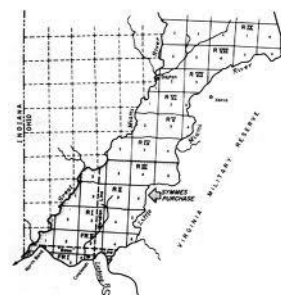
EARLY HAMILTON COUNTY BOUNDARIES

Genealogists researching their early southwest Ohio ancestors are often unaware of the many boundary changes that Hamilton County underwent before Ohio became a state in 1803. At one time in 1792, Hamilton County, Northwest Territory, covered most of the western third of the current state of Ohio and part of Michigan to the Canadian border. From 1798 to 1803 several southeastern Indiana counties were also part of Hamilton County. Descendants of settlers in these areas at those early times are eligible for membership in First Families of Hamilton County.

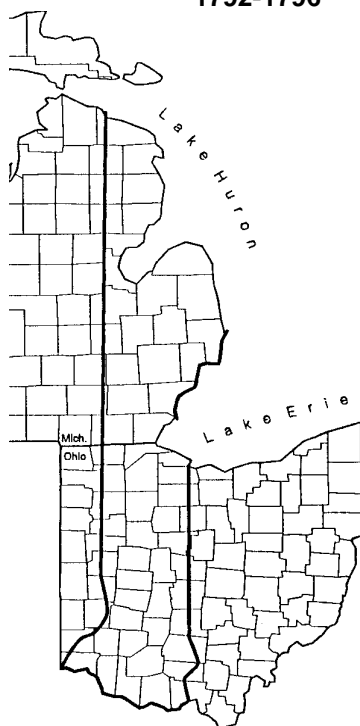
In the 1660's, early French explorers discovered the Ohio River. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 ended the French and Indian War and gave control of this area to the British. The Shawnee and the Miami were the Indian tribes in the western Ohio lands at the time. Near the end of the Revolutionary War, George Rogers Clark led 1,000 mounted riflemen up the Great Miami valley to destroy British outposts, giving the Americans control of what was to become the Northwest Territory. After the Revolutionary War, many colonial states claimed lands in this area because some of the colonial charters from the British kings specified title to the lands from 'sea to sea'.

NORTHWEST TERRITORY AND SYMMES PURCHASE

In July, 1787, Congress enacted the Northwest Ordinance establishing the Northwest Territory, and later that year Congress sold John Cleves Symmes over 250,000 acres between the Miami Rivers. In November 1788, Major Benjamin Stites led the first group of permanent settlers down the Ohio to establish Columbia at the mouth of the Little Miami River near the site of the present day Lunken Airport.



HAMILTON COUNTY 1792-1796



HAMILTON COUNTY On July 9, 1788, General Arthur St. Clair, the President of Congress, arrived at Marietta to become the governor of the new Northwest Territory which extended west to the Mississippi and north to the Great Lakes. He established the first county in the territory, Washington County, which covered the eastern half of the area which later became Ohio.

On Jan 2, 1790, Governor St. Clair moved his headquarters west to Fort Washington at Losantiville. He immediately established and organized Hamilton County as the second county, declared the new village to be its county seat, and renamed the town "Cincinnati". Hamilton County was named by Judge Symmes in honor of his friend, Alexander Hamilton, then the first Secretary of the Treasury, 1789-1795.

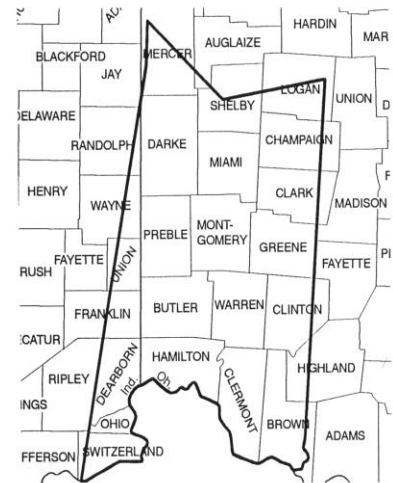
Initially, from 1790 to 1792, Hamilton County covered the area between the Miami Rivers. "Beginning with the mouth of the Little Miami; thence down the (Ohio) river to the mouth of the Big Miami, and up said stream to the standing stone forks; thence in a straight line due east to the Little Miami, then down that stream to the place of the beginning."

In 1792 Hamilton County's boundaries were extended east to the Scioto River and north to the Great Lakes. Hamilton County changed its borders ten times over the first eighteen years.

VIRGINIA MILITARY DISTRICT The state of Virginia reserved over 4 million acres of land between the Scioto and Little Miami Rivers to reward her soldiers who served in the Revolutionary War. Bounties ranged from 100 acres to 15,000 acres depending on rank and length of service. They could be sold or passed on to the heirs of a soldier or officer killed in the war. General George Washington had warrants totaling 3051 acres in Clermont and eastern Hamilton counties. The first patents for the Virginia lands were not issued until February, 1796.

INDIANA LANDS In 1798, Hamilton County added part of the Indiana Territory's Knox County. This area of land is sometimes referred to as the 'wedge' or 'gore', an old term for a triangle of land. The boundary ran north from the mouth of the Kentucky River to Fort Recovery. An Indian treaty ceded this triangular land in 1795 and opened the area to settlement, but it was not until six years later after the land had been surveyed and a land office opened at Cincinnati, that it could be purchased. In the meantime, many settlers moved in and "squatted" on the land hoping to purchase their site when the area was opened for sale. Early Indiana entries refer to this area as the Cincinnati District. When the state of Ohio was formed in 1803, the line reverted to one drawn due north from the mouth of the Great Miami River.

HAMILTON COUNTY 1798



According to the Hamilton County Recorders Office, most records for these areas that are no longer part of the current Hamilton County were long ago returned to the local newly formed counties.

HAMILTON COUNTY BOUNDARY CHANGES

- 1790, Jan 2 Hamilton County organized.
- 1792, Feb 11 Boundary Extended east to Scioto River and north to the Great Lakes.
- 1796, Aug 15 Diminished by formation of Wayne County, Northwest Territory.
- 1797, Jul 10 Diminished by formation of Adams County.
- 1798, Jun 22 Part of Knox County, Northwest Territory added.
- 1798, Aug 20 Diminished by formation of Ross County.
- 1798, Sep 1 Part attached to Adams County.
- 1800, Dec 6 Diminished by formation of Clermont County.
- 1802, Apr 30 Diminished by Enabling Act of Ohio.
- 1803, May 1 Diminished by formation of Warren, Butler, Montgomery and Greene Counties.
- 1808, Jan 20 Part attached to Butler County.

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