

1855



2005

A day in Flint History



1831: French writer Alexis de Tocqueville visits the Flint River settlement

Two traveling Frenchmen who entered the Flint River settlement on horseback after dark on July 24, 1831, were curiosities, not because they were French, but because they were tourists.

In 1831, almost without exception the people that entered the Saginaw Valley were Indian traders, soldiers or settlers. The travelers were Alexis de Tocqueville and his friend, Gustave de Beaumont.

To this day students read and dissect Tocqueville's "Democracy in America," the famous firsthand account of his travels through

young America and his astute observations from a foreign visitor's point of view. His account in "Journey to America" relates: "Our traveling clothes and rifles made us not look like business men, and to travel to see the sights was something completely unwonted. To make short work of explanations, we said that we had come to buy land."

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Source: Centennial Picture History of Flint