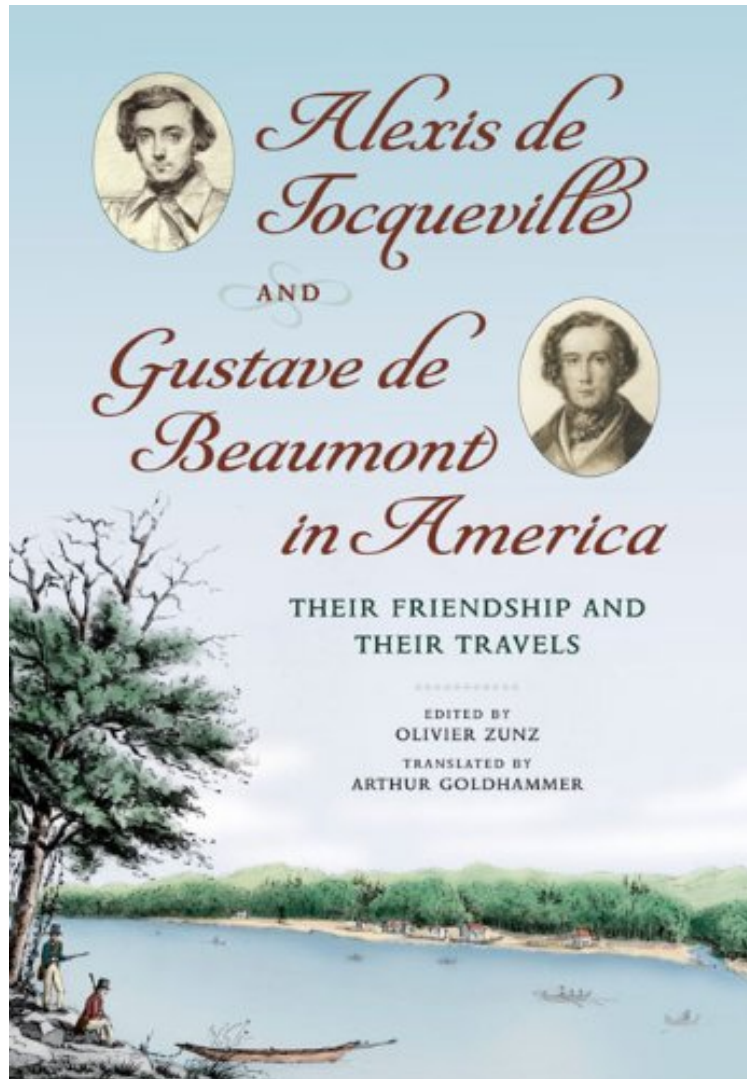


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Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont in America: Their Friendship and Their Travels

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From Brand: University of Virginia Press : Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont in America: Their Friendship and Their Travels before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont in America: Their Friendship and Their Travels:

8 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Reminding us what we are!By CliffordI'm only an amateur historian, but this volume - literally, a blast from the past - reminded me why I thank the Lord every day that I live in

America. We are, and must remain, exceptional. Whether the world chooses to recognize this or not, the world depends on American exceptionalism. I think it should be required reading for all eighth graders and college seniors! I wish our politicians would read it from time to time.

Alexis de Tocqueville, a young aristocrat of twenty-five, worried deeply about the future of France as well as his own fate in his native country, which had just experienced its second revolution in less than fifty years. Along with Gustave de Beaumont, a fellow magistrate, Tocqueville conceived the idea that by traveling to America he could penetrate the secret of the modern world, in which democracy and equality were destined to rule. Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont in America reproduces the journey of these two friends in an authoritative and elegant volume. Zunz and Goldhammer present most of the surviving letters, notebooks, and other texts that Tocqueville and Beaumont wrote during their decisive American journey of 1831-32, as well as their reflections and correspondence on America following their return to France. Also reproduced here are most of the sketches from the two sketchbooks Beaumont filled during their travels. The two young men relied on these documents in writing their individual works on America, Tocqueville's seminal *Democracy in America* (1835-40) and Beaumont's novel *Marie or, Slavery in the United States* (1835). Focusing on American equality, Tocqueville made a lasting contribution to Western political thought by framing modern history as a continuous struggle between political liberty and social equality, and presented the United States as having struck a proper balance between the two ideals. Beaumont concentrated instead on the brutality of racial prejudice. These extraordinarily rich and often profound texts constitute the indispensable record of their intertwined engagement with the United States, which we see here through the unfailingly intelligent gaze of two young Frenchmen with a unique appreciation of what was novel in the American experiment.

From Publishers Weekly Under the guise of investigating the American penal system, Tocqueville and Beaumont spent several months in 1831 and 1832 traveling America in search of the true character of the country's peoples, wildernesses, and democracy. They journeyed through the Great Lakes as far west as Green Bay, Wisc., through the wilds of Tennessee, and down the Mississippi to New Orleans. They were welcomed and feted at the highest levels of society, and their prodigious writings, which display a remarkable talent for close observation, provide a fascinating glimpse into a nascent America. Both men decry a lack of fine arts, an obsession with material wealth, and "barbarous music." They soundly condemn the practice of slavery as not only socially unacceptable but economically disastrous. Equally, the base treatment of Native Americans (they witnessed "relocation" at its very worst) shocked them. This compendium of letters from Zunz and Goldhammer (who previously collaborated on a 2004 volume of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*) is not only an exceptional glimpse into 19th-century life in America, but a wonderful and accessible companion to Tocqueville's own classic text. Illustrations. (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. This compendium of letters from Zunz and Goldhammer (who previously collaborated on a 2004 volume of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*) is not only an exceptional glimpse into 19th-century life in America, but a wonderful and accessible companion to Tocqueville's own classic text. (Publishers Weekly) The past few years have been kind to Tocqueville (*Democracy in America*) followed by two new translations of Tocqueville's *Letters from America*. Last year's translation by Frederick Brown included all of Tocqueville's letters, with selected letters from Beaumont, his partner on the 1831-32 journey to the States. This volume, edited with commentary by noted Tocqueville scholar Zunz (coeditor, *The Tocqueville Reader*) and translated by the distinguished Goldhammer (Ctr. for European Studies, Harvard), is much more expansive. In addition to Tocqueville's letters, it contains all of Beaumont's letters home in their entirety, and it presents the two men's work journals, summaries of interviews, copious excerpts from Beaumont's subsequent novel, *Marie; or, Slavery in the United States* (1835), and Tocqueville's later writings on American democracy and the American character. Tocqueville's journal notes, in particular, show how thorough and intelligent a researcher and thinker he was. The volume is attractively illustrated with Beaumont's sketches from the trip. VERDICT No serious library can afford to be without this exceptional volume, which is translated and edited superbly. It will give as much pleasure to casual browsers as to serious Tocqueville scholars. (Library Journal) Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* is a book that every American who reads should read. There's no better book on democracy and none better on America, first home of modern democracy. Among a wave of new translations and analyses in recent years, these two volumes provide elegant decoration for Tocqueville's masterpiece. Frederick Brown has edited and translated a handy collection of the letters Tocqueville wrote while traveling through America in 1831-32, speaking with Americans and gathering documents in preparation for his book. Olivier Zunz and Arthur Goldhammer have produced a tome fit for a generous gift, containing the same letters as in Mr. Brown's collection, plus Tocqueville's travel notebooks, narrations of his side-trip to the frontier, later letters, other writings on America and ample selections of writings from Tocqueville's friend and companion on the trip, Gustave de Beaumont. This book even includes pictures of American birds that Tocqueville and Beaumont shot so that Beaumont could paint them thus illustrating Tocqueville's uncanny appeal both to the left (lovers of nature) and the right (lovers of hunting). (Wall Street Journal) Lucidly translated, excellently edited, and handsomely produced, this superb volume offers a unique collection of the views of Tocqueville and Beaumont on early America. Their abundant correspondence and

travel notes, written during their journey through the US, allows readers to follow the flow of impressions and perspectives that culminated in Tocqueville's classic *Democracy in America* (1835). This edition also does full justice to the thought of Gustave de Beaumont...Indispensable reading for anyone interested in Tocqueville or in early US politics and society. Summing Up: Essential. All levels/libraries (CHOICE)Here, for the first time in English, are the primary documents for understanding Alexis de Tocqueville's famous commentary on *Democracy in America*. Olivier Zunz's learned, judicious, and fluent introduction identifies Tocqueville's sources of information and compares his impressions with those of his companion Beaumont. An essential book for the history, political science, and sociology of America. (Daniel Walker Howe, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*)Especially considering the dispersion of the original letters and the travel notebooks over several different volumes of Gallimard's *Oeuvres complètes* and of the *Pliade* edition, it is useful to have all the materials related to the American journey together in one handy volume. In addition, the fact that we have here not just Tocqueville's voice but also that of his travel companion Beaumont is more than an added bonus. The comparison with Beaumont, as this volume makes clear, is crucial for understanding how the actual journey impacted the two friends in very different ways. In addition, the letters and other writings are beautifully translated by the unparalleled Arthur Goldhammer, and the footnotes and scholarly apparatus are meticulously researched as well as user-friendly. All in all, *Tocqueville and Beaumont in America* is a worthy and important addition to the ever-increasing volume of Tocqueville's translated oeuvre. (Annelien de Dijn H-France)About the AuthorArthur Goldhammer has translated more than one hundred works from the French, including Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* and *The Ancien Régime and the French Revolution*. He is an affiliate of the Center for European Studies at Harvard University and a member of the editorial board of *French Politics, Culture, and Society*. Olivier Zunz is Commonwealth Professor of History at the University of Virginia. He edited (with Alan S. Kahan) *The Tocqueville Reader: A Life in Letters and Politics*, authored *Why the American Century?*, and served as president of The Tocqueville Society/La Société Tocqueville.