Topton's story begins with the beginnings of Pennsylvania. In 1681 Pennsylvania was given to William Penn in exchange for the debt owed to his father's service in the Navy. William Penn came to Pennsylvania in 1682 and stayed for 2 years. Returning to England, Penn published papers advertising Pennsylvania to immigrants, which was extremely successful among Germans. The Frankfort Land Company was established and aided in selling land to the immigrants. Berks county, especially received large amounts of Lutherans and Germans.

Around the areas surrounding and including Topton, iron ore was found underneath almost every farm. An estimated 100 mines were opened and excavated using stem power. Due to its large success, many villages developed.

In 1854 the Allentown Railroad Company was given the rights to build a rail line from Allentown to Philadelphia and have Reading Railroad join the line in between Reading and Port Clinton. The railroad was never finished, but because it was not finished a section was constructed from Topton to Kutztown lasting only 4 and a half miles. It was officially opened January 1870.

In 1858 Philadelphia and Reading Railroad was to build the Lebanon Valley Railroad, consisting of 54 miles from Reading to Harrisburg. The following year construction begun on rail from Reading to Allentown. These rail lines allowed opportunities to ship products to cities which like the iron ore deposits led to many new villages. More mines were opened because of the abundance of hematite ore.

On May 19, 1859 Topton was given its name. An inspector of the East Penn Railroad, Judge George D. Stitzel, found the highest point between Reading and Allentown and named the town Topton, for that reason. The land was owned by several families, the Haas, Butz and Diener farm was some of the more famous.

In 1869 a store was built by Jerome Titlow & Co. It was later occupied by the Topton Bank. In 1861 the Post Office Department gave J.D. Haas the authority of
Post Master and by 1871 there were 4 mails per day. In 1874 the Washington House was the borough's first lodge house. “The spirit of fraternity challenged the citizens” and the Top Stamm Red Men was established in 1873. The Topton Lodge K. of P. was established later that year. In 1876 the Knights of the Mystic was instituted but only lasted 3 years before being abandoned.

In January 1877 the first elections were held. 6 council members, 1 burgess, 1 tax collector and a justice of the peace were given seats. From there they appointed a secretary, highway commissioner, treasurer and the president of the council. At that time they governed over 53 taxable citizens. In 1878 the code of laws of near by town Fleetwood were adopted as Topton's own.

Today the governing body of Topton consist of a mayor and 7 council members, one being the president of the council and a second member being the vice president of the council. The council member are broken into 6 subcommittees, with each having a chair in one committee with two other members; finance, park and recreations, personnel, property, streets and utilities. There are also 15 positions of Topton officials ranging from Police Chief to Zoning Hearing Board. (Tax collector, sec./treas./manager, solicitor, engineer, sewage plant operator, water plant operator, coord. Maint/ facilities, parks/streets, zoning officer, fire chief, police chief, plumbing insp., housing insp., municipal authority, planning comm. and zoning hearing board).

The Topton borough Council meets every 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} Monday of the month. Starting in January of 2005 the council has been occupied with several problems. One major problem is the borough's sewer problem. A workshop was planned to be held on January 24\textsuperscript{th} at the January 12\textsuperscript{th} meeting. The councilmen debated the best way to find the floor drains connected with the sewer system causing the infiltration problems. Topton has 842 residential units that could be inspected. Dale A Cullin, council president believes a blanket inspection of all units is required to find the faulty
drains. However Stephen B. Beck, a council member believed the the blanket inspection was not needed due to the fact that many homes do not use their floor drains and forcing the residents to pay for unneeded inspections may cause legal action from the residents. In March the Topton Borough Council decided to inspect only 200 of the homes to find the floor drains connected to the sewer system problems. The council will also begin to require sewage inspections of homes before they are sold. There was an ordinance passed in March of 2004, but never enforced.(Reading-Eagle, Zainab Abdul-Fattah).

In March of 2005 the Council talked about renovating the borough pool. An estimate of $90,000 was given. After a leak found in the children's pool a further inspection showed more problems. The council debated whether or not to fix the pool as soon as possible or wait till the fall when prices would be cheaper but lose the children's pool for the summer.(Reading-Eagle, Jill Sheetz).

In April of 2005 the borough voted to install a 95 foot permanent fence on the youth baseball field. The fence is to be completed for this baseball season. At the meeting on April 13, 2005 a seat on the zoning hearing board was vacant and offered for anyone interested to apply.(Reading-Eagle Zainab Abdul-Fattah).

In comparing Topton census data (2000) to the United States census data (2000), the small town is very similar to the majority of America. Topton has a total population of 1,948. 946 of whom are males, 1,002 are females making the average 48.6% to 51.4% compared to the United States male/female percent being 49.1 to 50.9%. 76% of Topton is between 18 and 65 compared to the U.S. average of 74%. Topton's racial background is very homogeneous. 1,926 make up the 98.9% who are white.1 black person contributes to the 0.1%. The highest racial group besides whites are Hispanic making up 1.2%. The average household size of Topton is 2.42 compared to 2.59. The average family size is 2.90 compared to 3.14 of the U.S. (U.S.
The social characteristics of Topton are generally speaking, very different for the rest of the U.S. Those with a high school degree or higher make up 79.1% of Topton compared to 80.4%. Those with a BA or higher only make up 18.6% of Topton compared to the national average of 24.4%. Those who have served in the military and have returned make up 15.5% of Topton compared to 12.7% of the U.S. Foreign born citizens make up 0.4% of Topton compared to 11.1% of the U.S. Males who are currently married are 61.3% of the population compared to 27.5% and females who are married make up 56.3% of Topton compared to 26.9%. (U.S. Census Bureau).

The economic characteristics of Topton are better than average compared to the national average. The median household income is $45,888 compared to $41,994. The median family income is $56,667 compared to $50,046. The Per Capita income is also higher, $24,009 to $21,587. The families below the poverty level are less than the average, 2.2% to 9.2%. The individuals below the poverty level are at 3.8% compared to 12.4%. However, the median value of homes in Topton are lower than the national average: $95,300 to $119,600. (U.S. Census Bureau).

Now that I have laid out the history of Topton, Topton's government and how Topton relates to the nation I can interpret how Tocqueville may view Topton, and as other experts see how Topton's democracy is or is not healthy. To begin, Tocqueville finds problems in democracy, but a healthy democracy can combat the ills of an unchecked democracy. Tocqueville believed that a disproportionately high portion of power in the legislative branch is a problem. If the legislative branch gets too much power from the majority than the minorities rights will be ignored. Another problem Tocqueville finds in democracies is a lack of passion for freedom. Taking freedom for granted can occur when people do not participate. Americans hold equality strongly. But when equality leads to individualism and materialism it hurts
democracy. To remedy these ailments of democracy, Tocqueville believed independent judiciary branch having influence on the legislative branch along with a strong executive branch. Tocqueville also believed local self governments could be used to decentralize administration. Religion and education were also key core values Tocqueville felt would help keep democracy healthy.

When Topton formed and began to grow the people of the town formed lodges. Tocqueville said that, “In towns it is impossible to prevent men from assembling, getting excited together and forming sudden passionate resolves. Towns are like great meeting houses with all the inhabitants as members. In them the people wield immense influence over their magistrates and often carry their desires into execution without intermediaries”. Having open forums at borough council meeting also allow the citizens to have a direct connection to the executive officials. The council member's vote to only inspect 200 of the 842 homes in Topton demonstrated the health of their democracy to carry out the will of the majority but not to ignore the minority. Topton also has a strong democracy according to Tocqueville's view of community good. The borough felt it was very important to have a pool for the community to keep bonds tight as a group not as individuals. Topton also has a 15% veteran community which is 3% points higher than the nation. Tocqueville believed an unhealthy democracy as on without passion for freedom. Thus, the higher veteran percentage is a strong indicator that Topton's community has a strong passion for freedom. According to performance democracy, “successful elites govern with an eye to sustaining their winning coalitions, and citizens are rendered relatively inactive” (pg.142). I believe this is why Topton has an above average economic status, but below average education level compared to the nation. Topton citizens are well off so there is no need to become more educated and involved in politics. However, according to Dewey who is a participatory democracy theorist, “It forces a
recognition that there are common interests, even though the recognition of what they are is confused; and the need it enforces of discussion and publicity brings about some clarification of what they are. The man who wears the shoe knows best that it pinches and where it pinches, even if the expert shoemaker is the best judge of how the trouble is to be remedied”(pg 169). Dewey would have felt the council members issuing a “workshop” open to the public on deciding how to address the sewer problem was a sign of a healthy democracy. Benjamin Barber said that, “Active citizens govern themselves directly here, not necessarily at every level and in every instance, but frequently enough and in particular when basic policies are being decided and when significant power is being deployed”(174). If you view the Borough's decision to open debate on whether a blanket inspection or a specific home inspection is need to the public, shows a healthy democracy according to protective theorists: “By relegating the activities of public power to the narrowest space of action that is compatible with the maintenance of social order, this model [protective democracy] claims to ensure the broadest possible range of freedoms in the private sphere”(91).

Tocqueville believed that religion was another key to a healthy democracy. He also believed that individualism can hurt democracy. Using the U.S. Census Bureau, I found that Topton has a large married population (males 61.3%, females 56.35) compared to the U.S. (males 27.5%, females 26.9%). Being married puts you in a family and you are less likely to act in your own individual desires. I also found that Topton has a large Lutheran population. Tocqueville said, “It was Christianity (drawing on Judaism) that established three necessary premises for modern democracy: the inherent dignity of each person, rooted in the freedom that makes each person an Imago Dei; the principle of the universal equality of all humans in the sight of God, whatever their natural inequalities; and the centrality of human liberty to the
purposes and principles for which God created the cosmos” (Michael Novak).

Joseph A. Schumpeter said that “management of some of these affairs requires special aptitudes and techniques and will therefore have to be entrusted to specialists who have them” (page 143). I subscribe to the performance democracy theories. Experts are put in positions to make decisions for the people. If the democracy is going well then you keep following the expert, if not then you find a new representative. I believe participation is important, but not in every aspect of politics. Community organizations and council meetings in local governments is more effective to influence the town or borough than waiting to vote in the next election. Issues may not be understood as well to the common people as it is to an expert.

If Tocqueville were to judge Topton, then I believe he would see Topton as a very healthy democracy. He stresses the importance of religion in democracy; Topton has a high level of Lutherans in their community. Topton also has a very high married population. Tocqueville believed that equality would lead to individualism which is an detriment to democracy; I see marriage as a catalyst for the greater good way of thinking. Topton's elected officials are also concerned not with political issues but improving the community's recreations. The borough recently invested in a chain link fence of a youth baseball field as they are renovating the borough' children pool. Tocqueville also sees the lack of passion for freedom as an ill of democracy. I related a love for freedom with service for the country. Topton has a higher percent population that have served than the average of the country.

I believe that Schumpeter could best explain why Topton seems to have a lower education level that the nation, but a higher family and house income along with an investment in the community and active citizenship; “there exists a Common Good, the obvious beacon light of policy, which is always simple to define and which every normal person can be made to see by means of rational argument. There is
hence no excuse for not seeing it and in fact no explanation”(143). The U.S. Census Bureau gave a low percent in the population of bachelor's degree or higher, but the majority of the population did have a high school degree or higher, which is educated enough to determine the “Common Good”.

In conclusion, Tocqueville would have been optimistic of Topton's democracy. Topton was born out of railroads, farming and iron ore, yet the prosperity never alienated the community. The large Lutheran population may have kept the community together, along with civic groups. At the beginning there was the Topon Lodge as today there is the Topton American Legion. I believe the message from the mayor says it all: “We have two inspirational churches with rich histories and invite you to visit them. The Topton VMC Pool and various athletic fields provide recreational opportunities in the community. Various youth athletic groups provide opportunities to participate in a variety of sports programs. Wade Miller a favorite son of the community currently is a pitcher for the National League Houston Astros. Educational needs are met by the Brandywine School District with various events held throughout the year. A minstrel program with outstanding local talent is held annually at the school. The Lutheran Home at Topton is an inspiring site located on a hilltop just south of the Borough.”(Lawrence D. Werst).
Bibliography


<http://w1.igateway.com/clients1/topton/index.stm>

<http://www.readingeagle.com>
<http://factfinder.census.gov>