We have quite a bit of documentation of our history after Mr. Opheim came here in 1879. The American Indians, Metis and French were here before that but it’s harder to find their records.

One area that the French explored first was Baldhill Creek. In Nicollet and John Fremont’s 1839 expedition they were guided by Louison Freniere and were joined for part of their journey by the Jesuit Missionary [Pierre-Jean De Smet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre-Jean_De_Smet).

They camped near the mouth of a little river which the guides said came from quite far away to the northwest flowing from a big salt lake. The French called it “la riviera aux premieres buttes pelees” because of one hill slashed by a vertical cliff without vegetation which was on the right bank of the Sheyenne near the junction of this river. It came to be translated into English as “Baldhill Creek”. They also said their first camp was on the first bald hills on the Sheyenne and their next camp was on the second bald hills of the Sheyenne. This area has been modified by the Baldhill Dam forming Lake Ashtabula and their original camping area is now under water.

The “Big Salt Lake” may have been the big slough in Bartley Township. Baldhill Creek also flows from other streams near Red Willow Lake, Lake Sibley and Lake Juanita so it could have been some other slough or lake.

He goes on to describe the hills saying “The bald hills are made by water cutting through the plateau that is about 150 feet above the bed of the river. The base of this land is the bituminous clay belonging at the top of the last stage of the great formation I have described along the Missouri. Here the bald hills are remarkable. They resemble Indian mounds made by the hand of man”.

These mounds are mentioned in several history books on eastern North Dakota and usually described as geological formations but are sometimes referred to as Indian ceremonial mounds.

http://books.google.com/books?id=jJzlmqo0zzgC&pg=PA181&lpg=PA181&dq=fremont+baldhill+creek&source=bl&ots=i5rMGRA9jL&sig=D8yaYvt9gx8LwkzuxjstCs4mk5o&hl=en&sa=X&ei=JMDTULmiBua02gXczIHABw&ved=0CDsQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=fremont%20baldhill%20creek&f=false