

Lois Foster might not have actually hollered "Eureka!" like the ancient Greek mathematician Archimedes did as he leapt from his bath and ran naked through the streets when he discovered a way to determine the purity of gold. But Foster remembers startling a group of researchers inside the Land Registry Office in Belleville in 1981 as she exclaimed loudly on finding the information proving the ownership of the home of one of Belleville's most prominent early citizens, Billa Flint.

"I can remember the day I found it. It was so exciting to find this building. There were these people in the room — title searchers and other people that worked there and I said loudly, 'Oh, guess what I found. This building was built by Billa Flint in 1835,'" she says, laughing as she recalls herself getting up from her seat immediately and running across to the counter to show her friend her discovery of the record of the deed for the building on 180 Coleman St.

Foster, a long-time member of the Hastings County Historical Society, received her 25-year volunteer pin in November 2002, for her work delving into local history. She admits that her discovery of the Flint home was the highlight of her efforts over the years.

"I often did lots of research at the Registry Office. Finding the Flint house was very exciting when I found the deed. It said exactly when it was built. They wanted to describe the lot beside it that he was selling, such as so many feet from the then newly constructed building. I knew which lot it was because it was named. Once I got going there it was not so difficult to find the owner and builder of that brick building," she says.

Billa Flint, one of Belleville's pioneers, was a wealthy businessman and politician in the 19th century. He built the grand house on Coleman Street in 1835 to accommodate his widowed mother-in-law, three of her daughters and son who had come from



Billa Flint and his wife, Phoebe, were one of the most prominent Belleville citizens in the 19th century.

Brockville to live with Flint and his wife, Phoebe, the year before.

In 1861, he and his family moved to their new home at the corner of Bridge Street East and Ann Street. An apartment building now stands in its place.

Born in Brockville in 1805, Flint began helping in the family store when he was just 11. When he arrived in Belleville in 1829, he set up his first business — a general store on Front Street. Then branching out as a miller and a lumberman, he soon had hundreds of employees working for him throughout the Hastings County. The centre of his lumbering operations was in Bridgewater (Actinolite) township of Elzevir, north of Belleville. Later, he became the