

# TABLET UNVEILED TO LAFAYETTE

By L. B. HERR

On Sunday, October 14th, 1934, the spirit of General Lafayette hovered over the field along the old King's highway, now Route No. 340, where, more than one hundred years ago (July 27th, 1825) he had reviewed Lancaster's battalions, on the occasion of his last visit to America. Lancaster's troops were there again on Sunday afternoon, this time drawn up in review as The Lancaster County Historical Society paid tribute to the hero of the Revolution upon the centennial of his death.

Some time ago, Mrs. David Bachman Landis brought to the attention of the Society and its officers the matter of marking the spot where General Lafayette was received in 1825 by the citizens of Lancaster on the occasion of his third visit to this city. After Mrs. Landis, our corresponding secretary, and her husband, David Bachman Landis, our second vice-president, had made considerable researches and had held several conferences with Andrew B. Rote, on the site of whose property the review by Lafayette had taken place, the matter was turned over to our president, Professor Herbert H. Beck, who, with Mr. Rote, made the arrangements for one of the most picturesque unveiling exercises the Society has ever held.

In commemoration of Lafayette's last visit to Lancaster in 1825, a tablet was unveiled beside the road which bears this inscription:

"On these grounds/ LAFAYETTE/ reviewed the local Battalions/ of Infantry and Cavalry Troops/ which assembled here/ as Guard of Honor to/ escort him to Lancaster/ July 27th, 1825/ Marked by The/ Lancaster County Historical Society/ 1934."

The exercises were held on the broad, green-tufted meadow of "Greenacres," now the summer home of Andrew B. Rote. In 1825 the place was known as Grove's field.

The tablet was unveiled by Phyllis Anita Rote and Andrew Bendler Rote, grandchildren of the present owner of the beautiful estate. Following an invocation by the Rev. Dr. H. M. J. Klein, an address of welcome was delivered by his honor, Mayor James H. Ross of Lancaster, from the balcony of the Rote barn back of which the military forces were gathered.

An informative address on "Lafayette in Pennsylvania" was delivered by J. Bennett Nolan, Esq., of the Reading bar, a valued member of the Historical Society of Berks County and an author who is said to be the foremost authority on Lafayette in America. He called attention to "the unselfish services of that great Frenchman to the cause of liberty and America," and said that "Lafayette had been married just two years before coming to America. The young French soldier spent more time in Pennsylvania, than in any other state in the union. It was in Pennsylvania, that he waited

upon Congress in Independence Hall, where he made the friendship of General Washington, and where he received his commission as a major-general."

An address entitled "Battalion Days in Lancaster County," was delivered by Major-General Edward C. Shannon, commanding officer of the Pennsylvania National Guard and lieutenant-governor of Pennsylvania. In it he reviewed briefly the history of the militia in Lancaster county from frontier days to the present era. This address is published elsewhere in this volume.

Greetings from Harford and Cecil counties, Maryland, and from the State of Maryland were brought by J. Alexis Schriver, secretary and treasurer of the Harford Historical Society; he also gave a brief account of General Lafayette's passage through Harford county.

Mr. Schriver stated that General Lafayette suggested the name of Havre-de-Grace, for the little town at the head of the Chesapeake Bay because it reminded him of Havre in France.

It was recalled that General Lafayette made three visits to Lancaster: the first and second in January and February, 1778,<sup>1</sup> while Washington's army was suffering bitter hardships at Valley Forge; and the third, on July 27th, 1825, near the close of a fifteen months' triumphal tour of America.

"When General Lafayette came to Lancaster the first time in January, 1778," Dr. H. M. J. Klein, professor of history in Franklin and Marshall college, stated in the closing address of the program, "he was a young man of twenty-one. He was on his way to York, where the Continental Congress was meeting, from Valley Forge. He stopped here three days, and one of his duties here was to call a general court martial, to try a number of spies from Howe's army who were confined in the county prison."

#### ELABORATE RECEPTION

The general's third visit here in 1825 was when he was sixty-seven years old, Dr. Klein continued, telling how Lafayette went from Philadelphia to Wilmington by steamboat, journeyed to Chadd's Ford, Chester county, in an attempt to find the spot where he was wounded in the battle of the Brandywine, September 11th, 1777, and went from there to West Chester, and thence to Lancaster.

The select and common councils of Lancaster City had invited General Lafayette to visit the city almost a year before, the speaker stated, and elaborate preparations for his reception were made.

A welcoming committee from Lancaster started to meet him early on the day of his arrival, and escorted him over the Lancaster-Chester county line

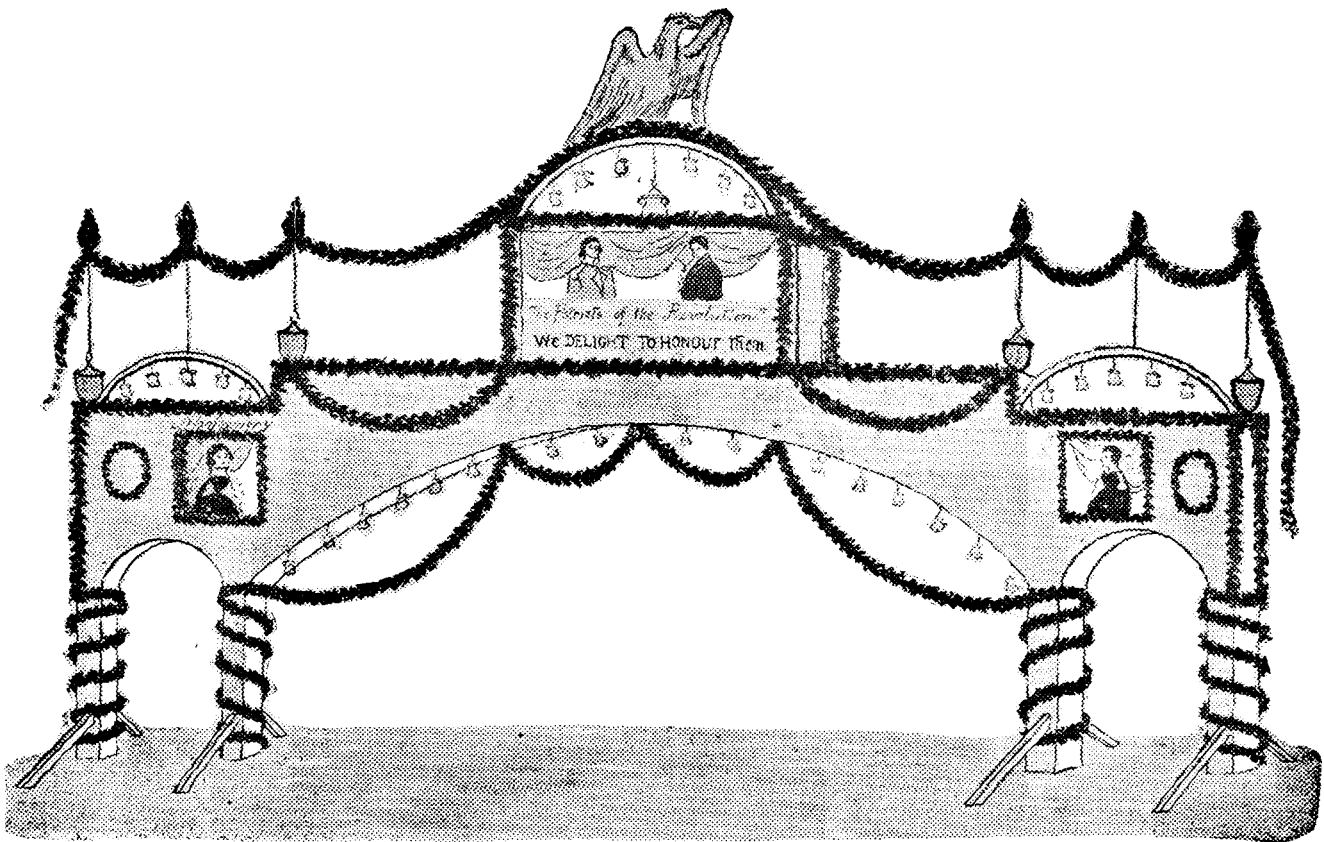
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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Marshall under date of January 29th, 1778, entered in his diary:

"Passed through this town [Lancaster] from camp [Valley Forge] to Yorktown this day, Gen. Conway and the Marquis de Lafayette."

On February 6th, 1778, Marshall entered in his diary:

"Yesterday morning went from here, who came the evening before from York, the Marquis de Lafayette, who was going forward for Canada."



ARCH ERECTED ON WEST KING STREET IN HONOR OF GENERAL LAFAYETTE'S THIRD VISIT  
TO LANCASTER ON JULY 27TH AND 28TH, 1825.

Address delivered to Genl. G. Lafayette on the 28<sup>th</sup> July,  
1825 in the city of Lancaster written & on July 1825 - -  
Genl -

We are happy to welcome you within the  
walls of our School; we hope that you will always  
recommend learning and that you will always  
cherish such valuable institutions as this. Remember  
that these Schools are of great importance to a  
free people and that education is the best security  
for Justice, Liberty, and Independence.

We thank you for your kindness in coming from your  
native country France, to help us in getting this  
Liberty we <sup>in</sup> now enjoy. We wish you ~~all~~ <sup>Health,</sup>  
Honour, and Prosperity as long as you live in this world  
and in the world to come eternal happiness, and if it is  
your intention to return to France we wish you a safe  
and pleasant voyage -

Delivered by J. B. Kerfoot

THE ABOVE ADDRESS TO GENERAL LAFAYETTE WHEN HE VISITED  
THE LANCASTER PUBLIC SCHOOL, THEN AT NORTH PRINCE AND  
WEST CHESTNUT STREETS, ON JULY 28TH, 1825, WAS BY JOHN  
BARRETT KERFOOT. YOUNG KERFOOT WAS THEN A BOY OF NINE OR  
TEN YEARS. SUBSEQUENTLY HE BECAME PRESIDENT OF TRINITY  
COLLEGE AND THE FIRST BISHOP OF PITTSBURGH

near Mt. Vernon. There two fine troops of cavalry received him and escorted him westward through the county.

### REVIEWS TROOPS

The general and his escort arrived at Grove's field, two miles east of Lancaster, about twenty minutes before 4 o'clock in the afternoon, according to Dr. Klein. There the city battalions were drawn up, General Lafayette was introduced and reviewed them. At 5:30 P. M. the procession entered Lancaster, and marched about the principal streets until 7 o'clock.

"In his address to the people of Lancaster," Dr. Klein continued, "General Lafayette spoke very graciously of the prevalence of German blood in this part of Pennsylvania, saying it accounted for the thrift, loyalty and independence of our citizens;" and then he added, "I have always thought that was one of the most gracious things General Lafayette did during his entire stay in America."

Continuing his remarks, the speaker said, "On the following morning, General Lafayette received the clergy of Lancaster, visited the school children, met a number of Revolutionary veterans at a dinner, attended a baptismal ceremony, and at 4 o'clock was the guest of honor at a banquet in the county court house. Many toasts were given, conspicuous among them being those offered by Mayor John Lightner, to 'Lancaster county: the granary of the Revolution;' and by Dr. Atlee, (an ancestor of our present jurist) on 'The Greeks: may they have a Washington for a leader and a Lafayette for their friend!'"

### WENT TO BALTIMORE

The next day General Lafayette departed for Baltimore with an escort of the Lancaster county committee, which accompanied him down the Susquehanna river to Port Deposit. There he crossed the river to Havre-de-Grace and boarded a boat for Baltimore.

Dr. Klein closed his address by quoting from John Quincy Adams' eulogy, delivered soon after the death of the gallant Frenchman:

"The devotion of Lafayette was two-fold: first to the people maintaining a desperate struggle against oppression and for national existence; and secondly and chiefly, to the principles of their declaration that first unfurled before his eyes the consecrated standard of human rights. Youth, health, for a time the favor of his king, the enjoyment of ease and pleasure, even the blessings of domestic felicity—he gave them all for toil and danger in a distant land and an almost hopeless cause, but it was the cause of justice and the rights of mankind. Lafayette stands among the disinterested benefactors of mankind."

### JUDGE ATLEE PRESIDES

Hon. Benjamin C. Atlee, president judge of the second judicial district, and first vice-president of The Lancaster County Historical Society, presided

at the exercises, in place of Professor Herbert H. Beck, who was injured several days previously when mounting a horse.

Pierre Chesnais, acting French consul at Philadelphia, who was to have represented France at the ceremony, was unable to attend because the French government had gone into mourning for its assassinated Foreign Minister, Louis Barthou.

After the planting of a white oak tree by Andrew B. Rote, on or near the spot near the Philadelphia road where Lafayette stood during his review of the troops on July 27th, 1825—one hundred and nine years ago, General Shannon reviewed the military units which took part in the ceremony. These were: Band of Veteran Guard, 3d Regiment Infantry, and the Veteran Guard, of Philadelphia; Drum and Bugle Corps of Post 34, American Legion, of Lancaster; Band of 103d Medical Regiment, of Lancaster; Headquarters Company 56th Brigade, of Columbia; 28th Military Police Company, of York; 110th Motor Transport Company, of York; 107th Hospital Company, 103d Medical Regiment, of Lancaster; and Batteries E and F, 213th Coast Artillery (anti-aircraft), of Lancaster.

#### COLONEL STAHR IN CHARGE

The parade and military review were directed by Lieutenant-Colonel Charles P. Stahr. The music during the exercises was provided by the several bands. Especial mention should be made of the splendid appearance of the guest organization, Veteran Guard, 3d Regiment Infantry, with their band, of Philadelphia. The magnificent stand of colors, showing the historical evolution of the American flag, fluttered out in the breeze as they marched in review.

Much of the success of this colorful and enjoyable celebration was due to the untiring efforts of our president, Professor Beck, in planning and completing these arrangements; to the generous co-operation of Mr. Andrew B. Rote in making the celebration successful by his generous hospitality; and to the committee in charge of the event which consisted of the following: Mayor James H. Ross, Hon. J. Roland Kinzer, Major-General Edward C. Shannon, Dr. Henry H. Apple, Andrew B. Rote, Andrew H. Rote, Justice William H. Keller, Colonel James Hale Steinman, Albert K. Hostetter, L. B. Herr, Henry C. Miller, Dr. H. M. J. Klein, George W. Hensel, Jr., Judge Benjamin C. Atlee, David Bachman Landis and Professor Herbert H. Beck.

An intelligent old man who died in 1914 near Philadelphia at the age of one hundred and two years, retained vivid memories of Lafayette when he attended a banquet in his honor at Kennebunkport, Maine, during the last visit to America in 1824-25. The general was dressed in a white nankeen suit and wore a three-cornered white hat. He rode to the banquet hall in a fine barouche drawn by six spirited white horses. A roast pig, with an apple in its mouth, occupied the center of the table.

This bit of information is added to give the reader some conception of the customs of the times when almost the last of those who had fought for our American liberties had gone to their reward.