

# LAFAYETTE'S VISIT TO LANCASTER

"Marie Jean Paul Roch Yves Gilbert Motier, Marquis de Lafayette was born in Anvergne, France, September 6, 1757. An orphan at thirteen, with a princely fortune, married at sixteen to the granddaughter of the Duc de Noailles, he had only the choice left to him in selecting a career to join the Court or the Camp, and as his father was a soldier he selected the camps.

"Lafayette was nineteen when the Declaration of Independence was signed and entered into the spirit of that document with such zeal as to call upon himself the censure of his elders. Through Deane an arrangement was concluded by which Lafayette was to enter the American service as a Major General. The King, however, forbade his leaving, and Lafayette had to provide a ship out of his own money to which he invited certain of his friends to join the American troops. He eluded several attempts to arrest him, and arrived in Philadelphia safely only to find that Deane had been pretty prodigal in his offers in his efforts to promote the American cause, in France; and that it would be impossible for Congress to place him in such a position as to outrank Americans who were entitled by their services to promotion. He was so patient in the matter and so modest in his demands that Congress, on the 31st of July, 1777, declared "that his services be accepted and that he have the rank and commission of a Major General of the United States." He was invited by Washington to become one of his military family, and thus began a friendship that lasted until Washington's death.

"Upon the visit of Lafayette to Germantown it was proposed to give him a reception at the Green Tree Tavern, the famous old inn built in 1748 with the letters D S P in the date stone which stand for Daniel and Sarah Pastorius. It was concluded later that the Tavern would not accommodate the party so arrangements were made whereby the Chew house was substituted. This was the building which furnished protection for Musgrave's men at the Battle of Germantown. Miss Anne Chew, then a young lady of sixteen, presided at the reception to Lafayette, and I have heard her tell the story of his coming on several occasions. I have also heard from Mrs. Elizabeth Maury a description of the ball which was given to him in Philadelphia. She was a staid young person of Quaker parentage and was much impressed with the device which flowered from above a wreath of laurel upon the head of Lafayette as he stood at the end of the Hall:

"We bow not the neck,  
We bend not the knee;  
But our hearts, Lafayette,  
We surrender to thee!"

"On Wednesday morning, July 28th, 1825, at half-past nine o'clock, in consequence of previous arrangement, General Lafayette was met at Colonel Philson's in Chester county, by Adam Reigart, Esq., General G. B. Porter and Jasper Slaymaker, Esq., citizens of Lancaster. Three elegant barouches, each drawn by four fine horses, had been secured for conducting the General and his suite to Lancaster. The first, presented by Mr. Frederick Hambright, contained the General and was drawn by four grey horses, and on the route he

was accompanied alternately by one of the three gentlemen of the committee. The other two were occupied by Col. George Washington, Lafayette and Mons. Le Vasseur and two members of the committee.

"The party left Col. Philson's at 10 o'clock and arrived at Mt. Vernon, within Lancaster county, at 11 o'clock, where they were received by an escort composed of the troops of horse of Captains Diller and Buckley. On his arrival at Mt. Vernon General Porter advanced to the brouche containing the "Nation's guest" and addressed him, welcoming him to Lancaster county. He also presented him with a map of the county with the compliments of the author of it, Mr. Joshua Scott. General Lafayette replied briefly, thanking Mr. Scott for the memento.

"From Mount Vernon the cavalcade proceeded to Salisburyville, where refreshments were partaken of. From thence they proceeded to Paradise, where the people turned out to welcome the guest. The party then proceeded to Grove's Field, two miles east of Lancaster, where the battalion of city infantry, under command of Captains Hambright, Reynolds and Reigart, and Major McLaughlin's county troop, and Captain Lytle's Strasburg "Blues," all under command of Major Hambright, were drawn up to receive the General and suite.

"The Carpenters' Society, composed of young men between seventeen and twenty-one, and a body of youths from twelve to seventeen, all handsomely dressed, with sashes, badges and cockades, each company ranged under separate banners, formed in line to the right of the field. On the left were a troop of citizens on horseback, with badges, cockades and sashes, and also a large body of farmers, bearing in their hats the emblem of plenty—a full ear of wheat. The arrangements were in charge of Captain James Humes, as chief marshal. To the troops were added several thousand people of both sexes and all ages. The General was conducted into the field and was received with a salute of thirteen guns, the full band playing "Hail Columbia." He was then presented by General Porter to Major General Hibshman and to Brigadier General Mosher, two veterans of the Revolution. After reviewing the troops and receiving the affectionate greetings of the people, the General received the military salute, they passing in review.

"The procession was then formed and the General was escorted to Lancaster. On King street, at the head of the city, an immense floral arch had been erected. They arrived at five o'clock and proceeded down King street to Duke street, where the General was saluted by fifty hoary headed veterans of the Revolution. They stood upon a platform erected for the purpose in front of the Farmer's Bank.

"As the General gazed on the veterans he stopped and said, "These are the wrecks of that gallant band, that in the vigor of youth and full strength of manhood, stood by me, side by side, in the hour of their country's peril; That country—That grateful country—will smooth the pillow of their declining years."

"On King street near Slaymaker's hotel, was an arch incrimed, "Hail, Friend of Liberty," and "Brandywine, 1776—Yorktown, 1781." At the Court House they were met by thirteen young ladies, robed in white, who chanted a hymn of praise. On West King street were also a number of arches, many of them being decorated with portraits of Generals Washington, Wayne, Hand, Montgomery and Benjamin Franklin. The procession then moved to Franklin College and thence to the hotel where the General was to stop. He was there welcomed by the Mayor of the city (Nathaniel Lightner), and was presented to the Recorder, Aldermen, members of Select and Common Councils, after which he sat down to a splendid repast, prepared by the ladies of Lancaster.

"The clergy of the different denominations were then presented to him, and he was addressed by Rev. Doctor Enders. The soldiers of the revolution next paid their respects.

"In the evening he was tendered a complimentary ball in Masonic Hall, the committee of arrangements being composed of Messrs. John Reynolds, Geo. B. Porter, John F. Steinman, Cyrus S. Jacobs, George Louis Mayer, Frederick Hambricht, Robert Maxwell, P. Wager Relgart, Samuel Humes, Jr., and Evan R. Evans.

"While the ball was in progress he left for an hour to attend a dinner complimentary to him by the veterans of 1776. This was given at the house of Mr. Leonard Eichholtz, where fifty of the old soldiers of 1776 had assembled. John Light was President and Samuel Humes and John Risdell Vice Presidents. After the cloth was removed, toasts were drank, with appropriate music from the heart-cheering drum and fife. General Lafayette drank to the memory of General Washington, and then to the memory of Generals Warren, Montgomery, Mercer, Nash, Greene, Hand, Wayne, Gates, St. Clair, Morgan and "our departed female patriots;" John Light drank to the committee of arrangements; Mr. Humes, to memory of General Roberdeau; Mr. Risdell, to memory of Colonel Gibson; Captain Reitzel, to memory of General Marion; Mr. Messenkop, to memory of General Stark; Mr. Peter Shindle, to General Lafayette and Brandywine; Mr. Hensel, to the Mayor and city of Lancaster; Captain Mourer, the farmers and mechanics; Mr. Ober, our member of Congress, James Buchanan, Esq.; Mr. Bausman, the officers of this banquet; Mr. George Leonard, the remnants of the Revolution; the company, "our host and hostess."

"On Thursday morning at 11 o'clock the General and suite visited the Lancasterian school, where they were received by the teachers, Mr. Varin and Miss Musser, and the 320 children, male and female. The girls dressed in white and wore pink ribbon sashes while the boys wore blue ribbon sashes. The former carried bouquets and the latter laurel branches.

"When the General reached the door of the apartment the scholars arose and sang:

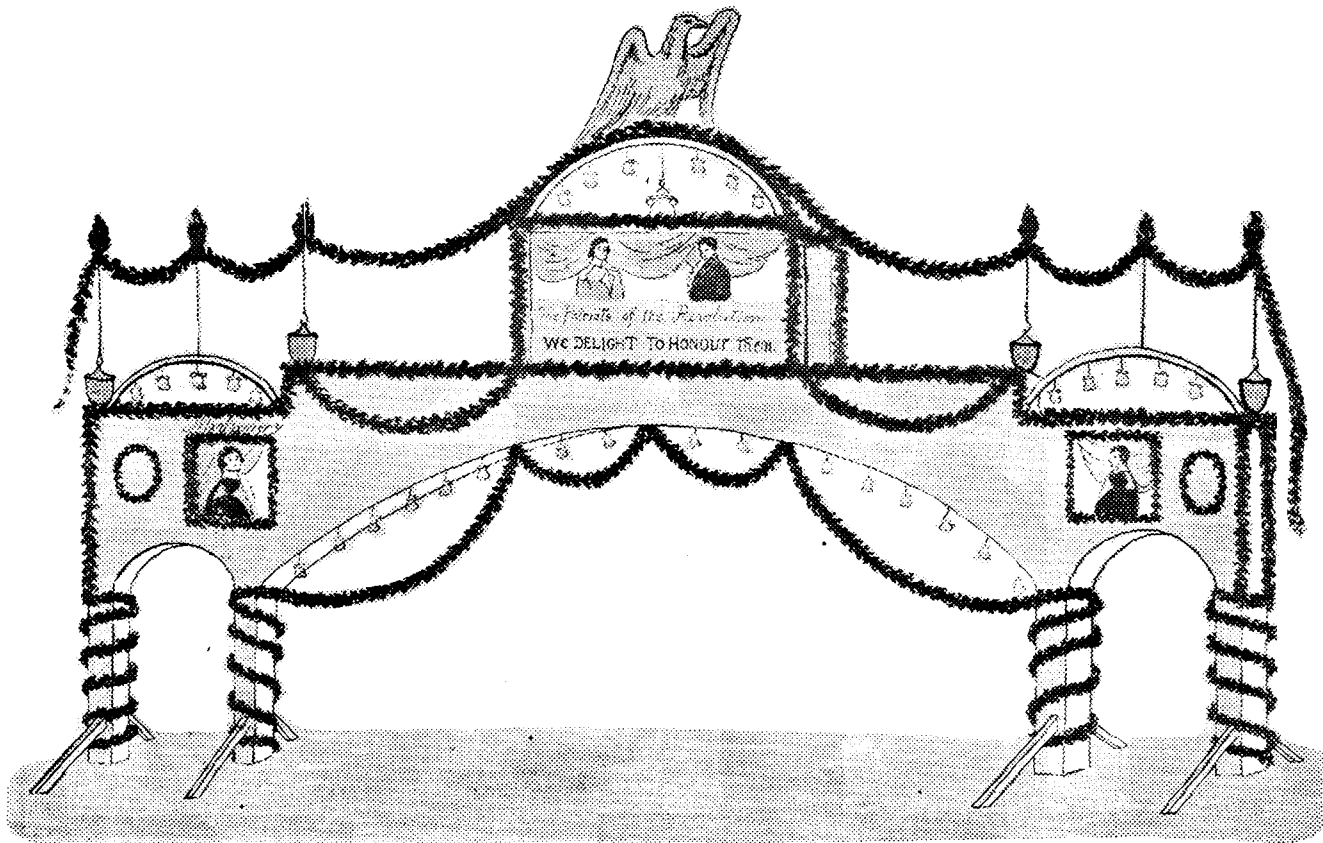
Hero, hail! all hail to thee,  
Champion of our liberty.

"A boy of ten years of age delivered the address of welcome and Lafayette feelingly responded. The scene was one "never to be forgotten." Many a fair bosom heaved with irresistible emotion, and many a brilliant eye dropped the tributary pearl, without the lovely owner being able exactly to tell why it was called forth.

"The General next visited the venerable George Ross, Esq. then in his seventy-third year, son of the late George Ross, Esq., one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, where he dined." Ross lived in the house at the northwest corner of Prince and Prague streets. He next visited Mrs. Brien, daughter of his friend General Edward Hand, who had been his Adjutant General at the siege of Yorktown and at the surrender of Lord Cornwallis.

"At half past twelve he visited the family of General Porter, at their residence on the southwest corner of Penn (Centre) Square and South Queen street, and was present at the baptism of their infant son, who, in honor of Lafayette, was named Gilbert de Motier de Lafayette Porter. The ceremony was performed by Rev. Ashmead, pastor of the Pennsylvania Church. He next waited upon Robert Coleman, Esq., Adam Relgart, Esq., Jasper Slaymaker, Esq., and Nathaniel Lightner, Esq., and then returned to the hotel.

"In the afternoon at four o'clock he repaired to the Court House, where



A LAFAYETTE ARCH ERECTED ON WEST KING STREET, LANCASTER.

Drawn for reproduction from a water-color in possession of Miss Mary E. Lichty, of No. 521, East King street. It is proposed by the Committee on Decoration for the Lancaster Centennial Charter Celebration, in 1918, to reproduce the arch, the Committee having discovered this design in Miss Lichty's possession, and the latter kindly placed it at their disposal.

Below the original painting appears the following inscription, which would indicate that the arch was on West King street, which "seems" to have been written at the time the design was made: "An arch erected by the patriotic citizens of West King street, Lancaster, in honor of the arrival of General G. M. Lafayette, who visited this town July 27, 1825." Below, on the right hand corner, appears the artist's first initials, "G. B.," and then instead of spelling out the name four x's (x x x x) appear with a final b.

A good reason why the inscription seems to have been made at the time the arch was made up is that in the same handwriting appears the name Montgomery above a little picture on the arch which could not have been recognized as that general had it not been known to the writer that the representation was intended as the Colonial hero.

From the drawing the arch seems to have been in a light color. Of course, the festoons were of evergreen. A huge golden eagle surmounts the design. The two portraits on the left, looking toward the picture, are in Continental uniform. The left-hand portrait in the upper panel is in citizen's clothes, and the portrait on the extreme right seems to have been in Colonial uniform.

A deep rose curtain back of each portrait is the only color combination in the design. The four pendants, which are distinctly Colonial, are in blue; and the Chinese lanterns are in varying colors.

one hundred citizens were assembled at a banquet prepared by Mr John Stehman, and "served in the same room in which General Washington dined on his visit to the city." The Mayor of the city presided, and Wm. Montgomery, Edward Davies and John Forrey, Esq., officiated as Vice Presidents. After the cloth was removed General Lafayette arose and proposed toasts to the city and county of Lancaster, American Independence, Washington, the President of the United States, Governor of Pennsylvania, and included a number of other themes in his remarks, concluding with "Our Fair Countrywomen," as follows:

"Woman, the happiest pledge of Heaven's good will,  
Woman, the perfect picture of its skill;  
Woman, who all our noblest thoughts employs,  
Woman, the center of all earthly joys."

"After the banquet he visited the family of Col. Hubley, and then called upon Mrs. Jenkins and Miss Hubley at Mr. Jenkins' house, and afterwards visited Molton C. Rogers, Esq., Secretary of the Commonwealth. The evening was closed by a splendid ball held in Masonic Hall.

"On Friday morning at an early hour the General and suite departed for Port Deposit, enroute for Baltimore. He was accompanied by three companies of Lancaster volunteers, under command of Major Hambright, and the City Horse, in command of Captain Voight. The procession passed through Willow Street, the "Buck" and Chestnut Level, and at all the places large crowds turned out to do him honor.

"The Baltimore American picks up the thread of the narrative of the journey after leaving Lancaster.

"The good General and his suite reached Baltimore about one o'clock on Saturday morning from Port Deposit. He left Lancaster in an elegant traveling carriage drawn by four gray horses, and was accompanied by the Lancaster committee, General Porter and Adam Reigart, Esq., and escorted by six marshals, well mounted and uniformly apparelled.

"As the boat descended the Susquehanna her progress was suspended off Havre de Grace for the reception of a number of ladies and gentlemen of that town, who were desirous of testifying their feelings to the guest of the Nation. This incident occasioned the delay of about an hour, when the boat again proceeded.

"The company soon after sat down to a dinner, and while so engaged the band of music invited for the occasion rendered a number of airs. When the boat passed Turkey Point the good General recalled the fact that it was there that the British had landed a large body of men during the Revolution.

"As the steamboat ascended the Patapsco, a short distance below Fort McHenry, she was met and saluted by the steamboat Eagle, with a large party of ladies and gentlemen on board and the addition of another excellent band of music. Both bands playing alternately, and at 1 o'clock on Saturday morning General Lafayette landed at Bowly's wharf amidst the shouts of the citizens. General Lafayette left Baltimore on Monday for Washington, where he was the guest of the President of the United States.

"In the opinion of Hilaire Belloc the character of Lafayette suffered from his aloofness towards his contemporaries and his adherence to principle. His principles made him contemptuous of the men around him. His great wealth doubtless cut him off from experience. He was incapable of intrigue, fond of popularity and thought those who did not like him were vile. He never did the right thing, but he never did a big thing for which his conscience could reproach him. The Queen held him in particular odium. His sympathy with

the revolutionary movement after his friendship with the court seemed to her treason. Marie Antoinette's and Danton's views were shared by many of those who came in contact with him. He inspired no enthusiasm and when he attempted a rebellion he had no followers.

"But I do not share the opinion of the historian, for a man who so undauntedly fought the battle of Freedom in an alien land and so endeared himself to the hearts of the people he helped to gain independence must have had noble and magnetic qualities or he would not have been accorded the welcome and acclaim he received everywhere he appeared upon his return to America, a half century after he fought and bled for her. In my mind we should always venerate Lafayette as a type of the strong bond of friendship and love which has ever bound the United States and France together in mutual regard and well wishes, and that to-day cements the alliance between the two republics in the common cause of justice and right."

Author:           Montgomery, Thomas Lynch, 1862-

Title:            Lafayette's visit to Lancaster / by Hon. Thomas L.  
                  Montgomery.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s):      Lafayette, Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert Du Motier,  
                  1757-1834.  
                  Lancaster County (Pa.)--History--19th century.

Publisher:       Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society, 1917

Description:     125-131 p. : ill. ; 23 cm.

Series:           Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 21,  
                  nos. 6 & 7

Call Number:     974.9 L245 v.21

Location:        LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

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