The Annual Meeting of The American Friends of Lafayette

It is not too late for a note on our meeting at the Sub-Treasury Building in New York City on May 20th. Certainly the public meeting was the most impressive affair that we have held to date. The colorful soldiery, the military music and the large audience filling Wall Street in front of the famous statue of Washington made a scene that will be long remembered. If the addresses by the distinguished guests were formal and ceremonial in character, they were nevertheless a warming demonstration of the tradition which our Society plays a part in keeping alive and effective, the ancient friendship of the French and American peoples.

There is a note elsewhere in this Gazette on the splendid exhibit of Lafayette memorabilia in Federal Hall Museum. The luncheon and the annual business meeting of the Society were held here following the outdoor meeting. The present officers and Executive Council were re-elected and the Treasurer was directed to purchase a $500.00 War Bond from the Society's treasury. The Secretary reported the following additions to the roll of Active members in the past year:

Mr. Matthew J. Scammell, Trenton, N. J.
Mrs. Edward K. Bennet, New York City.
Dr. Edward J. O'Sullivan, New York, N. Y.
Mr. Philip Ver Planck, Waban, Mass.
Mr. Bodo L. O. Richter, Easton, Pa.
Miss Odette Gilloti, New York, N. Y.
Mr. Mili F. McAlpin, New York, N. Y.
Mr. John VanBuren Wilcox, Trenton, N. J.
Mrs. J. L. R. de Morini, Wellesley, Mass.
Mr. Frederic R. Kirkland, Philadelphia, Pa.

The Society expressed its appreciation of Mrs. MacIntire's work in reviving our publishing program: *Si exemplum quaeris, circumspice*.

T. E. N.

The Federal Hall Museum
Lafayette Exhibition

In honor of the Marquis de Lafayette, who died 110 years ago this spring, the Federal Hall Memorial Museum arranged a special exhibition of rare items connected with his life. This exhibit which was seen by all who attended the annual meeting of The American Friends of Lafayette, will continue through Lafayette's birthday, September 6th.

The display is furnished by four of our members, Stuart W. Jackson, John F. Gough, Walter P. Gardner and Messmore Kendall. Engravings, books from Lafayette's library, letters written by him and other authentic relics have been assembled, including one of the swords of Lafayette, lent by Lafayette College. Through the tireless efforts of these gentlemen and the cooperation of the Director, Mr. Gardner Osborn and Mr. Elwood Yale Smith, a most outstanding and notable exhibition has been arranged. Every member of The American Friends of Lafayette should make every possible effort to see it.

* * *

In Service

Four members of the Executive Council are in the armed services. E. E. Hume is a Brigadier General and is Chief of the American Military Government in Rome; Professor Frank Monaghan is a Lieutenant-Colonel, A.U.S. Chief, Analysis Branch, Bureau of Public Relations, Washington, D. C.; Curtis Columbia is a Lieutenant in the Navy; Bennett Nolan a Lieutenant-Commander in the Coast Guard. We are thus splendidly represented in the armed services. To these members of our Council, our greetings and salutes. Our records of other Active members in the armed forces are incomplete but we will publish the whole list when the information is assembled.
The Liberation of Europe:

An address to the Active members at the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of The American Friends of Lafayette, New York City, May 20th, 1944, by Theodore E. Northrop.

It is a solemn reflection for those of us concerned with the patriotic traditions of our country that, at the moment we are meeting, the patriotic undertaking which transcends all others in the annals of history is about to take place in Europe. Magnificently trained and equipped American boys, with British and Canadian comrades at their sides and with the heroic French underground fighters emerging to give vital aid, will soon be locked in mortal combat with German fascism. The enemy is already desperately wounded by Allied air bombing and the historic offensive of Russia’s mighty Red Army. In Italy Allied armies, with hardened French veterans taking no small part, are moving in force against the enemy. In the Balkans Tito’s Partisans are ever alert. And on the Eastern front “La chère et puissante Russie,” in General de Gaulle’s phrase, is ready to resume its inexorable offensive against the hated despisers.

This is the moment for which the world’s freedom-loving peoples have waited in an agony of suspense for two years. This is the goal they have worked toward. The agony, for untold millions, has been physical agony. Perhaps, considering the heroism and suffering of the world’s peoples and the gallantry and steadfastness of our fighting men, American civilians not directly engaged in war work sometimes have the frustrated feeling that we are mere onlookers in the struggles which are rocking the world. But as loyal citizens supporting our country’s war effort we have a part. Let us consider what we can do to support the final grand assault on Hitlerism. What special duties do patriotic civilians have in this historic moment?

We should be specially alert to combat expressions of defeatism, in whatever form they may be masked. We members of historical societies like The American Friends of Lafayette, if not scholars to a man, are at least amateur historians. Through our study of America’s great war of national liberation in the eighteenth century, we should be able to see better than most people the meaning of today’s struggle. Today the United Nations are fighting a tyranny more menacing to the liberties of mankind than our forefathers fought against. Does anyone doubt that the embattled farmers of 1775 and the Sons of Liberty clubs would have understood this? Does anyone doubt that the men who pledged “their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor” would have understood this? Or that the great Lafayette, who not only brought decisive moral and material aid to our war of liberation but for the next fifty years championed every liberation movement in two hemispheres—does anyone doubt that he would have understood today’s struggle?

Until a few months ago there was a serious problem of unity. The statesmanship of Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt has solved that problem, or at least removed it as a major obstacle to victory. Obstruction to victory has taken a new form, and all who understand the stakes of victory must combat the new defeatism. We hear now much talk of the horrors, the death and desolation that will result from our landing on the Continent of Europe. The casualties our troops may suffer is pictured in gruesome detail, and the power of the enemy is grossly exaggerated, as if there had never been a Stalingrad. Playing upon the love we have for our soldiers and our natural abhorrence of bloodshed, this new line would turn us into cowards, powerless to deliver the blow that must be struck if Hitlerism is to be destroyed. It would be unfair to impute unpatriotic motives to all who take up “the horror of it” talk. Many honest men are influenced by this propaganda, cunningly contrived to appeal to high humanitarian impulses. What we must realize is that the promoters of this propaganda do not want to save our sons. They want them to lose the war against Hitlerism. One has only to recall the manner in which the French people were deceived in 1940 by leaders serving in Hitler’s fifth column. Stop this bloodshed, they said. And then they said, Let us make a gentleman’s peace with Hitler. We have learned from the terrible experience of the French that whoever argues the perils of fighting fascism is next going to argue for an understanding with fascism. The French found that “gentleman’s peace” their leaders meant surrender into slavery. How those who love France rejoice that today she has new leaders!

Will the defeatists’ line weaken the blow which the Allied armies are about to deliver? Most assuredly, if a great enough wailing is set up on the home front. Our fighters are flesh of our flesh and every weakening influence affecting us is in some degree passed on to them. They are stronger to resist such influence than we are, for whoever has fought fascism in the field never doubts what must be done to destroy it. But our worries can reach the millions of superbly trained young men as yet untested by battle. Their morale is high. It will not help them in carrying out the great task which history has set for them if our encouragement is only to mutter about the horror of it all.

Let us say to them, to every son and brother and dear friend, to every American, Englishman and Russian and Frenchman, to every partisan and underground fighter, to every patriot who marches against the foe of all decent humanity:

Yours is the most serious task ever entrusted to men. Mankind will never cease to honor you. Our hearts are with you, your hopes are high. We know you will not fail. The beast of fascism shall not rise again. Go forward, and God bless you.

Bastille Day in Boston

(A few biographical facts about Belle Palmer Rand of Louisville, Kentucky, the wife of Professor Edward Kennard Rand of Harvard University. She has always had an ardent admiration for all things French and spent much of her girlhood and married life in France. While in Paris, in the summer of 1931, she saw her first French film—Maurice Chevalier in “La Grande Mare.” She was struck immediately with the thought that here was a practical way to bring colloquial French to the students of America. She obtained permission from the government to import films duty free for educational purposes. The first ones were shown at Harvard University and soon French films were being distributed to the schools and colleges throughout the United States. In recognition of her success in this enterprise, the French government bestowed upon her “Les Palmes Académiques” in 1936. Then in October, 1939 she was made “Chevalier de la Legion d’Honneur” at the same time that this honor was conferred upon her husband.

The war put a stop to importing French films. Mrs. Rand then directed all her energies to conducting a sewing room where garments were made and knitted for French refugees. After the fall of France, a society was formed in Philadelphia by Mr. Houdry to support General de Gaulle in his determination to continue to fight. This was the beginning of “France Forever,” “La France Quand-Même.”

Two abortive attempts were made to start a chapter of “France Forever” in Boston. Early in July, 1941, Mrs. Rand sent out letters to all her French film patrons and to other Franco-Americans, begging them to join “France Forever,” and to lend their support to the gallant young Frenchman who was rallying the Fighting French around him under the banner of the Cross of Lorraine. An enthusiastic response resulted: the 14th of July was celebrated by a dinner where many more people joined the organization. Since then the society
has grown by leaps and bounds, and the Boston chapter is the center for all New England except Rhode Island and Connecticut. Thus "France Forever" owes Mrs. Rand a tremendous debt of gratitude, and it is with pride that we include her among the members of the American Friends of Lafayette.)

Bastille Day in Boston was a memorable occasion in this eventful year, 1944, for it marked the union of the different French societies of greater Boston in a series of events, which began at the plaque of General Lafayette on The Mall on Boston Common. There was a parade of French sailors from a French warship. They stood at attention while Mayor Tobin placed a wreath at the base of the plaque. Professor René de Messières, President of the Boston Chapter of "France Forever" and Commandant Pierre Gilly of the Fighting French Navy, placed twin bouquets of red, white and blue garden flowers, while a band from the U.S. Naval Receiving Station played the French and American National Anthems.

Mayor Tobin in his address spoke of the gratitude and reverence that Americans have for the great patriot and statesman Lafayette, who, when scarcely more than a boy, contributed so much to the great independent republic that is ours today. After a parade through the principal streets of old Boston, the sailors were entertained by "France Forever" at the Atelier Français.

Commander Gilly held a brilliant reception at five o'clock at Hotel Vendome, where men of the consular service of the Allies mingled with the officers of the French Army and Navy and the Franco-Americans. At night came the big meeting at the New England Mutual Hall which was presided over by President de Messières. The principal speaker, Count Henri d'Ornano, gave an eloquent address, worthy of his noble Corsican ancestors. Martial Singer of the Paris and Metropolitan Opera thrilled the audience by his rendering of two of the most popular "Songs of Resistance." The evening was brought to a close by the showing of two films, "Le Maquis" and "The Next Time We See Paris."

Perhaps it would be appropriate to end this little account of Bastille Day in Boston by quoting from the Charter of "France Forever": The purpose of the organization is to "foster, work for and advance the ideals of freedom under the Constitution of the United States of America, and to criticise all ideas and philosophies contrary to, and inconsistent with the ideas and philosophies on which the Constitution of the United States is founded. "To take part in all efforts to defend, protect and save for the people of the United States its Constitution, customs, laws, ideas and philosophies. "To co-operate with and assist in all measures of National Defense of the United States of America, with the view of social, military, naval and economic preparedness, to arouse, encourage and maintain interest in French ideas, institutions, customs, language, and arts, and to perpetuate throughout the world the principal and ideals of France as a democracy."

The charter was drawn up in 1940 when Mr. Houdry formed the society of "France Forever," "La France Quand-Même" in Philadelphia. It has more than justified its continued existence in these four eventful years. "France Forever" is a rallying point for lovers of French freedom, and has shown Frenchmen in our country that Americans are ready and eager to encourage them in their struggle for that precious possession — liberty.

BELLE P. RAND

"The Private Letters of Baron de Vioménil".

By JOHN FRANCIS GOUGH

In 1935 the Collins Doan Company, 196 Morgan Street, Jersey City, N.J., published in a limited edition "The Private Letters of Baron de Vioménil on Polish Affairs (1771-1772) with a Letter on the Siege of Yorktown," translated with notes, from the French, by one of our members, John Francis Gough, Officer d'Académie. We are happy to note that Messrs. Collins and Gough, early schoolmates, life-long denizens of Jersey City, and fast friends of its leading Polish citizens, collaborated well in producing this volume. It contains what in English is probably the most extended account of the First Partition of Poland. It was particularly fitting that the volume should have been printed in Jersey City, an early and important Polish center in the United States. A very favorable review of this book appeared in The New American. We quote from the article by Mr. Theodore G. Ehram, then Instructor in English, in Lehigh University: "We are well equipped (by its contents) to observe and judge this gripping spectacle of a country fighting to free itself of shackles; one feels the intense loyalty which existed between the French and the Polish; the material is of such a kind as to present a well-rounded picture of the period, the account of the defense of the Citadel in Cracow will delight the reader, for here is a tale doubly exciting because it is true. . . . Much labor has gone into the making of the book, for which we owe the compiler a debt of thanks."

The original French work dates back to 1808, and was discovered by the translator in his search for information about Vioménil, a brilliant Lorraine general, second in command to Rochambeau, and a companion in arms of Washington, who regarded him as a founder of the American Republic. He deserved and received the thanks of the Polish, for his endeavors for them in 1771-1772. The book contains sketches of other Frenchmen who labored for freedom, both in Poland (1771-1772) and America (1780-1783). Choisi is prominent. He captured the Citadel in Cracow 1772 and was a chief figure in the Yorktown campaign (1781). A group picture (a Trumbull detail) shows him, Vioménil, and the latter's brother, who also fought in Poland. Two maps, America (1781) and Poland (1772) are attractive; the first indicates the movements of the French army and navy in the Yorktown campaign, and the second helps to an understanding of the story of Poland. Upon the Polish map are shown in rough outline these ancient divisions: Pomerania, Great Poland, Little Poland, Polish Prussia, Warmie, Samogitia, Lithuania, Podlasia, Mazovia, Kujawi, White, Black, and Red Russia, Ukraine, Volhynia, Podalia, Moldavia, and Pocutie. Both maps are decorated.

Vioménil's letter on the siege of Yorktown is reproduced in facsimile. The original is in the noted Lafayette collection made by Hon. Walter P. Gardner, first President of The American Friends of Lafayette. It was sent to Rostaing, Colonel of the Gatinais regiment, which sustained losses at Yorktown. Vioménil mentions the dead and wounded officers and the honors and promotions awarded for courage.

As the volume is intended chiefly for students deeply interested in the beginnings of the American Republic, the general reader, unless possessed of an intense desire to explore details of Polish, French and American history, may find the book difficult to appreciate. If he reads it thoughtfully, he will come to realize why there is still a Polish problem and why Lafayette befriended Poles and why at Versailles in 1919 the liberal thought of France and America helped Paderewski right the injustice done Poland in the eighteenth century.
Lafayette Was Given the Freedom of the City of New York in 1784.

By Elizur Yale Smith, Historian,
Federal Hall Memorial Associates.

The corner-stone of the second City Hall of New York was laid in 1699, and the building was first used in 1701. This famous edifice, remodeled in 1788, became Federal Hall, the first Capitol of the United States, under the Constitution. Here the government was organized and here George Washington was inaugurated the first President of the United States. The building was located on Wall Street, corner of Pye Woman's Alley, and at the head of Broad Street. During the eighteenth century besides being occupied as the City Hall of New York, this town hall was the Capitol of the Province, and after the Revolution, of the State of New York for, seventy-four years, and, on Jan. 11, 1785, the Continental Congress, assembled under the Articles of Confederation, convened here. Since its birth in 1774, at Philadelphia, this Congress had been a wandering assembly of legislators; now it settled down in a permanent abode in New York's City Hall, where it remained until its demise in 1789. This site is now an historic shrine and its famous memories are perpetuated by the Federal Hall Memorial Museum, in the present century-old monumental pile: a replica of the Parthenon, on the Acropolis at Athens.

The custom of the honorary grant of the Freedom of the City of New York originated in 1702, when this Freedom was first given to Viscount Cornbury, the royal Provincial governor. The ceremony was a colorful event, with the Provincial and City officials, accompanied by the Judiciary and the royal troops in attendance. After the Revolution it was the State and City troops. An address, engrossed on parchment, granting the Freedom and Citizenship of the City, was presented to the recipient, together with the Seal of the city encased in a gold box.

It was not until Aug. 4, 1784, that Gen. Lafayette first visited New York City. Landing at the Battery, he was greeted by his brother officers of the Society of the Cincinnati, the State and City officials, the clergy, the military, and the populace. He was given a tremendous ovation, taken to the City Hall where he was greeted by the Governor, George Clinton, and given a Gorgantuan feast at Sun Franques' Tavern, by the Society of the Cincinnati, at which he was obliged to listen to long and dull speeches and drink the proverbial thirteen toasts. But Lafayette liked such ceremonies. When he appeared cannon roared, women craned their necks to catch a glimpse of him, and the city was gayly decorated. Never was a foreigner accorded greater honor.

After a few days in New York, he left to visit Gen. Washington at Mount Vernon, and at Annapolis the two parted for the last time. He returned to New York, and was occasionally in and out of the city until he sailed, to return to France, from the Battery on Dec. 21, 1784. On each occasion he was caressed and fêted. Every one delighted in doing him honor.

It was only natural that the Corporation of the City of New York should do signal honor to the French general. It was decided to renew the ancient custom of the granting of the Freedom of the City to distinguished visitors and citizens. No such ceremony had taken place since before the occupation of the City by the British troops in 1776. The City had not been recovered from the British less than ten months. At a meeting of the Common Council held at the City Hall on Sept. 11, 1784, with James Duane, the Mayor, presiding, it was ordered that five respectful Addresses from this Corporation be presented with the freedom of this city in Gold Boxes, one to his Excellency the Governor, George Clinton, one to his Excellency General Washington, one to the Hon. John Jay Esq., one to the Honble the Marquis de Lafayette, one to Major General Baron Steuben. And that Mr. Mayor & Mr. Recorder [Richard Varick] prepare & report the Addresses & that Aldn Gilbert Mr. Johnson & Mr. Phoenix direct the making of the Gold Boxes accordingly.

The certificate of Lafayette's Freedom of the City reads:


To all whom these Presents shall come, Greeting:

Whereas the Right honorable The Marquis de Lafayette Marqueschal [sic] De Camp of the Armies of his most Christian Majesty and Major General in the Service of the United States of America, by the early and adventurous Part which he took in the late Revolution by which the Liberties and Independence of the United States are happily established and the essential Services he hath performed in different situations hath endeavored himself to all to whom the Rights of America are Dear And we being desirous of giving him a public Testimony of our Exaltation and of our high Sense of his distinguished Merit and essential Services. De we therefore known to all, whom it may concern that the said Marquis de Lafayette is by these Presents admitted to a Freeman and Citizen of the City of New York in the State of New York in America.

In Testimony whereof We cause the public Seal of the said City to be hereunto affixed. Witness James Duane Esq. Mayor of the said City this fourteenth Day of September in the year of our Lord 1784 & of the Independence of the State the ninth—

James Duane.

By order of the Common Council
Robt Benson Clk.

On Sept. 15, the Mayor, Common Council, and other City officials waited on the Marquis who was received at the City Hall with all the pomp and ceremony of the time, and received his thanks and answer, as follows:

To the honorable the Mayor Aldermen & Commonalty of the City of New York.

Gentlemen: While I am honored with so flattering Marks of your Esteem, it is a peculiar Gratification to me to receive them in this City where with Delight I see the triumphant Restoration of the American Flag.

Amidst Hardships of War, which so heavily fell upon you, it has been your noble Task to give the World an Example of Disinterestedness & Fortitude. To unite with you in common Efforts and common Wishes, became my fortunate Lot; And also from a powerful Cooperation, then in readiness, we had a Right to expect the Repossession of New York, yet did I feel much happier, in the far better Method by which the End of your Exile was made a signal for restored Peace.

In the precious Testimonies of your Partiality, now afforded me, I most pleasingly enjoy the new Tie that connects me with this City: and whilst I fondly wish, with you in every concern for its Prosperity I beg leave to assure you, that the warmth of my Zest can only be equalled by the Feelings of my Respect and Gratitude.

De la Fayette.

All of these addresses are recorded on the Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, the originals of which are still in existence.

The gold boxes, which contained the Seal of the City, were about three inches in diameter, being round, and records show that when the five Addresses were voted on the 11th of September, warrants were issued for two of them to cost £29.8 or $75.50 each, two to cost £28.5 each, and one to cost £45.16 or $114.50. Which was Lafayette's box there is no way of knowing. The box given Gen. Washington has been lost, but the box given Lafayette was last seen in the museum at Chavaniac shortly before the occupation of France by the enemy during the present war.