ANNUAL MEETING
MOUNT VERNON, VIRGINIA
May 18, 1951

The twentieth annual meeting of the American Friends of Lafayette was held on May 18th, 1951, at Mount Vernon, Virginia. The program was preceded by a luncheon at Memorial Highway Terminal, at the Mount Vernon Entrance Gate, attended by twenty-seven members and guests, including the guest of honor, the French Ambassador, M. Henri Bonnet. Following the luncheon the company proceeded to the "Old Quarters" of the Mount Vernon estate. President Kendall introduced M. Bonnet, who spoke warmly in terms appropriate to the occasion: "President Kendall next introduced Mr. Charles C. Wall, Resident Superintendent of Mount Vernon, our host for the day. Mr. Wall's scholarly address, which will be found elsewhere in this issue of the Gazette, was of deep interest to our members."

Following this, the members lingered for some time inspecting a most interesting exhibit of original Lafayette letters, engravings and various memorabilia assembled in one of the rooms. A tour of Mount Vernon, particularly the Mansion, was then conducted by Mr. Wall and Mr. Worth Bailey, assistant to Mr. Wall. They were able to answer the very many questions of an antiquarian nature raised by members about specific items of Lafayette-Washington interest.

The annual meetings of the Active Members and the Executive Council were held at nearby "Woodlawn," the home of Major and Mrs. Lawrence Lewis (Nellie Custis), given to them by General Washington at the time of their marriage in 1799. President Kendall introduced Mr. Rixie Smith, custodian of the beautiful estate. Refreshments were served.

MEMBERSHIP

Honorary Members

With the greatest pleasure we welcome three Honorary Members:

M. HENRI BONNET, Ambassador from France to the United States.
M. ROGER SEYDOUX, French Consul-General in New York.
M. ALBERT CHAMBON, French Consul-General in Boston.

New Active Members

JUDGE THOMAS F. MCALLISTER, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
MR. REGINALD T. TOWNSEND, New York City.
MR. JEREMIAH D. MAGUIRE, New York City.
MR. CARMAN MESSMORE, New York City.
MR. JACK COLES, New York City.
MR. ALFRED P. JENKINS, Richmond, Virginia.
MRS. CHARLES P. GORELY, Jr., Weston, Massachusetts.

We have lost through death the following Active Members:

PROFESSOR ALBERT H. GILMER
PROFESSOR GEORGE H. ALLEN
MR. H. C. DURSTON
HON. GEORGE MURRAY HULBERT
MR. JULIUS S. RIPPEL
Also an Associate Member:
MR. ARTHUR R. RULE

Mr. Allyn K. Ford's study of General Weedon, presented as the annual address at our Fredericksburg meeting last year, has been published in Autograph Collectors' Journal v. 2, no. 3, Jan., 1951, p. 2-6.
YORKTOWN DAY  
October 19, 1950

The American Friends of Lafayette was again one of the sponsors of the celebration of the victory at Yorktown, with Mr. Stuart W. Jackson, as usual, representing the Society on the committee — the Yorktown Day Association. Our President, Mr. Messmore Kendall, and Mrs. Kendall attended the impressive ceremonies marking the 169th anniversary of the historic day. The exercises following the customary parade were held before the still headless and armless Victory Monument at Colonial National Park, before an assemblage of nearly one thousand persons. Mrs. James B. Patton, President General of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, presided. There was music by the 50th Army Band of Fort Monroe, and the Poquoson High School band. The speakers were Mr. Alfred P. Goddin, President of the Sons of the Revolution of the State of Virginia and Hon. Edward J. Robeson, Jr., Representative in the Congress from the First Virginia District.

General Mark W. Clark, U. S. Army Chief of Army Field Forces, Fort Monroe, Virginia, made the principal address of the day. “We must look at the evil forces of Communism. I ran into this face to face in Austria. We have tried repeatedly to get along with them and they have blocked every move for cooperation toward peace for the world. It is time to make them realize we mean business. We have to watch for phony peace proposals. Let’s get some blue chips to play in this game in which we are fighting aggression and are determined to retain our American way of life which we hold so dearly.”

Following General Clark’s address, the Wreath Ceremony was conducted by Mr. Samuel M. Bemiss, Secretary of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia, placing one large memorial wreath in a joint tribute from all the participating patriotic societies.

Captain Gorges Cabanier and Madame Cabanier, he of the French Navy and Naval Attaché of the French Embassy, were present. The U.S.S. Mississippi was anchored in the York River, off the Monument grounds for the day. A detachment of Navy personnel from the ship participated in the parade. Captain K. V. Dawson, Commanding Officer, and his staff co-operated in all plans for the ceremonies. The Mississippi received all visitors and there were many.

A special exhibit of historic interest was held at the Swan Tavern in Yorktown — Washington, De Grasse and Rochambeau, the “three chief architects” of the Siege of Yorktown, were featured this year. The exhibition was sponsored by the American Friends of Lafayette as part of the celebration reminding us anew that the French force at Yorktown was as large as all the American units combined and consequently played a decisive role in forcing the surrender of the British. The items displayed were from the collection of Mr. Stuart W. Jackson, Mr. Messmore Kendall and the Rosenbach Company of Philadelphia and New York.

Among the exhibits were a pair of satin slippers worn on formal occasions by Martha Washington, George Washington’s shoe buckles, his telescope, the sealing ring set with carnelian cut with the coat-of-arms of General Washington, the surveyor’s compass that belonged to him. Also a letter from Vaudreuil, Commander of the Septre in the fleet of De Grasse, a proclamation, dated March 18, 1781, by Cornwallis to the people of North Carolina, stating that all rebels who would lay down their arms would be paroled; an original manuscript from the Marquis de Lafayette to Colonel William Davies dated August 17, 1781, written at Camp Forks of York River, thanking the State of Virginia for its aid in the struggle; an original letter sent by the Comte de Rochambeau to Governor Greene of Rhode Island, October 3, 1780; an indenture of a portion of “Wakfield,” the birthplace of Washington; a commission to James V. Ball as a lieutenant of the Light Dragoons, signed by General Washington, and other original letters, documents and books. The exhibit continued into November.

Yorktown Day every year maintains its charm and interest; those who attend are richly rewarded.

***

MESSMORE KENDALL
Receives Legion of Honor

On November 13, 1950, the French Consulate in Boston was raised to the rank of Consulate-General, making six cities in the United States so designated: New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, New Orleans and now Boston. M. Albert Chambon, Consul, became Consul-General of New England, receiving the approval of the city to which he has endeared himself, maintaining his position with efficiency and graciousness. He is very much the friend of this Society as well as one of its Honorary Members.
LAFAYETTE'S ASSOCIATIONS WITH MOUNT VERNON

By Charles C. Wall
Resident Superintendent of Mount Vernon

(An address delivered at the Annual Meeting, Mount Vernon)

The Marquis de Lafayette's association with the Washington and Custis families cover a period of over fifty years, from his first meeting with General Washington at Headquarters in 1777 until his death in 1834. His first recorded visit to Mount Vernon was made in the summer of 1784, his last in 1825. There is a possibility that he first saw Mount Vernon in the spring of 1781 when Virginia was the principal theatre of war and the plantations along the Potomac were being ravaged by the British men-of-war and partisan privateers. This was a period of bitter travail for all of Tidewater Virginia. Lafayette had been dispatched inland with a small army to oppose Cornwallis. He chanced to be in Alexandria in late April, just after a British warship had raided the shores of the Potomac, burning and pillaging the exposed homes on both sides of the river almost to Alexandria. Lafayette had been dispatched southward with a small army to oppose Cornwallis. He chanced to be in Alexandria in late April, just after a British warship had raided the shores of the Potomac, burning and pillaging the exposed homes on both sides of the river almost to Alexandria. He was dismayed to learn that Lund Washington, the General's cousin and plantation manager, had gone aboard the warship and made a voluntary offer of refreshments to them. It would have been a less painful circumstance to me, to have heard, that in consequence of your non-compliance with their request, they had burnt my House, and laid the Plantation in ruins. You ought to have considered yourself as my representative, and should have reflected on the bad example of communicating with the enemy, and making a voluntary offer of refreshments to them with a view to prevent a conflagration.

George Washington had long been resigned to the destruction of his home and in this letter to Lund (too long to be quoted full text) he asked only that movable property of value be evacuated inland.

It would be an oversimplification to assume, on the basis of this correspondence, that Mount Vernon was spared because of Lund's indiscretion. Tender of a few provisions could scarcely have deterred an enemy had he wished to injure the leader of the patriot cause. We prefer to think that his restraint was inspired by sincere respect for the character of the master of Mount Vernon.

In September, 1781, General Washington spent three nights at Mount Vernon, after an unbroken absence of more than six years. He was joined here by Generals Rochambeau and Chastellux and their military families. This was probably the most colorful and dramatic incident in the history of Mount Vernon, but Lafayette was pressingly detained before Yorktown. Nor do we find his name recorded among those distinguished foreign officers who visited Mount Vernon when the French Army moved northward from Williamsburg the following year.

Barring the possibility that Lafayette made an unrecorded visit to Mount Vernon during the summer of 1781, we are left with the assumption that he was first here in 1784. The record of his two visits in that year is disappointingly fragmentary. We know that he came first on August 17, 1784, and remained twelve days, but General Washington's diary for that period is, in the words of Dr. Fitz-patrick, "missing or not kept." He returned on November 24th and remained until the 28th. Once again there is no diary account. Other potential sources of information are almost equally barren. In imagination we may picture Mount Vernon during these visits as a colorful setting for happy social gatherings, but prudence dictates that our speculations be not committed to paper. The associations of General Washington and Lafayette have already been too much embellished with undocumentary fancies. We know that in anticipation of this second visit General Washington met Lafayette and his two companions, Grand-chain and Caraman, in Richmond, and that on their departure he escorted them to Annapolis. Upon his return to Mount Vernon he wrote a letter of farewell to his departed guests which defines their relationship for us. I quote two relevant paragraphs:

"In the moment of our separation upon the road as I travelled, and every hour since, I felt all that love, respect and attachment for you, with which length of years, close connexion and your merits have inspired me. I often asked myself, as our carriages distended, whether that was the last sight, I ever should have of
Washington Lafayette, to the shores of America in 1795, while his mother traveled to share the confinement of the father in his Austrian prison. The young man, sixteen years old at the time, was accompanied by his tutor, Monsieur Pres- tele. Political considerations (also foreign to our present theme) prevented President Washington from taking these young refugees into his family at the time, but they joined him on his journey to Mount Vernon upon his retirement from office in March, 1797, and remained here until the following October. This lengthy visit cemented lifelong ties of friendship between young Lafayette and the younger members of the Washington and Custis families whom he met here. He became closely attached to Mrs. Washington's younger grandchildren, Nelly and George Washington Parke Custis, who were members of the Mount Vernon household. Nelly was a young lady of eighteen years and George Washington Parke Custis, who had been nicknamed "Squire Tubb" by the elder Lafayette, was a youth of sixteen years.

When Lafayette made his last visit to America in the middle twenties his itinerary included Mount Vernon. He came by water with George Washington Lafayette and the other members of his suite, escorted by George Washington Parke Custis, John C. Calhoun and a numerous company. In the absence of Bushrod Washington he was received by Lawrence Lewis of Woodlawn. At the Tomb Custis presented the General with a ring containing a lock of General Washington's hair and delivered a brief oration in the best tradition of the period.

There is here a symbol of that unity of ideals so prominent in the relationship of the two men which is worthy of special note. I refer to the Key of the Bastile, which Lafayette sent to George Washington in 1790. It hangs conspicuously in the central hall of the Mansion where General Washington placed it. With it came a letter of presentation from which I quote:

"Give me leave, my dear general, to present you with a picture of the Bastile, just as it looked a few days after I ordered its demolition, with the main key of the fortress of despotism. It is a tribute which I owe as a son to my adopted father — as an aide-de-camp to my general — as a missionary of liberty to its patri-arch."

Recently it was suggested by one of the nation's leading journalists that this key be returned to France, but we feel that so long as France and America continue to share the ideas which inspired the donor in his presentation, the key has no more appropriate sanctuary than Mount Vernon. We hope that George Washington continues to be a patria rich of liberty in the minds of the French people and that they will always share the American people's vision of Mount Ver non as a shrine and a symbol of freedom for all peoples of the earth. The American Friends of Lafayette could have no higher goal, and none more timely, than the furtherance of this mutual concept of freedom which united the two men we honor here today.

* * *

Lafayette Exhibition In Boston

In connection with the 2000th anniversary of the founding of the city of Paris and at the suggestion of M. Albert Chambon, Consul-General of France in New England, a Lafayette exhibition was held under the auspices of the American Friends of Lafayette, from May 16th to 28th in the Institution for Savings at Boylston and Park Streets. Mr. Howard C. Nason, assisted by Mr. Goddard, supervised the arrangement of the exhibit. Some forty items were displayed, contributed by the Massachusetts Historical Society, the State Street Trust Company, our member, Mrs. Charles P. Gorely, Jr., and Mrs. Alan MacIntire. Thanks are due for the generous co-operation of the bank officials in giving the Society this opportunity to honor Lafayette during the period embracing Lafayette Day.
BOOKS

Mr. Stuart W. Jackson has presented to the Collection of the American Friends of Lafayette two important printed pieces, one bearing on Lafayette's role in prerevolutionary polemics in France and the other showing his position toward the end of his participation in the Revolution:


In this Lafayette proposes tax and financial reform. The brochure is an example of the many serious but unheeded appeals addressed to the monarchy in the period of the gathering storms of revolution.

Lettre de M. Lafayette, à l'Assemblée National, lué à la séance du 18 juin 1792. 7 p.

Written at Maubeuge, where he commanded the Army of the Center, this denunciation of the Jacobin Clubs and the "troublemakers" in Paris documents Lafayette's open break with the Revolution.

In April, Rutgers University Press published The Schuylkill, by J. Bennett Nolan, a member of our Executive Council. This interesting work is the story of a famous river — places, people and events associated with it.

A Cheese for Lafayette (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1950), written by Mrs. R. Max Goepp, Jr., and Mrs. Margaret Webb Sanders; a children's story illustrated by Helen Belkin. It revives an incident of the many serious but unheeded appeals addressed to the monarchy in the period of the gathering storms of revolution.

On The Collection

Eighteen items were added to our library of books relating to Lafayette and his associates. The most important was that of Mr. David Loth, The People's General, published this year; a popular work placing greater emphasis than earlier works on the de Broglie papers, touching on the French ministry's secret plans for directing the American Revolution in the national or imperialist interests of France.

Another work, in which we take special pride is our own Publication No. 4, Lafayette and Slavery, from his letters to Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp, by Melvin D. Kennedy, 1950, seen through the press by John Francis Gough, as were our Publications 2, 3 and 4. As the members know, this study is based on manuscripts in the Collection of our co-founder, Mr. Stuart W. Jackson. It is a study worth special mention is Professor Harold W. Streeter's article on Lafayette, are gladly inserted in the Collection of the American Friends of Lafayette.

In this Lafayette proposes tax and financial reform. The brochure is an example of the many serious but unheeded appeals addressed to the monarchy in the period of the gathering storms of revolution.

Two works were added containing something on Lafayette after 1815: Stendhal's Memoirs of an Egotist (1949) and Thureau-Dangin's Le Parti Liberal sous la Restauration (1888). Finally, we secured a short run of an eighteenth century periodical, Journal politique; ou, Gazette des gazettes (Bouillon) July—December, 1779, containing references to the American war. Apparently only two American libraries have the Journal Politique for this period.

The Collection of the American Friends of Lafayette at the end of the year contained 1,533 cataloged items (printed).

THEODORE ELI NORTON

Notice of events connected with Lafayette are gladly inserted in the Gazette.

LAFAYETTE MEETING OF THE WEDGWOOD CLUB

On March 31, 1951, at the Old State House, Boston, the 133rd meeting of the Wedgwood Club was held; the theme, "Lafayette Revisits America in 1824," with Mrs. Albert W. Claflin the speaker. She most expertly and interestingly traced Lafayette's route, at the same time showing 75 slides (in color) of contemporary pottery commemorating the visit of Lafayette. The Old Blue plates and platters shown were from the truly wonderful collection of Dr. and Mrs. Claflin — Enoch Wood, Jackson, the Stevensons, Stubbs, Clewes, Ridgeway and others. Over sixty Lafayette commemorative items belonging to members of the club were displayed — Staffordshire, lustre, Josiah Wedgwood, Liverpool ware in cups, plates, platters, scent bottles, medallions and other articles, as well as engravings and books, making a highly impressive exhibit. More than forty members were present. (The Wedgwood Club, founded by Mr. and Mrs. Charles P. Gorely in 1933, is an international organization of collectors of early English ceramics. Mr. Gorely is President. Mrs. Gorely (Jean Gorely), one of our members, is an authority on Wedgwood, a lecturer and author of many articles on 18th century arts and letters, including a series of 14 volumes entitled Old Wedgwood.)

Mrs. Claflin has graciously consented to repeat her fascinating lecture, most happily for our members, as part of the program of our next Annual Meeting, which is to be held in Boston in May, 1952.

* * *

The 126th Annual Meeting of the Bunker Hill Monument Association was held at the Harrison Grey Otis House in Boston. This happy reminder of the day on which Lafayette laid the cornerstone of the monument, was enhanced by an address high in interest by Mr. Bruce Lancaster, historian and author. The American Friends of Lafayette was represented by its Vice-President, Mrs. MacIntire.

Page Five
LAFLAYETTE TO NELLY CUSTIS

(Mrs. Lawrence Lewis of Woodlawn, Alexandria, Va.)

(Printed with the kind permission of Mr. Charles C. Wall)

Le Grange January 11th 1828

My dear Nelly

While you Have Been pouring your sorrows in my loving Sympathising Heart, you Have Anticipated my participation in the Heavy Lot you Had to Support, a precious Child, the joy and the Hope of His parents, Your own Darling, Has Been Snatched from you — My grief on the Melancholy occasion, the grief of your Brother, Have been shared by the whole family at LaGrange. Mention me most affectionately and mournfully to the unhappy Mother, to Her husband, and be assured that distance does not lessen our share in loving Circumstance that concerns you all.

We have been these last days agitated with feelings of different nature. My Grand daughter Louisa Latore Maubourg most Happily married last Summer to Hector de peron, Labours under a complaint, in the lungs we Have cause to fear, that Has obliged Her to seek the shores of the Mediterranean where father, Mother, and Husband are nursing Her. an intimate friend and aunt of the family Mde de Segur Has Been very ill and is not out of danger, in the meanwhile we are blessed with a marriage in which we Have every motive to delight; that of Natalie, George's eldest daughter, to Adolphe Sevier (?), an Accomplished young man, belonging to a most respected manufacturing family in France, whose father and two uncles are our Colleagues, one of them the able political orator, the young couple seem to Have been made for each other, it may be said there is no love lost between them in that unusual scale of the Expression, that love on both sides is fully reciprocated, they married the day before yesterday, and were immediately stolen (?) to LaGrange for some days when the father, mother, and children will go with me to Paris. God knows for How much time. Your Brother and myself Having been elected deputies by this and the neighbouring district of Meaux, my unshakable constituents Since that recent formation of the House, the administration Has Retired from the impending contest, and New Ministers appointed whom it is But Fair Hereafter to judge from their works.

The turn of Service of General Gaines at New York will be very convenient for you to Have your children together, altho' I fully agree with you in your Commendation of Cincinnati one of the Most delightful places I ever knew. that good State of Ohio is a Wonder among Wonders. I am Highly pleased to think your Son and His lovely Wife are very Happy together. But your Mourning poor daughter parke, endowed with so much Sensibility, How deeply she must Have been affected as well as Her Excellent Husband whose very name is to me a source of enduring associations! I see Mr. Lewis Has Been again Visited with the Gout. pay My affectionate Compliments to Him, to your good children; I am Happy to Hear our Beloved Young Angela grows tall, remains Handsome, is a darling Companion to Her Mother who most kindly remembers our so very gratifying Anticipations. I carefully keep, in my American treasure, Angela's pretty little box. Remember me very affectionately to your Sisters and family. There is also a very interesting Happy Young Couple who, I am sure, do not forget me. My best compliments to the good Doctor, to your Neighbour Judge Washington when you see Him. I Have received a letter from Your Brother, who I see Has produced two very Good plays. I shall answer by the next packet. in the meanwhile remember me most friendly to Him, and the Arlington family. My Heart is Deeply concerned in your excellent Sister Betty's lingering situation. No wonder Her Health is affected when Her keen sensibilities Have Had So much to suffer. exercise and a little dissipation could not but do Her good; I wish I was near Her well knowing My Hold on Her filial feelings, and you, Dear Nelly, you Have at last found a Remedy, Rough, I confess, for Your periodical Bilious Complaints. I advise you to make a frequent use of it. Oscar and Edmond grow up very good Boys; the former pursues His studies along with frederick Skinner of Baltimore a very distinguished Lad and like an other Brother to Him and child of ours. I Have Had the inexpressible gratification to embrace young Hugo who, with His Worthy Comrade, Has Had a very short passage. Adieu, My dear Nelly, Believe me with paternal affection Your obt friend

LAFLAYETTE

Remember me to Genl Gaines when you see Him, or write to your daughter. your Brother George sends His Sympathising love and will write By the next packet

* * *

HISTORIANS

The idealistic, inspirational image of a man — even if a bit overdrawn — is valuable. An historic figure disparaged and slandered is thereby stripped of all value, bringing bitter disillusionment, especially to young people. What then has the sneering historian accomplished? "Unmerited praise" is far less harmful than an undeserved tearing down. Hero worship is a clean, useful stimulant and guide for young people; a radiance to light their paths. If every heroic and ideal figure is patronized, reduced and trampled underfoot by historians who are no more than selfish exhibitionists, who then is left for inspiration? Little wonder our young are cynics. By that same token, the lovely, quaint and whimsical legends which are with such glee "disproved" by patronizing writers, are better left unmolested, true or not. This theme is excellently put by Struthers Burt in Philadelphia; Holy Experiment (New York, 1945):

"It is always a pity when worthy and inspiring legend has to be questioned, and, once more, the worth of so doing is doubtful. Strong folk legends represent the will and aspirations of a people, and so, fundamentally, in their factual untruth are often truer, imaginatively and spiritually, than the actual truth."