Yorktown Day
October 19, 1947

An invitation to participate in the celebration of Yorktown Day was extended to the American Friends of Lafayette by the Comte de Grasse Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, in cooperation with other patriotic societies and the Colonial National Historical Park at Yorktown, Virginia. The observance of the 166th anniversary of the surrender at Yorktown was preceded by a delightful dinner party at the beautiful Gloucester home of the Stuart Jacksons for those members who were able to make the trip to Virginia. Mr. Jackson's splendid library fascinated all, to say nothing of the Virginia ham and oysters from Mr. Jackson's own oyster beds!

On Yorktown Day, the 250th anniversary of the building of the Parish Church at Yorktown was celebrated at a largely attended festival service in the old church, with the Rt. Rev. William A. Brown, Bishop of Southern Virginia, in attendance. Grace Church, built of marl slabs taken from the York River shore, stands in dignified simplicity on the river bluff. Lord Cornwallis used Grace Church as a powder magazine during his stay at Yorktown. The church service was followed by luncheon at the local inn.

The ceremonies of Yorktown Day were conducted at the base of the Victory monument; Mrs. George Durbin Chenoweth, Regent, Comte de Grasse Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, presided. There were addresses by Mrs. William H. Pouch, Honorary President General, N.S.D.A.R., Mr. Godden, President of the Sons of the Revolution in Virginia, and Admiral Alden Lee Ainsworth, Commandant of the Fifth Naval District. Many wreaths were laid at the base of the monument, among them one from the American Friends of Lafayette, placed by Mr. Stuart W. Jackson. Mr. Edward A. Hummel, superintendent of the Yorktown National Park, made the occasion notable for its precision. A large company attended this impressive ceremony, held on a flawless and dazzling afternoon upon the hallowed spot above the sparkling blue York River, in the ancient and now peaceful town of York.

Annual Meeting, 1948

The Annual Meeting of the American Friends of Lafayette will be held Friday, May 21st, at Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania. The program will be announced presently. It is hoped that many members will be able to attend. The principal speaker, at a College Convocation to be held in the Chapel, will be Professor Louis Gottschalk of the University of Chicago.

Dr. Gottschalk outlines his address: "I mean to show that without the American Revolution the French Revolution might not have come in the way and at the time that it did. I shall mention Lafayette several times, especially as an example and as a leader of the French Revolutionaries who was made such by his American experiences."

Dr. Gottschalk's Lafayette

Quoting a letter from Dr. Louis Gottschalk to our president, Mr. Gough: "My fourth volume on Lafayette deals with his career from the close of the American Revolution in 1783 to the opening of the French Revolution in 1789. It shows how he played an important part in the development of the desire for constitutional reform in both countries, though in France he was anxious to limit the central power by decentralization, and in America he was anxious to increase the central power by a stronger federal government. It also takes up his efforts on behalf of science, letters, trade, emancipation, toleration, and philanthropy during those years. It talks about his relations with Frederick II of Prussia, Joseph II of Austria, and Catherine II of Russia as well as with many prominent Americans (including Washington and Jefferson) and Frenchmen (including Vergennes and Calonne). A good section is devoted to his voyage in the U. S. in 1784. It is now in the press, but because of labor and material shortages it may not appear till the end of the year."

New Active Members

Mr. Laurence Gouverneur Hoes, 6115 Western Avenue, Washington, D.C., President of the James Monroe Memorial Foundation.

Professor Joseph M. Carrière, professor of Romance Languages, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Lafayette's Sword

We are informed that the sword (a masterpiece of the armorer's and goldsmith's arts), presented by Congress to Lafayette, 1779, is owned by a family in Rome, and is offered for sale at $70,000. Perhaps it might be lent or leased to the Library of Congress.

J. F. G.

A Letter to the Editor:

Bibliothèque Nationale
Paris, 18 Novembre, 1947

Madame,

J'ai l'honneur de vous informer que le Dérpartement des Périodiques de la Bibliothèque Nationale a reçu le numéro 8 (septembre, 1947) de la Gazette of the American Friends of Lafayette. Je vous adresse mes plus vifs remerciements pour l'envoi de cette intéressante publication.

La Bibliothèque Nationale serait heureuse de posséder dans ses collections les premiers numéros de la Gazette dont l'importance est certaine pour l'histoire des relations franco-américaines au XVIIIe siècle. J'espère que vous pourrez répondre favorablement à cette demande.

Veuillez agréer, Madame, l'expression de mes sentiments très respectueux.

Le Conservateur
Chef du Département
JOSERAND

(With this request we have gladly complied.)

An Interesting Recent Acquisition

A volume recently placed in the collection at Lafayette College: The Jockey Club; or, A Sketch of the Manners of the Age. New York, T. Greenleaf, 1793. ("Copied from the tenth London edition.") Published anonymously; the author was Charles Pigott (d. 1794). Pigott was an English republican, an all-out supporter of the French Revolution, and the two pages on Lafayette excoriate him for his support of the monarchy. Pigott's closing lines are: "He is abhorred by his contemporaries; his name will be execrated to posterity." Pigott reckoned without the American Friends of Lafayette!

T. E. N.
The Story of the Garden and Cemetery of Picpus

by Clara Longworth de Chambrun

DURING forty-six years' residence in France I have rarely been absent from the Fourth of July ceremonies at Lafayette's grave; but I have seldom found any one of the numerous Americans congregated there who was aware for what reason this Franco-American hero, whom his friends destined to the Pantheon, should have been laid to rest beside the potter's field where thirteen hundred victims of Robespierre's terror were indiscriminately thrown after the nearby guillotine had done its work.

Lafayette's burial at Picpus, like practically every event in his life, was dictated by sentiment. To understand his reasons fully we must retrace the history of the place through the many phases through which it passed. Beginning as a convent of a wealthy order of Chanoinesesses, it was taken over by the Nation when the Revolution broke out and leased to a leading republican speculator, who foresaw, through it, an easy means of profit.

The fine gardens surrounded by high walls were reputed to enjoy the purest air in Paris (hence the name Boulevard Bel-Air, which the neighboring avenue still bears, and hence the decision of the new owner to open in the roomy building a convalescent home which became a lucrative enterprise until the day when the Committee of Public Safety requisitioned the whole property in spite of his protests). They required a tract with high walls adjacent to the guillotine erected near the Barrière du Trone where the headless corpses could be undressed, and their garments duly inventoried as national property. An army of clerks was assembled for the purpose. This work was carried on at night, by the light of bonfires fed with rosemary and thyme, with a view to counteract infection from the twoscore headless bodies flung there pell-mell by the reeking tumbrils from the guillotine.

The victims, as you know, belonged to all classes of society, from stable-boys and sewing-girls to Marshals of France, Duchesses, poets, and other men of letters. You probably remember among the last victims were Lafayette's sister-in-law, the lovely Louise, Vicomtesse de Noailles, his mother-in-law, the Duchess d'Ayen, who supported her aged mother, the venerable Maréchale de Noailles, to the scaffold, whereas Lafayette's wife, "Ardent Adrienne," as she was called, though scheduled to perish with them, was saved without her knowledge by the timely intervention of the American Minister in Paris, James Monroe.

All this Lafayette himself only learned a year later in the Austrian prison of Olmutz, where his wife and daughters came to share his captivity, and where, for the first time, he perceived that his ideals of Liberty, Humanity and Justice are not always shared by those who pretend to put them into practice. During her long incarceration Madame de Lafayette, though without paper or ink, managed to write the story of these atrocious happenings in the margins of Les Liaisons Dangereuses, the best-seller of those days which her husband had in his pocket when taken prisoner.

In prison, too, the idea of what she was afterwards to accomplish began to germinate. She determined to discover the place where those she loved were buried and procure them Christian sepulture. Her task was not easy. Complete reticence was maintained by the authorities as to where the victims of the guillotine had been consigned. The poet, Kotzebue, who came to Paris in order to discover the tombs of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, failed in his pious mission. Only in 1816 were they discovered in the Ossuary near the Madeleine where the Chapelle Expiaire now stands. It was still harder to find the secret of the fosse commune at Picpus when Madame de Lafayette and her sister, the Marquise de Montaigu, came clandestinely to Paris for this purpose. At last they encountered Abbé Carrichon, who, disguised as a gardener, had followed the fatal cart and given the ladies absolution, but the poor old man remained in prayer under the shadow of the guillotine and never thought of going further, nor, apparently, did anyone else. Finally, Madamoiselle Paris, a little sewing-girl, specialist in lace mending, heard that the two mysterious ladies were in search of information she alone possessed. She came to them with her tragic story.

Her father, who had been groom in the Duc de Brissac's stables, had turned his knowledge of horses to account by becoming driver of a local diligence. All went well until a lad in his employ denounced his master as "slave of an aristocrat." So Paris was condemned by the Revolutionary tribunal. His daughter followed the tumbril and remained praying while his execution took place, but only realized later that she had failed to note what had become of her father's body. The poor child was to be given a second opportunity, for the ordeal was renewed. A few days later her brother, Francois, a young soldier in the barracks, was condemned in his turn. This time the girl was able to note how the corpses were being thrown pell-mell into an immense cart. She followed this vehicle along a muddy track to the old octroi, crossed a field to the Avenue de St. Mandé, where the creaking wheels with their lugubrious load entered the gardens of Picpus through a large breach made in the north wall. This was her journey's end, as she was forcibly restrained from penetrating further. But she had learned what she wanted to know and many times thereafter made a pious pilgrimage in order to pray near the fosse commune which lies immediately behind the walls of Picpus. It was thus that, when the time came, she was able to lead the intrepid Noailles sisters over the same ground.

From then on, ladies and lace mender had a common object in life: to acquire the property, re-dedicate the chapel, raise contributions from relatives of other victims, and to obtain the right to lie beside them. There were lions in the path, however, in the shape of police agents employed by Fouché, head of Napoleon's secret-service. These were convinced that the meetings in the chapel screened subversive activities, and that the congregation of Augustinian nuns, pledged to pray daily and nightly that the crimes committed in the name of liberty, might be effaced by a beneficent Creator, were in reality plotting against the safety of the state. Proudly, before raiding the convent, they reported their findings to their chief, but the astute Fouché knew that the political wind was turning; and soon one of the principal subscribers to the enterprise and chief founders of the cemetery and chapel was Napoleon's beloved stepson, Eugene de Beauharnais.

His father, Alexandre, had met death with the poet, André Chénier, at the Barrière du Trone.
From that day Napoleon decreed that the foundation should be allowed to form in peace. It is incorporated today as the SOCIETE IMMOBILIAIRE DE L’ORATOIRE ET DU CIMITIERE DE PICPUS. It is administered by a committee of twelve, all direct descendants of the victims of the fosse commune and privileged to lie in the cemetery beside the garden.

(Clara Longworth de Chambrun is the mother of Count René de Chambrun, and a sister of Nicholas Longworth, who married Alice Roosevelt. She is among the leading modern authorities upon Shakespeare.)

** Apologies **

There has been a delay in the publication of the Dubois-Martin brochure, announced in the last issue. We hope eventually to send it to our active members.

Through an oversight, the name of Mr. Nolan, former president, was omitted from the list of names of the Executive Council on the current stationery of the Society.

** John Paul Jones to Lafayette (1780): **

“I am a citizen of the world, totally unfettered by the little mean distinctions of country or of climate, which diminish or set bounds to the benevolence of the heart. Impelled by principles of gratitude and philanthropy, I drew my sword at the beginning of the American Revolution, and, when France so nobly espoused that great cause, no individual felt the obligation with truer gratitude than myself. When the court of France soon after invited me to remain for a time in Europe, I considered myself as highly honoured by the application that was made to the American commissioners. Since that time I have been at every instant, and still am, ready to do my utmost for the good of the common cause of France and America. As an American officer, and as a man, I affectionately love and respect the character and nation of France, and hope the alliance with America may last forever... I lament the calamities of war, and wish, above all things, for an honourable, happy, and lasting peace.”

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Speech Broadcast by MESSMORE KENDALL

President of the BILL OF RIGHTS COMMEMORATIVE SOCIETY

BILL OF RIGHTS DAY — DECEMBER 15, 1947

IN 1787 a proposed Constitution for a United States was issued to the original Thirteen States for their ratification. It met with much opposition from the radical patriots of the day who opposed it for they feared that it would not offer sufficient protection against despotism. They remembered the blood which had been spilled to bring about their liberties and they were unflinching in their determination to keep them. They knew it had been a constant struggle to retain their freedom since 1215 when at Runnymede their forefathers wrested from King John the Magna Carta which is the basis of all human liberties.

They believed that their liberties should be set forth in plain, unmistakable language as a part of the Constitution and thereby made the basic written law of our land. So they enumerated the protections they demanded: Freedom of Worship; Freedom of Speech; Freedom of the Press; the right to peaceably assemble and to petition the Government for redress of grievances, trial by jury and all the other rights they deemed essential for a free people who had escaped from domination of a state or individual.

It was only when George Washington and James Madison pledged themselves that Congress would embody their demands as amendments to the Constitution that document after nine months was finally ratified by the people of the States.

Their demands became the first ten amendments to our Constitution and are known as The Bill of Rights. They are a statement in plain language of American liberties and are set forth so clearly that all may understand.

There is but one kind of freedom and it is found only when government is limited by a Constitution which protects the sanctity of the home and the freedom of the individual against interference not only from other individuals, but also from slavery by centralized power.

These precious rights we enjoy seem so obvious, so seemingly commonplace, that we have taken them for granted. There are no greater truths than that man fails to appreciate what he already possesses and things seldom are prized until lost. One never really fully realizes the blessings of the use of an arm, until it is gone; the joys of sight are coveted by few — save the blind.

And so it is with liberty and human rights. To gain them, men fought through the fires of hell. Once won, and seemingly secured, they are left to the care of everyone in general and no one in particular. This is well and good when no enemy menaces. But now the scene has shifted, time has passed and our hard-gotten gains are attacked from without and within, and are in danger of being swept away. Unless we keep a watchful eye we may find this Nation in the same unhappy situation of slavery half the people of the world are in today.

“God grants liberty only to those who love it and are always ready to guard and defend it.”

So protect the priceless heritage we celebrate today.

It is now my great pleasure to present the man whose happy duty it is to protect this heritage for you and to enforce the observance of our Constitutional privileges. He is the Nation’s lawyer, your champion in the lists against those who would destroy our form of government, I present our brilliant Attorney General of the United States, Tom C. Clark.

** Brandywine Battle Field — a peaceful countryside dreaming in the shimmering heat of a July day in 1825. Lafayette, then an elderly man, visiting his beloved America for the last time, once more walked across the fields. “The honor of having mingled my blood with that of many other American soldiers on the heights of the Brandywine, has been to me a source of pride and delight,” he said. Today these words of his face the sun, carved upon a monument there on the battlefield, for all to see — and remember: “May the blood spilled by thousands, with equal merit, in the cause of Independence and Freedom, be to ensuing generations an eternal pledge of unalloyed Republicanism, Federal Union, Public Prosperity and Domestic Happiness.”**
The Freedom Train

Dr. Frank Monaghan and Dr. Julian P. Boyd, of our Executive Council, were members of the Documents Advisory Committee for the Freedom Train. Dr. Monaghan was largely responsible for assembling the documents, and, thanks to him, the Marquis de Lafayette made the Train. Across the country it bore among its treasures an original letter from Lafayette to Washington.

This original manuscript letter was lent by the Lafayette College Library from the Collection of the American Friends of Lafayette. In his book Dr. Monaghan makes the following comment: "It is a double reminder: that a great leader in the French Revolution remained so intensely interested in the progress of the new American government; and that he received his education in the principles of liberty while he was fighting, as a youthful general in the American army, to achieve something which he did not quite understand. But in America he came to know liberty and most of his future years were spent in trying to transplant it to France."

The Letter

Paris, January the 1st, 1788

My dear General:

I am fortunate in this opportunity to wish you a Happy New Year, and to devote the first moments of this day to the heartfelt pleasure to remind you, my beloved General, of your adoptive son and most affectionate, devoted friend. I beg you will present my best respects to Mrs. Washington. Mde de Lafayette joins in the most tender compliments to you and to her and I hope, my dear General, that you will be so kind as to mention me very affectionately to all the family and friends.

It is needless for me to tell you that I read the proposed Constitution with undescrivable eagerness and attention. I have admired it, and find in it a bold, large, and solid frame for the Confederation. The election principles, with respect to the two Houses of Congress, are most happily calculated. I am afraid only of two matters:—first, the lack of a declaration of rights; secondly, the great powers and possible continuance of the President, who may one day or other become a Stadtholder. Should my observations be well founded, I still am easy on two accounts. First, that a bill of rights may be made if wished by the people, before they accept the Constitution. My other comfort is, that you cannot refuse being elected President; and that if you think the public vessel can stir without those powers, you will be able to favor them, or propose measures respecting their permanence, which cannot fail to insure a greater perfection to the Constitution, and a new crop of glory to yourself. But, in the name of America, of mankind at large, and your own fame, I beseech you, my dear General, not to deny your acceptance of the office of President for the first years. You alone can establish the political machine; and I foresee it will furnish an admirable chapter to your history.

I am more and more pleased with Mr. Jefferson. His abilities, his virtues, his temper, every thing of him commands respect and attracts affection. He enjoys universal regard, and does the affairs of America to perfection. It is the happiest choice that could be made.

Adieu, my dear General, with filial love and respect I have the honour to be Your devoted and affectionate friend

LAFAYETTE

"THE HERITAGE OF FREEDOM"

by Dr. Frank Monaghan

In this book Dr. Monaghan sets down the story of the Freedom Train and its precious cargo. The inspirational impact of its visit to cities and towns across the land will long be remembered. This book is a valuable record of a thrilling and novel undertaking. (Published by the Princeton Press.)

Officers of the Legion of Honor

Mrs. Edward Kennard Rand of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Mr. J. Bennett Nolan were recently elevated to the rank of Officers of the Legion of Honor.

In 1784, Samuel McIntire of Salem, woodcarver, architect, builder, fixed the temporary tables in the Assembly Hall on Federal Street, Salem, where a dinner was given on October 28, 1784, in honor of the Marquis de Lafayette. For this labor, Samuel McIntire was paid £1.8. Old bills, which are in the possession of Colonel Lawrence Jenkins of Salem, tell us that at the dinner there was consumed "92 dinners, 41 bottles of Wine, 16 Bowls of Punch and 12 glasses of Grog." Cost £50.9. In the evening, 27 bottles of wine and 't bottle of Old Spirits. Cost £6.19. (Colonel Jenkins is curator of the Peabody Museum, East India House, Salem, Mass.)

Washington to Lafayette

Mount Vernon, 18 June, 1788

*** I expect that many blessings will be attributed to our new government, which are now taking their rise from that industry and frugality into the practice of which the people have been forced from necessity. I really believe that there never was so much labor and economy to be found before in the country as at the present moment. If they persist in the habits they are acquiring, the good effects will soon be distinguishable. When the people shall find themselves secure under an energetic government, when foreign nations shall be disposed to give us equal advantages in commerce from dread of retaliation, when the burdens of war shall be in a manner done away by the sale of western lands, when the seeds of happiness which are sown here shall begin to expand themselves, and when everyone, under his own vine and fig-tree, shall begin to taste the fruits of freedom, then all these blessings (for all these blessings will come) will be referred to the fostering influence of the new government. Whereas many causes will have conspired to produce them. You see, I am not less enthusiastic than I ever have been, if a belief that peculiar scenes of felicity are reserved for this country is to be denominated enthusiasm. Indeed, I do not believe that Providence has done so much for nothing. It has always been my creed, that we should not be left as a monument to prove, "that mankind, under the most favorable circumstances for civil liberty and happiness, are unequal to the task of governing themselves, and are therefore made for a master."***

Lafayette Medals

A quarterly, French American Review, edited by Professor Gilbert Chinard of Princeton University, will be launched this month. Our active members will all receive a copy of this publication, issued by the Institut Francais de Washington, of which Mr. Stuart W. Jackson is president.

Lafayette College, 1948

Study of American History

Each year the medal of the American Friends of Lafayette is awarded at Lafayette College. The case bears the following legend:

Presented by

The American Friends of Lafayette

To the highest ranking senior in the Study of American History

Lafayette College, 1948