LAFAYETTE, AMERICA'S HERO: THE GROWTH OF A LEGEND

by

Marguerite Doris Bloxom

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of the University of Maryland in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
1963

APPROVAL SHEET

Title of Thesis: Lafayette, America's Hero: The Growth of a Legend

Name of Candidate: Marguerite Doris Bloxom
Master of Arts, 1963

Thesis and Abstract Approved: Otho T Beall, Jr (by Carl Bode)
Otho T. Beall, Jr.
Assistant Professor
English Department

Date approved: May 10, 1963

C.1

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: Lafayette, America's Hero: The Growth of a Legend

Marguerite Doris Bloxom, Master of Arts, 1963

Thesis directed by: Dr. Otho T. Beall, Jr.
Assistant Professor

The legend of Lafayette began to grow about the time of his 1784 goodwill visit to the United States. Identical biographical sketches of Lafayette appeared in several early histories of the Revolutionary War, and similar versions were included in other histories. The core of the sketch was the picture of a young French nobleman, inspired by the ideals of liberty and equality, who came to America at great personal sacrifice and his own expense to take part in the fight for freedom. His story was used to add weight to the rightness of the action of the American patriots, and to stimulate feelings of national pride.

After the turn of the century, the story of Lafayette became shorter and more routine. It was dropped from some textbooks, and was greatly abbreviated in others. It seems probable that while Lafayette would not have been forgotten, his place in American history would have been small, perhaps even obscure, if he had not visited America again in 1824.

During this last visit, after an absence of forty years, the General received an enthusiastic and overwhelming

reception. Interest in Lafayette revived quickly, and accounts of him appeared in newspapers, periodicals and separate books. The importance of his contribution to the foundation of the United States was emphasized; as a hero, he approached the position of America's savior. In addition, his personal characteristics endeared him to the people. In all probability, Americans' lasting esteem for Lafayette was developed as a result of the 1824 visit.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. THE MODERN BIOGRAPHERS' VIEW OF LAFAYETTE'S DECISION TO COME TO AMERICA 7

III. LAFAYETTE IN AMERICA: THE FIRST THREE VISITS (1777-1784) 18

IV. LAFAYETTE AND THE UNITED STATES: THE CHANGES OF FORTY YEARS (1784-1824) 30

V. AMERICA WELCOMES LAFAYETTE: THE TRIUMPHAL TOUR IN 1824 41

VI. WRITING THE STORY OF LAFAYETTE 56

VII. THE LAFAYETTE LEGEND AT THE TIME OF HIS VISIT 79

APPENDIX 100

LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED 118

I. INTRODUCTION

On a warm August Monday in 1824, thousands of people lined New York City's Broadway from the battery to City Hall. They had come to welcome General Lafayette, the "Hero of Two Worlds," to America.[1] Forty years had passed since the General's last visit, and the infant nation had grown and expanded. A majority of those who crowded to see him pass had never seen the man before. Over half of them were far from born when Lafayette was last in America, and in fact, the fathers of many of the watchers had been only children[2] when the General last visited New York in 1784.

All that most of these eager spectators knew about their hero, they had learned from secondary sources. Probably they had met him in their schoolbooks or heard about him from their teachers. Some had learned of him in the war stories their fathers and grandfathers told. Those who read newspapers and periodicals regularly knew of his participation in the French Revolution--if they could remember that far back. Those who kept informed about French politics knew that he had recently served in the French Legislative Assembly as an elected representative from his area and was an influential liberal, although he probably did not have the enormous public popularity he had once known.

Undoubtedly some Americans had only begun to recognize his name after word of his visit had been announced, and plans for the celebration were being drawn. During the next thirteen months they would constantly hear of Lafayette as his travels carried him into each of the twenty-four states.

Quite plainly there had been nothing comparable to Lafayette's grand reception in all of America's history. He came at the invitation of Congress and President Monroe, and he was designated "The Nation's Guest." Everywhere he went he was greeted by crowds, speeches, processions, dinners, balls and honors of all sorts.

One may ask why Lafayette's reception was so overwhelmingly enthusiastic. Certainly it was a celebration of nationalism, when stories from the Revolutionary War were told again, and patriotic feelings ran high. Marshall Fishwick had pointed out that the visit set off the first revival of veneration for Washington. In his words, the "visit reawakened all the revolutionary glow and reactivated the tongues of veterans who in all ages become more heroic as they are further removed from the battlefield." He described Lafayette's visit as a piece of the "poetry of history."[3]

General Lafayette must have seemed like a figure returned from history, a living character of the past. In recalling the occasion Josiah Quincy wrote, "It was as if one of the dead heroes of the past, to whom indebtedness of mankind is always acknowledged, were to be reanimated to receive the gratitude of a living world."[4] The ceremonies were thus interpreted as a demonstration of the nation's appreciation to one who had helped win the country's freedom. This demonstration of gratitude was further thought to show the world that this republic was thriving and proud and not very impressed with the divine right of kings or the Holy Alliance.[5]

Lafayette meant more to those Americans of 1824, though, than just the figurehead of a national celebration. There was a genuine respect for the man himself. Was this respect newly learned, or had it existed through the forty years of his absence? Had he always been a hero, or was he rediscovered in 1824? He was personally known by many influential Americans. Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and others had maintained correspondence with him and given him assistance when they could. But what did the average American, the man on the street, know of Lafayette?

This is a study of the story of Lafayette as it was told during the forty years of his absence from the United States. One cannot hope to measure directly how Americans felt about him through those years, but one can learn something about how he was treated in the history books, periodicals and literature of the period. As far as these writings can be considered indicative of the thoughts of their times as well as influential in shaping thought, one may learn the characteristics of Americans' image of Lafayette.

Such a study of the Americans' picture of Lafayette during forty years may be important for several reasons.

For one thing, it can supply details to help explain why Lafayette's visit generated such enthusiasm, and why he was so well received. It can also be expected to show something about the importance of heroes to the American people, and the uses that Americans make of their heroes. Finally, the study of Lafayette as a hero may be expected to show something about the personal characteristics and traits that Americans have emphasized and required of the men they glorified.

One assumption of this study should be made clear now. This assumption is that a man becomes a hero (or a villain) not primarily for his deeds, but because of the way in which those deeds are perceived by the public. This means that the man's story must be told to the people, and the story must win their approval before a man can become a popular hero.

The way in which the story is told, and the impression that the story conveys are determined by the motives and attitudes of those who tell it and those who hear and repeat it. Intentionally or not, a story will be distorted, enlarged, emotionally slanted and otherwise changed to suit the purposes of those who use it. Unless the story is checked against records or other data, it will remain in this altered state or be further altered as long as it is useful and satisfying for its audience.

This is a study of how Lafayette's story was told, changed and used during the period of his absence (1784-1824) and at the time of his last visit. That is, it is a study of how he was made a hero for Americans, and why his image took the form it did.

I. Footnotes

[1] New York Evening Post, August 17, 1824.

[2] Warren S. Thompson and P. K. Whelpton, Population Trends in the United States (New York, 1933), p. 141. (Estimation that in 1820 88 per cent of all white, age known Americans were age 44 years or younger, and 60 per cent were age 19 or younger.)

[3] Marshall W. Fishwick, American Heroes, Myth and Reality (Washington, D. C., 1954), p. 42.

[4] Josiah Quincy, Figures of the Past from the Leaves of Old Journals, 9th ed. (Boston, 1901), p. 161.

[5] New York Evening Post, July 10, 1824. (Oration by Hooper Cumming, D.D. at July 4, celebration.)

II. THE MODERN BIOGRAPHERS' VIEW OF LAFAYETTE'S DECISION TO COME TO AMERICA

The legendary Lafayette, the hero whose story was told in the history books, was an idealistic youth who believed so deeply in liberty, equality and the rights of man, that he was willing to leave his native France and come to America to donate his energy and talents to the Americans who were fighting to establish those ideals. Before examining the legend and its growth in detail, it is important to present some of the more objective data that have been established by contemporary biographers. The very careful work of Louis Gottschalk in the study of Lafayette's early life makes his books the major sources of reliable and detailed information about Lafayette before the French revolution. Other writers tend to rely primarily on Gottschalk or on Lafayette's Memoirs, although some have contributed additional worthwhile information and interpretation.

Gottschalk has been interested in studying young Lafayette's motives for coming to America to join the fighting. It is his contention that when the marquis met the American commissioner in Paris, he was a frustrated young man in search of a career rather than a champion of liberty.[1] Lafayette did not become a genuine liberal until after his exposure to the American people and the thinking of American leaders. Gottschalk recreates a picture of the life of the young marquis and the factors that led him to his decision to come to America which is perhaps less romantic than the legend, but at the same time more human and appealing.

Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, was born in September of 1757. He was an only child who was about two years old when his father was killed in battle against the British. His grandmother and two aunts raised him in his native rural area of Auvergne where the villagers bowed to him when he rode out in the carriage.[2] He had few companions except a female cousin, the local Abbe who was his tutor, and peasant children that he occasionally played with. From an early age he dreamed of being a soldier like his father and perhaps someday avenging his father's death.[3] It was not until Gilbert, as he was called, was eleven that he was sent to Paris to be near his mother and to receive more formal education and an introduction to the social circles to which his mother belonged.[4]

Lafayette's mother died when he was thirteen, and his grandfather died a few weeks later, so that he had little immediate family left to guide him. Through the influence of his great grandfather he was entered in the Second Company of the King's Musketeers and thus began his military career, although his schooling continued.[5] He received the standard course of Latin, rhetoric, fencing, some history and riding at a popular school for French nobility.[6]

About the time of his fifteenth birthday, Lafayette's marriage to Adrienne, second daughter of the Duc d'Ayen of the Noailles family, was arranged. Although the wedding was not scheduled to take place for two years, the boy was sent to live at the Noailles home at Versailles, and his career came under the direction of his future father-in-law. Lafayette was made an officer in the Noailles Dragoons.[7]

After his marriage at seventeen, Lafayette moved with the "young bloods" at court although he felt awkward and ill at ease among them and maintained a protective air of coldness and reserve which was sometimes viewed suspiciously by other courtiers. He retained much of his rural simplicity and was not very successful on the dance floor or in drinking bouts.[8] About this time his in-laws were trying to secure a position for him at court in the service of the Comte de Provence, the king's brother. Fearful of losing the chance for a military career and already uncomfortable at court, Lafayette eliminated the possibility of such a position by mildly insulting the count during a ballroom conversation.[9]

A year or so later, a new minister of war was appointed, and under his direction a reorganization of the army was begun. Many young captains were put in the reserve, and Lafayette was one of them. His chances for professional military success, at least in a peacetime army, now seemed very small.[10] He was an ambitious young man who longed for praise, glory and reputation in a brilliant military career, but the avenues to his goal now seemed blocked. As

Henry Sedgwick has written, he longed to "prove to the Noailles family and the gallants of Versailles that the clumsy, red haired boy possessed qualities of no mean order . . . ."[11] Was he to content himself with life at court even though he did not enjoy it? Could he build a career for himself, or must he let his relatives guide his future even though the Duc d'Ayen seemed to lack confidence in the abilities of his new son-in-law?

This was his dilemma when he first heard that some far off Americans were waging war against the British. From his old friend and former commander, the Comte de Broglie, he learned that an American, Silas Deane, was in Paris trying to get military equipment for the revolutionaries, and he would probably want some French officers to collect and accompany the shipments.[12] The possibility of taking part in such a conflict quickly excited Lafayette's imagination.

Broglie who was interested in his own fame and prestige, was secretly trying to advance himself as commander of the American army to replace Washington and perhaps bring all of America under French control. Part of his plot involved sending a crew of worthy French officers to America to pave the way for the count to assume power. One of his key conspirators was the Baron deKalb, an established military figure of dubious title but considerable repute, who had some familiarity with America. Broglie and deKalb were regularly though subtly pressing Deane to send some Frenchmen, particularly those they recommended, to America.[13]

Lafayette, his brother-in-law, the Vicomte de Noailles, and their friend, the Comte de Segur, were all attracted to the notion of going to America to fight the British. Gilbert and Noailles went to ask permission of their father-in-law, who scoffed at the plan and forbade them to take part in such an expedition.[14]

Noailles relinquished his plans, but Lafayette silently persisted. He led Broglie to believe that he had his father-in-law's permission, and the count eventually agreed to have deKalb introduce the young marquis to Silas Deane. The American agent was so impressed with Lafayette's social standing and his unique desire to serve without pay, that he soon gave him a Major General's commission in the American army, even though the nobleman was only nineteen years old and had had no wartime experience. It is uncertain whether or not Lafayette knew of Broglie's schemes to achieve fame and power in America, but if he did, he had no opposition to them. He had respect for his commander, he believed in the superiority of the French, and he had not yet met George Washington.[15]

Many delays and setbacks occurred, however, before the adventurers could finally get started. The British minister in Paris, Lord Stormont, was suspicious of their activities and kept up a regular pattern of protest. Furthermore, because of the poor showing of the Americans in the fighting, the French government was unwilling to openly support them and antagonize the British. Because of this, deKalb and a party of men with commissions from Deane (Lafayette was not included) were stopped and turned back at Le Havre, although one shipload managed to sail.[16] After the men returned to Paris, they took steps to reorganize the expedition.

One of the conspirators suggested that the Marquis de Lafayette, if he wished, could purchase a ship and thus eliminate the transportation difficulties. When Lafayette heard of the plan, he agreed readily, and Broglie's secretary, whose brother was signed to go with the party, set about making the arrangements.[17]

Through the whole period Gilbert vacillated nervously about what he should do. He yearned to go to America to win glory and recognition--and yet he feared the displeasure and wrath of his father-in-law and his other powerful relatives. He continued to hope that they would relent and approve of his trip.

At last the ship was ready, and Lafayette, Baron deKalb, and twelve other French military men of varying degrees of experience sailed from Bordeaux. Word of his impending departure had reached his family, who convinced the court to send an order requiring the young man to return and join his family for a tour of southern Italy. The order was delivered just as the men were boarding the vessel, but in apparent defiance Lafayette gave the order to sail. His orders, however, were to go to Spain, where the ship would be out of reach of French officials, and there he halted

---

and tried to decide what to do. First he sent a messenger back to try to learn how feeling for and against him was running. Then he headed back himself in an attempt to secure more approval for what he wanted to do.[18]

As he was traveling overland towards Paris, he met the Vicomte de Mauroy, who also had a Major General's commission from Deane. Mauroy convinced Lafayette that aside from his family no one was really concerned about stopping the young man, and that, in fact, many important people unofficially favored his going. With that assurance Lafayette convinced himself that his father-in-law would eventually be proud of him, and he returned to his ship with Mauroy. Two other men joined the party, one of whom was a European-born American, Leonard Price (also given as Brice), who was apparently the only one aboard who spoke English. At last the Victoire put to sea, and the Marquis de Lafayette, age nineteen, was about to meet Americans on their own soil for the first time.[19]

It is easy to believe, as Gottschalk has shown, that Lafayette was not a republican or a liberal at that time. He was a rich, aristocratic, absentee landlord whose large holdings were managed by stewards almost without his knowledge. Gottschalk concludes of Lafayette that he was:

> Altogether representative of the aristocrats of the old Regime. If he was dissatisfied with his present lot, it was not because he had a superior sense of justice and a greater respect for the right. . . . It was because he felt self-conscious, inferior, and unhappy in a milieu for which his ancestry, early training, and awkward manner had not prepared him--because he was nothing

> more than a country squire among princes, dukes, and marshals, even though richer than most.[20]

Gottschalk further suggests that Lafayette did not come to America because he believed in what America was fighting for, since he knew little about what she hoped to gain. He states:

> He did know that she was fighting England, and that was enough to make him believe that he ought to be on her side. He did not really know that liberty and equality were good. He did know that glory was good, at least for him, and since glory was to be found on the side of liberty and equality, they must be good too. . . . as England had solemnly been declared to be fighting against the rights of man, Lafayette found himself decidedly in favor of the rights of man.[21]

In a more charitable interpretation, David Loth has pointed out that Lafayette belonged to an older order of aristocrats who seriously believed in *noblesse oblige* and responsibility toward the common people who were dependent on them. Because of this, he had been taught a sense of the worth and value of human life at all levels that was missing in the newer aristocrats who crowded Versailles. His emergence as a liberal and a sincere supporter of equal rights followed fairly easily from this value system and did not require any extreme changes in his character. When he met new ideas of liberty and equality in America, he could assimilate them with comparative ease and without major changes in belief.[22]

Loth agrees with Gottschalk, however, that an idealistic dedication to liberal principles was not what motivated the Marquis de Lafayette to join the American army. Similarly, W. E. Woodward, whose biography, *Lafayette*, was published in 1938, accepts Gottschalk's view and quotes several paragraphs of his work.[23]

Andre Maurois, in Adrienne (1961) a biography of Lafayette's wife, tends to revert to the earlier and more legendary belief. Maurois did not use Gottschalk's major books as sources, although he acknowledges the scholarship of the work. Maurois apparently depended on Lafayette's Memoirs and letters to which he had access.

Maurois speaks of Lafayette as a young idealist who yearned to fight for liberty. He writes:

> To young men like Louis de Noailles and Gilbert de La Fayette these first cannon shots in the defense of liberty sounded a summons and a signal. . . . They had seen with their own eyes the scandalous inequality on which French society was built, and the spectacle had caused them distress. . . . To a generation in love with ideas of renewal and reform the temerity of the Americans who had revolted against a reactionary monarch seemed wholly admirable.[24]

In a later section Maurois does acknowledge that Lafayette had many aristocratic habits even after his return from America.[25] Basically though, he believes that Lafayette was always a true son of liberty. Again the durability of the legend and its resistance to change are demonstrated.

II. Footnotes

[1] Louis Gottschalk, The United States and Lafayette (Rock Island, Illinois, 1958), p. 1.

[2] Louis Gottschalk, Lafayette Comes to America (Chicago, 1935), Ch. I, pp. 1-15.

[3] David Loth, The People's General. The Personal Story of Lafayette (New York, 1951), p. 36.

[4] Gottschalk, Comes Ch. I, pp. 1-15.

[5] Gottschalk, Comes Ch. II, pp. 16-25.

[6] Loth, p. 16.

[7] Gottschalk, Comes Ch. III, pp. 26-36.

[8] Loth, p. 25.

[9] Gottschalk, Comes Ch. IV, pp. 37-55.

[10] Gottschalk, Comes Ch. IV, pp. 37-55.

[11] Henry D. Sedgwick, Lafayette (Indianapolis, 1928), pp. 23-24.

[12] Elizabeth S. Kite, "Lafayette and His Companions on the 'Victoire'," Records of the American Catholic Historical Society (March, June, Sep., Dec. 1934), p. 11.

[13] Loth, p. 47.

[14] Gottschalk, Comes p. 73.

[15] Loth, pp. 28-31.

[16] Loth, p. 55.

[17] Gottschalk, Comes pp. 84-85.

[18] Kite, pp. 22-24.

[19] Kite, p. 31.

[20] Gottschalk, Comes p. 65.

[21] Gottschalk, Comes pp. 137-138.

[22] Loth, pp. 34-37.

[23] W. E. Woodward, Lafayette (New York, 1938), p. 45.

[24] Andre Maurois, Adrienne. The Life of the Marquise de La Fayette, trans. Gerard Hopkins (New York, 1961), p. 42.

[25] Maurois, p. 121.

III. LAFAYETTE IN AMERICA: THE FIRST THREE VISITS (1777-1784)

In June 1777, Lafayette and his companions landed off the coast of South Carolina. A difficult overland trip brought them to Philadelphia to offer their services to Congress. After all the problems and obstacles they had faced to come that far, it was a rude shock to be told by a representative of Congress that Silas Deane had no authority to give them commissions, that the American army had all the officers it needed, and their services were not wanted.[1]

Congress had been receiving a steady flow of foreign officers who made exorbitant demands for rank and position. It had been particularly troubled by a Frenchman named DuCoudray who had come with the earlier shipload of Broglie's recruits, and who seemed too influential to dismiss, although his demands were incessant. Congress was determined to discourage any new applicants; the Marquis de Lafayette, however, was a special case. Further reflection by some members of Congress brought about the realization that Lafayette was very wealthy, had important family connections and was easily the most aristocratic of the foreign applicants. In addition, the fact that he demanded to serve without pay was refreshingly unique. Within a few days of his arrival, Congress reconsidered and made him a Major General in the American army.[2]

His companions on the voyage to America did not receive such warm treatment. Several of them petitioned and wrote letters to Congress complaining of their treatment, and deKalb demanded that he receive the previously promised commission or enough money for the return trip to France. Eventually Lafayette succeeded in having three of lesser rank made aides-de-camp to himself; after a few months deKalb was made a Major General also, while most of the others left America.[3]

After he joined the American army, Lafayette was invited by General Washington to stay with him at army headquarters outside Philadelphia. Although the marquis was a Major General, he had no command, but he frequently expressed his eagerness to assume one if it could be made available. He also expressed a desire to learn and a willingness to serve where he was needed, especially if there might be a chance for glory there. Washington frankly admitted that he did not know what he was supposed to do with the young man, or why Congress had given him a commission. However, he admired Lafayette's sincerity, and his affection for the marquis grew--though not as rapidly as Lafayette's love for his new commander which blossomed almost overnight.[4]

Lafayette's first real taste of battle came in September of 1777 at Brandywine Creek. The Americans hoped to use the natural barrier of the river in a defense that would stop the British advance toward Philadelphia. The

---

attempt was unsuccessful, since the English found an undefended ford and were able to cross the river as the Americans were forced to drop back. In the fighting Lafayette was brave and shouted encouragement to the retreating soldiers. Before the shooting ended, the marquis was wounded in the leg; it was a flesh wound and not serious, but it gave him the added distinction of having shed his blood for the American cause.[5] He later wrote to Adrienne:

> Our Americans after having stood their ground for some time, ended at length by being routed: whilst endeavouring to rally them, the English honoured me with a musket ball, which slightly wounded me in the leg,--but it is a trifle, my dearest love; the ball touched neither bone nor nerve, and I have escaped with the obligation of lying on my back for some time, which puts me much out of humour.[6]

Lafayette was sent to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to recuperate while the British moved into Philadelphia. After he recovered, Washington gave him his first command, a division of Virginians, and his first task was to lead them into winter camp at Valley Forge.[7]

During his first months in America, Lafayette made friends with Thomas Conway, a native of Ireland who had served with the French army in the Orient. In the weeks before Brandywine, while he was restlessly awaiting some action, Lafayette had talked with Conway about a plan to lead an attack on the West Indies, and he became fond of this naturalized Frenchman. He also expressed an affection for General Horatio Gates without realizing the animosity between these men and Washington. Lafayette apparently came close to blundering about his loyalties, although as soon as he saw that Conway and Gates were beginning actively to promote public and congressional dissatisfaction with General Washington, he was quick to declare his staunch support of his Commander in Chief.[8]

During the winter of 1777-1778 there was talk of sending a grand expedition to conquer Canada. When Lafayette heard of the plan, even though he knew Conway was one of its promoters, he quickly suggested that since he was a high ranking Frenchman, he was well suited to command such an operation. Congress and the Board of War agreed with him and put him in charge, although he insisted on remaining under orders to Washington rather than taking an independent command as had been proposed.[9] Lafayette was displeased, however, that Conway was made next in command to him, and as he set out on the expedition, he suspected that the whole thing was a plot to separate him from Washington and put him under the control of Conway's friends and agents.[10]

The expedition was a complete failure. Lafayette and deKalb traveled as far as Albany to find that promised men and supplies were missing and unobtainable, and that a march under such winter conditions was nearly unthinkable. Lafayette was fearful that the whole business might be a blot on his reputation, and he anxiously wrote to Washington, who reassured him, and soon ordered the men to return.[11]

In the early summer of 1778, Washington and his council decided to attempt a full scale attack against the British that might prevent their resuming control of New York.

Before the Battle of Monmouth, as the engagement was later called, the command of the American forces was first offered to General Charles Lee, who refused. Lafayette was then put in charge until Lee changed his mind at the last minute. The fighting was confused by poor intelligence reports and Lee's many commands, and Washington arrived just in time to find the Americans retreating. The battle later appeared as Lee's disgrace and the termination of his military career.[12]

When news of the French alliance came, Lafayette was delighted. His letters to his influential family, who now indeed was proud of him, and other important French officials had probably contributed in some measure to France's decision to recognize American independence and enter into an alliance.[13]

Soon after this agreement was reached, Lafayette was on his way to Rhode Island to meet the French ships commanded by Count d'Estaing. The French and British fleets met off Providence, but a New England storm did more damage to both than either did to the other. The French were under orders to sail to Boston for repairs, an act which the Americans loudly protested since it left their army at Providence unprotected. Although Lafayette was distressed to hear criticism of his countrymen, he did attempt to convince the French to return, but the Americans retreated before he could succeed.[14]

Lafayette had been thinking for some time of returning to France. He was probably homesick, as well as being anxious to receive the fame and adulation that he was now sure awaited him at home. In addition, he thought that since France had joined in the war against England, he might have a chance of fighting under the French flag. Finally, he assured himself that, because of his intimate knowledge of both France and America, he might do the Americans more good at Versailles than he could do in the battlefield.[15]

The young General applied for and received leave from Congress and in January of 1779, he sailed out of Boston.[16] Congress sent letters of commendation to the French king assuring him of the noble and brave performance of Lafayette. It also commissioned Franklin to purchase a sword fitted with appropriate symbolic decorations and to present it to Lafayette with a message of appreciation from Congress.[17]

In Paris Lafayette was immediately made the center of attention and admiration. He was applauded in the theatres and consulted by the king and ministers. As he had predicted, his father-in-law was pleased, and his earlier act of disobediance was treated lightly by all concerned.[18]

Lafayette busied himself with several schemes. First there was talk of a real expedition against Canada; then he worked out a plan to take an American raiding party into the Irish Sea. French officials were more interested in an attack on England herself, and Lafayette actively promoted himself a place in those plans. Finally it was decided to expand French support for the fighting in America and to send the troops and supplies that the Americans needed.

Lafayette, who had also supported this decision, would return to America to take his former post and to serve in liaison wherever he could. He left for America in March of 1780.[19] His arrival was welcomed, and his assurances that he would soon be followed by French ships were good news. The American situation had not improved, and there was a growing discontent with the progress of the war among soldiers and civilians alike.

As before, Lafayette seemed to be present at many of the interesting moments of those months. While he and Washington were returning to their Hudson Valley camp after a conference with Rochambeau in Hartford, they received word of Benedict Arnold's treachery at West Point and hurried to the scene. Lafayette was one of the officers who sat on the board that tried the British Major Andre and sentenced him to hang.[20]

Shortly thereafter, Washington gave him command of 1200 light infantrymen and sent him to Virginia to try to capture Arnold, who was then with the British. In this assignment Lafayette displayed what later appeared as his greatest military skill, an adeptness at logistics. Loth writes:

> For all his fretting over shortages, he got more out of the civil authorities than any other commander and with less friction. He learned the management of men, how to judge the course to take with a given individual under given circumstances. He learned when to plead gracefully . . . He learned when to appeal to patriotism, self-esteem, public spirit, charity, snobbery--and so on down the line of human motives.[21]

After a skillful job of moving his men as far as Annapolis in an amazingly short time, Lafayette was forced to admit failure. The French fleet which was supposed to come to his aid never arrived, but Arnold received additional British reinforcements.[22]

The marquis was discouraged. He felt there was little for him to do in the South, and he was afraid of missing the action if the Americans and French tried to take New York. He and his men had moved as far north as Elkton when orders came telling them to turn south again, to assist General Nathaniel Greene, who was hoping to prevent a merger of the forces of Arnold and Cornwallis.[23] Eventually Lafayette received command of the entire American army in Virginia, and was forced to contend as best he could with a superior force of British. He anxiously awaited support from General Anthony Wayne and his Pennsylvanians.[24]

At first while he was considerably outnumbered, Lafayette could do nothing but retreat slowly, keeping to the north and west of Cornwallis. When General Wayne finally arrived, they were able to make more trouble for the British.[25] Gradually it began to appear as though Cornwallis were retreating and Lafayette was quick to add to this impression in his letters and dispatches. When Cornwallis moved, he followed him. The English commander, on the other hand, felt that he had been successful in his Virginia raids and was retiring to the more healthful atmosphere of Williamsburg. He had also received orders to be prepared for transport by sea to reinforce the British at New York. He hardly realized that he was being followed.[26]

In the end Cornwallis and his army were trapped in Yorktown, although this was probably due not as much to the opposition given him by the Americans as the fact that Cornwallis believed that British ships were coming to his assistance. By the time he realized that he would not receive support from sea, it was too late for him to escape to the south again. Washington's army and the French fleet were arriving, and after siege operations and some fighting Cornwallis surrendered.[27]

When it became apparent that the war was essentially finished, Lafayette began to plan his return to France. He arrived there in January of 1782. As before, he received on all sides the flattery and praise that he loved. He agitated for terms in the peace treaty that would be fair and favorable for America, and he continued to act as a self-styled authority on American affairs.[28]

In 1784 Lafayette decided to pay a personal visit to America, primarily to see Washington again. French officials approved of the project and encouraged Lafayette to do whatever he could to promote friendly relations between the two countries. He came as an informal ambassador of good will.[29]

When he returned to America, he was twenty-seven years old and already "The Hero of Two Worlds." He received a warm hero's welcome. There were crowds, speeches, dinners and balls. For the first time he was able to enter New York City, which had been occupied by the British during the war.

City officials there presented him with the freedom of the city in a golden box. He spent a pleasant fortnight with the Washingtons at Mount Vernon. Then he traveled north in the companionship of James Madison and attended an Indian conference in upstate New York. The state of Maryland conferred honorary citizenship upon him and his male descendants, and Harvard University presented an honorary degree to him. In Philadelphia he addressed the American Philosophical Society (he had earlier been made a member) about the wonders of Mesmerism, which he had been studying. It was the shortest of his visits to America, and after six months he was on his way back to France.[30]

III. Footnotes

[1] Louis Gottschalk, Lafayette Joins the American Army (Chicago, 1937), Ch. I, pp. 1-13.

[2] David Loth, The People's General. The Personal Story of Lafayette (New York, 1951), pp. 77-78.

[3] Loth, p. 80.

[4] W. E. Woodward, Lafayette (New York, 1938), pp. 21-23.

[5] Loth, pp. 82-87.

[6] Marquis de Lafayette, Memoirs, Correspondence and Manuscripts of General Lafayette (New York, 1837), p. 101.

[7] Loth, pp. 98-99.

[8] Gottschalk, Joins pp. 65-90.

[9] Loth, pp. 106-107.

[10] Gottschalk, Joins pp. 112-116.

[11] Loth, pp. 104-107.

[12] Loth, pp. 110-113.

[13] Woodward, pp. 64-65.

[14] Woodward, pp. 70-72.

[15] Loth, p. 116.

[16] J. Bennett Nolan, Lafayette in America Day by Day (Baltimore, 1934), p. 99.

[17] Louis Gottschalk, Lafayette and the Close of the American Revolution (Chicago, 1942), pp. 43-44.

[18] Loth, pp. 119-121.

[19] Gottschalk, Close pp. 1-75.

[20] Loth, pp. 138-141.

[21] Loth, p. 157.

[22] Gottschalk, Close pp. 188-205.

[23] Gottschalk, Close pp. 210-215.

[24] Gottschalk, Close p. 232.

[25] Gottschalk, Close p. 244.

[26] Gottschalk, Close pp. 251-259.

[27] Gottschalk, Close pp. 320-323.

[28] Loth, pp. 164-166.

[29] Louis Gottschalk, Lafayette Between the American and the French Revolution (Chicago, 1950), pp. 83-84.

[30] Gottschalk, Between pp. 84-138.

IV. LAFAYETTE AND THE UNITED STATES: THE CHANGES OF FORTY YEARS (1784-1824)

The years from 1785, when Lafayette returned to France, to 1789 when the French Revolution began are described by Woodward as probably the happiest of his life. "He was famous, rich, young and healthy. He dabbled in French politics, such as they were; agitated for reforms in the government and the methods of taxation; and made trips with his gorgeous crowd of friends and retainers to Potsdam and Vienna."[1]

In the early period of the French Revolution, Lafayette was a hero of the people, while yet a respected person among the nobility. In 1789 he sat with the nobles of the French National Assembly and, at the same time, accepted command of the middle class people's army, the National Guard. He ceased to use his title and referred to himself as General Lafayette.[2] When he rode out on his white horse he drew cheering crowds, and his public popularity was enormous.[3] At one point, when an angry mob marched to Versailles, he was able to turn the mood of the crowd from anger towards favor for the royal personages.[4]

As the tone of the revolution became more radical, Lafayette's popularity began to decline. A moderate liberal, the General advocated government reform, preferably in the form of a constitutional monarchy. The days and the times were uneasy, but when the king signed the constitution, in 1791, Lafayette and many others hoped and believed that the revolution was ended. Shortly thereafter, he resigned his post at the head of the National Guard, but a few months later he was asked to take command of one of the three armies that were being formed for defense against attack by Austria and Prussia.[5]

Lafayette was with this army near the border of France when radical elements of the revolution, the Jacobins, overturned the monarchy, relieved Lafayette of his command, and ordered him to return to Paris to defend his support of the king. Aware of the sharp danger of returning, his popularity and prestige gone, Lafayette crossed the border into Austrian territory where he planned to make his way to England.[6] He was promptly arrested and held for the next five years in Prussian and Austrian prisons.[7] After a daring escape attempt, in which he was aided by a German doctor named Bollman and an American, Francis Huger, he was kept in close confinement.[8] In 1795 his wife, Adrienne, who had narrowly missed execution during the Terror in France, voluntarily joined him in the Austrian prison of Olmutz, and she brought their two daughters with her.[9]

In 1797 Napoleon was persuaded to secure the release of Lafayette from the Austrians. The move gave Napoleon a chance to demonstrate his power, but he stipulated that Lafayette was not to return to France.[10] When Napoleon assumed governing power from the Directory in 1799, Lafayette entered France on a false passport and announced his intention of remaining. The emperor gave his permission along with a warning to stay out of politics.[11]

Lafayette was heavily in debt and had lost title to his lands during the revolution. His wife's relatives, however, had been able to recover some of their property, including the chateau of La Grange near Paris. After Lafayette's return to France, he settled there with his family and interested himself in farming and in writing his Memoirs.[12]

At this time Lafayette considered moving to America. Just before the turn of the century he wrote to American friends to ask their opinion about the wisdom of such a step. His friends advised him to wait until Franco-American relations improved. At that time, although war was not formally declared, Americans were fighting the French in fierce battle on the high seas.[13]

President Jefferson learned of the General's financial difficulties and urged Congress to pass a bill giving Lafayette a gift of public land such as had been given to other officers after the American Revolutionary war. The bill was passed in 1803, but because of conflicting claims, the titles were not actually granted for seven more years. Sale of the land eventually helped Lafayette clear his debts for awhile.[14]

The Marquise de Lafayette died in 1807 at the age of forty-eight. Her death was probably due to ailments acquired in the prison with her husband. He never remarried.[15]

In 1818 a few years after the Bourbon restoration, Lafayette was again elected to the Legislative Assembly, and he resumed his place as an influential person in French politics.[16] He and his son belonged to some of the secret "Liberty" societies that were springing up in Europe about 1820, and they were particularly active in the Carbonari, a group that desired overthrow of the Bourbons and establishment of a constitutional monarchy. When he received the invitation to visit America, Lafayette was still occupied with the Carbonari, but he was not at the time sitting in the National Assembly.[17]

The General had become the close friend of an Englishwoman, Frances Wright, who was becoming well known as a writer and reformer. Miss Wright had written a book about her impressions of America, and the two spent long hours comparing notes and discussing the new nation. These talks probably helped rekindle his interest in visiting the United States again.[18]

During the forty years of Lafayette's absence there were many changes in America too. The United States in 1784 was composed of thirteen relatively independent states loosely joined by the Articles of Confederation. Gradually tariff and trade problems together with the ineffectiveness of the Confederation in dealing with foreign powers led to the realization that more united power was essential if the nation were to show a strong front to the rest of the world.

The constitutional convention of 1787 began to draw up a plan for such union.[19]

The plan that emerged after weeks of discussion, argument, concession, demand and disagreement was not immediately hailed as a great achievement. Within a year, however, most Americans treated it as the cornerstone of their liberty, and politicians of all persuasions glorified it in Fourth of July speeches.[20]

Throughout the United States in this period, the feeling was generally one of having broken away from tradition and begun anew in a way that few nations had done before.[21] There was a growing sentiment of national pride; the flag, the eagle and the Constitution inspired men of many backgrounds; the thrill of political activity and the desire to take part in the government and get representation of one's views were increasingly felt.[22]

The nation in 1790 was primarily rural, though the cores of culture and civilization were centered in the cities. Philadelphia, the largest of the major cities, had 42,000 residents.[23] In its commercial life, the United States was primarily dependent on export of crops and raw materials. Manufacturing was minor although some small textile plants had been started in New England.

Through the first decade of the nineteenth century while the British and French were at war, the United States, as a neutral nation received rough treatment from both opposing powers.[24] The French, in 1797 declared the Alliance at an end and authorized French vessels to seize and confiscate American ships carrying British goods or going to or from British ports. The cry for war was raised, but President Adams elected to negotiate. For the next two years, although war was not formally declared, the United States battled the French at sea.[25]

The United States struggled for identity and self-assertion with very little power to support her demands for recognition of her rights. When Britain and/or France ignored these rights, the United States could only counter with trade restrictions of her own which generally hurt American merchants more than the foreign powers and created great resentment within the states.[26]

The demand for war had been heard many times, but American leaders had avoided asking for war, since the consequences of failure seemed grave. In 1812, President Madison under the urging of "warhawks" such as John C. Calhoun and Henry Clay saw no alternative but to ask Congress to declare war on Britain. The Americans were poorly prepared and not well directed.[27]

The Treaty of Ghent, signed in 1815, settled few of the disputes, but the fighting was stopped and the way made clear for future settlements. While the following years did not bring the tranquility that newly elected President Monroe hoped for, still they were periods of respite and relief. The identity of the United States seemed to Americans to be assured and future progress inevitable.[28]

The geographical expansion which had been temporarily slowed during the war increased rapidly. Movement westward had been in progress since the revolution and was stimulated by the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Rapid expansion accounted for the admission of six states after 1812.[29]

With such geographical expansion went advances in communication. Roads and turnpikes steadily appeared, although travel over them was far from comfortable. The greatest advances were made in water travel. In 1807 Robert Fulton's Clermont was first propelled by steam up the Hudson River. By 1820 the steamboat was a familiar sight on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Manmade waterways were of interest too, and the Erie Canal from Buffalo to Albany began operation in 1825. The railroad had been introduced to America by 1824, but business enterprise was hesitant to pour much into its development.[30]

Religion also traveled with geographical expansion. After the close of the revolution and particularly after the turn of the century, a second Great Awakening pervaded American religious life. This religious zeal went along with patriotic pride in its emphasis on maintaining American virtue and moral superiority. Revivalism was well suited to the frontier where the church became the social and intellectual center of newly settled communities.[31]

The idealism that was part of growing national pride along with the optimism of a people whose potential for progress seemed unlimited, helped create an atmosphere that would be increasingly receptive to romantic literature. The religious revival in its reaction against rationalism and dependence on a world of reason also contributed to this cultural atmosphere. The romantic movement was becoming increasingly popular in Europe and was beginning to find a cordial reception in America in the early nineteenth century. By 1824 the American literary scene had been expanded by Irving with The Sketch Book (1819), and Cooper with The Spy (1820). Through the next two generations this budding romanticism would reach its full height.[32]

The United States of 1824 had left its infancy, and there were signs that it was beginning to acquire maturity. States had been welded into a nation, and there was a general, if not always spoken, agreement that dissension was healthy and should be lived with. Americans were proud of themselves and their institutions. They were convinced of their own superiority and equally convinced of their future progress.[33] The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 was perceived by some as a statement of independence achieved. In her growing national strength, the United States would plan to stand away from Europe's troubles.[34] Though there were still many domestic problems to deal with, the time was ripe for a grand national celebration.

Lafayette had been considering a return visit to the United States, and he had expressed this desire in letters to American friends. In January of 1824, Mr. Mitchell of Maryland proposed to the House of Representatives that

Lafayette be officially invited to come.[35] Congress unanimously passed the resolution, and President Monroe extended the invitation. (Monroe had long been a friend of Lafayette's and had been instrumental in securing the release of Mme. de Lafayette from imprisonment in Paris in 1795.)[36] The proposed visit quickly won public approval. Some people pointed out that in addition to honoring Lafayette, such a visit would show the world that America was not afraid of the Holy Alliance and was proud to receive a continental republican. Other believed that such a visit would refute a charge they felt was often made, that republics were ungrateful.

The invitation was accepted, although Lafayette delayed about setting a date for the trip. Finally, in July of 1824, he set sail for the United States with his son, George Washington Lafayette, his secretary, Levasseur, and a personal servant. He was probably unprepared for the thrilling and overwhelming welcome that he would receive.[37]

IV. Footnotes

[1] W. E. Woodward, *Lafayette* (New York, 1938), p. 175.

[2] David Loth, *The People's General, The Personal Story of Lafayette* (New York, 1951), p. 216.

[3] Loth, pp. 230, 269.

[4] Loth, pp. 203-210.

[5] Woodward, pp. 294-295.

[6] Andre Maurois, *Adrienne. The Life of the Marquise de La Fayette*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (New York, 1961), pp. 206-207.

[7] Woodward, pp. 310-311.

[8] Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past from the Leaves of Old Journals*, 9th ed. (Boston, 1901), pp. 119-126.

[9] Woodward, pp. 363-365.

[10] Woodward, p. 368.

[11] Woodward, pp. 380-381.

[12] Woodward, pp. 381-383.

[13] Loth, p. 262.

[14] Woodward, p. 386.

[15] Loth, pp. 273-275.

[16] Woodward, p. 405.

[17] Woodward, pp. 408-412.

[18] William R. Waterman, *Fanny Wright* (New York, 1924), pp. 68-78.

[19] Harry J. Carman, Harold C. Syrett, and Bernard W. Wishy, *A History of the American People* (New York, 1960), I, 249-251.

[20] Marcus Cunliffe, *The Nation Takes Shape: 1789-1837* (Chicago, 1959), pp. 126-127.

[21] Russel Blaine Nye, *The Cultural Life of the New Nation, 1776-1830* (New York, 1960), p. 147.

[22] Cunliffe, pp. 38-39.

[23] Cunliffe, p. 100.

[24] Carman, p. 333.

[25] Carman, pp. 301-302.

[26] Cunliffe, pp. 56-57.

[27] Carman, pp. 343-351.

[28] George Dangerfield, The Era of Good Feelings (London, 1953), p. 101.

[29] Carman, p. 359.

[30] Cunliffe, pp. 102-105.

[31] Nye, pp. 219-220.

[32] Norman Foerster, ed. American Poetry and Prose (Boston, 1957), Part I, pp. 266-269.

[33] Nye, p. 148.

[34] Cunliffe, p. 65.

[35] New York Evening Post, January 15, 1824.

[36] Maurois, p. 265.

[37] Woodward, p. 418.

V. AMERICA WELCOMES LAFAYETTE: THE TRIUMPHAL TOUR IN 1824

A detailed description of the General's thirteen month visit to America would be much too long to include here. Fortunately, Bennett Nolan has compiled a day by day chronology of Lafayette's stay in America that makes it possible to retrace briefly the route of his travels. A few descriptions of some of the highlights of the visit should serve to illustrate the enthusiastic reception the old hero received. The impact of the visit at that time and on succeeding generations would form the basis for a study in itself.

News of the Congressional resolution which requested President Monroe to invite Lafayette to visit the United States appeared about the middle of January, 1824, and Lafayette's acceptance became known soon after. Soon the news spread that Lafayette would be "The Nation's Guest," a designation that he retained throughout his thirteen month stay.[1]

In the major cities the governing councils passed resolutions welcoming Lafayette's anticipated arrival and assuring him of their love and friendship. Public and private groups began thinking of balls, banquets, receptions and programs of other sorts that could be held to honor him. Much of this type of planning must have gone on after

Lafayette's arrival, because he had little in the way of definite schedules or itinerary at the time he landed.[2]

Early plans had to be fairly tenuous and flexible, because no one knew exactly when Lafayette would arrive or even where he would land, although New York seemed a likely choice. Elaborate flag and cannon signals were arranged to announce his arrival and to send troops and officials to their appointed places for his reception.[3]

The Cadmus, the ship on which the General and his party were passengers, reached the shores of America on Saturday, August 14, 1824. Soon after the ship anchored, the son of Daniel D. T~~h~~ompkins, the Vice President of the United States, came out to invite Lafayette to visit at his father's home on Staten Island until Monday. The General was somewhat surprised and suggested that he ought to go on into the city, because he was probably expected. He was assured that a grand welcome, which would be much more suitable for Monday than for Sunday, was awaiting him.[4]

By Monday all of New York must have known that Lafayette had arrived and would soon be welcomed by eager Americans. As his ship left Staten Island, it was met by an escort of steamboats decorated with flags and festoons. A committee of war veterans went out to meet the General and to ride back with him to Manhattan. Lafayette greeted them warmly, and they talked of old times until all had tears in their eyes.[5]

At Castle Garden, near the battery, he disembarked about 2:00 p.m. and was conducted in a procession through cheering throngs up to City Hall. There he was received by the mayor and many speeches were given, after which Lafayette reviewed the troops. Finally he was taken to his quarters at City Hotel, where a state banquet was held for him.

The next day, Tuesday, was marked by a noontime reception given by citizens in the Governor's Chamber of City Hall. On Wednesday he visited the navy yard and had lunch on the new frigate, Washington. Later at City Hall he was honored at a reception given by clergy, militia officers, and civic societies. The Historical Society gave a late afternoon reception where both the General and his son were made honorary members of the society.[6]

On Thursday, August 19, he received delegations from other cities who had come to extend invitations, and he dined with groups from Hartford, Baltimore and elsewhere.[7] Many of these arrangements were probably turned over to his son and his secretary, who worked out schedules and mapped routes. In the afternoon there was a reception by the French Society, and later Lafayette watched a parade by the Fire Department.[8]

In spite of the warm welcome he was receiving in New York, Lafayette was eager to get to Boston. He had promised many friends that he would go there at the first possible chance. On Friday, August 20, the Lafayette party departed from New York, still in procession through cheering crowds, and headed north through Connecticut and Massachusetts.

In all the towns they passed, they were greeted by excited onlookers, and there were hands to shake, babies to kiss, veterans to embrace, speeches to be heard and returned, toasts to be made and received, and festive meals to be eaten.[9]

Lafayette's arrival in Boston was celebrated with another procession which again moved through a cheering crowd. Josiah Quincy who rode near the head of the parade described it this way:

> We passed through immense throngs with all the noise that bells, cannon, and human lungs were capable of producing. . . . Everyone wore a Lafayette badge stamped upon blue ribbon. . . . It was a surrender, complete and without condition. It was universal . . . the cultivated classes of our somewhat stiff and exclusive city led the wild enthusiasm of the streets.[10]

In the early part of September, Lafayette traveled through New Hampshire to Hartford where he boarded a steamboat for New York. He disembarked about noon on Sunday, September 5, at Fulton Street Landing. This time there seemed to be little concern about desecrating the Sabbath, and crowds cheered along the shores and wharves of the East River as cannon fired a national salute. From the landing he was conducted to City Hall through streets filled with people.[11]

Monday, September 6, was his birthday and the Society of the Cincinnati held a dinner for him at Washington Hall which was "beautifully decorated with flags, evergreen, &c."[12] After the first fifteen toasts, Lafayette rose to offer a salute; when he finished, a transparency showing the

Goddess of Liberty holding a welcome scroll was illuminated, while a laurel wreath was lowered to the General's head. At least thirty-nine more toasts were offered before the evening ended.[13]

The next day Lafayette visited the Academy of Arts, the Hospital, and the Almshouse.[14] On Wednesday he boarded a steamboat to visit Fort Lafayette. A banquet luncheon was served there with members of the Society of the Cincinnati and other military officers. Flags were draped in an arch over Lafayette's chair, and he sat in the place of honor. The General left about 5:00 P.M. so that he could meet his later engagements.[15]

That evening Lafayette attended the performance at the Park Theatre, which was elaborately decorated for the occasion. The ladies, beautifully arrayed, began to arrive early so as to be in position to greet the General when he appeared. He came about eight o'clock, and the onlookers shouted and waved. The play was Laugh When You Can with a new interlude, The Siege of Yorktown. At each reference to Lafayette, the audience cheered and applauded enthusiastically.[16] (Levasseur noted that they attended the theatre several times during their New York visits, but that it was difficult to follow the performances because of the constant outbursts of the audience whenever Lafayette appeared or was mentioned.)[17]

On Thursday, September 9, Lafayette attended a grand oratorio performed by the choral society at St. Paul's church.

"On his entrance the audience rose and the choir struck up the animating air of 'See the Conquering Hero Comes.' The Marseilles Hymn was also performed in full chorus, and the effect was grand beyond description."[18]

From the church he was conducted to the park near City Hall where the engines of forty-six fire companies were drawn up inside the park fence. The engines were decorated with flowers, ribbons and pictures of Lafayette and Washington while each fireman wore a Lafayette badge. After an exchange of speeches, Lafayette reviewed the fire companies, and then retired to the portico of City Hall to watch them perform.

Bucket brigades busily filled the engines with water. When the engines were ready, the firemen put their ladders together in the center of the park to form a pyramid. High on top they placed a miniature house filled with combustibles which they set afire when the signal was given. As the flames leaped up, the engines worked at once, and forty-six water spouts were directed at the house. The effect was of a mighty fountain "rushing up and descending like a shower of liquid silver."[19] The crowd was properly awed and delighted by the spectacle. In the evening Lafayette dined with Philip Hone, Esq.[20]

The next day, Friday, Lafayette visited the New York Free School Society and reviewed the children. As part of the exercises 400 children recited an ode, and a young boy read a tribute. Later at the African Free School similar speeches were exchanged. The General expressed his pleasure with the management of the schools and was made an honorary member of the Society.[21]

In the afternoon, the Ninth regiment of New York State Artillery paraded for Lafayette in front of his quarters at City Hotel. The officers presented a gold sword to him, and mutual gratitude and affection were expressed.[22] That evening Lafayette dined with Col. Nicholas Fish and there were fireworks after dinner.[23]

A Masonic celebration by the Knights Templar was held for Lafayette on Saturday.[24] In the evening he returned to Washington Hall for a dinner given by French citizens residing in New York. The decorations included two large arches and a revolving sun. The most unusual feature of the decorations was a seventy foot long miniature replica of the Grand Canal which ran through the middle of the table. The model was complete with banks of green sward, trees, gardens, water and miniature boats.[25]

On Sunday the General attended public worship at Trinity Church.[26] Little activity is recorded for him on Monday and it is possible that he rested, though more likely that he received callers.

On Tuesday his visit to New York reached its climax with a grand fete at Castle Garden, something of an outdoor arena apparently set in the water at the tip of Manhattan by the battery.[27] The bridge to the castle was carpeted and decorated with evergreen. The castle was enclosed by an awning which was partially drawn back. In front of the gate stood a seventy-five foot lighted pyramid which was topped by an F mounted in a six point star.[28]

James Fenimore Cooper wrote a description of the affair for the New York American. According to his account:

> Over the main entrance was thrown a triumphal arch, reaching to the roof, adorned with wreaths of laurel and oaks, and garlands of flowers, crowned with a colossal bust of Washington, and resting on pillars of cannon: at the top of the arch, the flags of America and France were connected, and descended thence on each side, forming an appropriate and beautiful drapery; while midway was suspended a painting of the Genius of our Country displaying a scroll inscribed "to the Nation's Guest."[29]

When the General arrived, about 10:00 P.M., he was escorted to the pavilion as the band played the Lafayette March. After he was seated, "The allegorical painting . . . of the Genius of our country, was slowly rolled up and exhibited to the General and the company a very beautiful transparency, representing a faithful view of La Grange, his patriarchal residence, with the simple words under it, 'HIS HOME'--the effect of this exhibition was all that could have been desired."[30]

Lafayette strolled around the area, "receiving the eager pressure of thousands of fair hands, and the fervent and affectionate wishes of thousands of hearts."[31] Finally about 2:00 A.M. the old hero and his party, escorted by a number of friends and dignitaries, boarded the boat that was to take him to West Point and on to Albany.[32]

After a short stay in Albany, the party returned to New York and then set out through New Jersey for Philadelphia. After a week's visit there, Lafayette traveled through

Baltimore to Washington. He arrived in Washington on October 12, and was received by President Monroe and chief officers of the administration.[33]

After a few days in Washington, Lafayette and his companions left for a tour of Virginia. One of the first stops was at Mount Vernon where the General was able to stand with his son by Washington's tomb. After visiting Yorktown, Williamsburg, Norfolk and Richmond, the travelers arrived at Monticello. Here the General spent several days resting, reading his mail, and visiting the University of Virginia. He also stayed awhile at Montpelier.[34]

Lafayette returned to Washington for most of December and January. At this time, Congress honored him by a formal reception. The form of this ceremony, however, drew editorial criticism from Niles Weekly Register which felt that the Senate had been condescending and not sufficiently respectful toward The Nation's Guest.[35]

On the other hand, a later account which appeared in book form in 1826 spoke of his Congressional reception, as a high point of his visit and said, "Of all the proud triumphs through which the veteran hero has passed since he first landed upon the shores of America, this was not only the most glorious, but must have been the most interesting to his feelings."[36] The same account pointed out that General Lafayette was "the only public character that has ever been received by the Senate of the United States. This virgin honour was reserved for the man who was truly the most deserving."[37]

The General was conducted into the Senate chamber by the committee that had been appointed to prepare his reception. The committee chairman announced, "We introduce General Lafayette to the Senate of the United States." The legislators rose with the president of the Senate who invited Lafayette to take a chair on the right. After this he called for adjournment, and the Senators came forward to pay their individual respects to Lafayette.

On the next day the Senators joined the Representatives in the House chamber and Lafayette was escorted into their presence by a larger committee. On his entrance everyone on the floor rose and stood uncovered while he was introduced. Then Speaker Clay addressed him eloquently, and Lafayette's reply showed that he had been moved by the Speaker's words. This was followed by adjournment and the paying of individual respects.[38]

Shortly after this a bill was introduced to present Lafayette with $200,000 and a township of public land. It passed quickly with only token opposition.[39]

Early in February Lafayette made a short trip to Harrisburg and other Pennsylvania towns, after which he returned to Washington again. On February 23, he and his party left on his southern tour. In March they moved through South Carolina and into Georgia. As before, his path was marked with crowds, welcomes by governors, dinners and balls. He reviewed troops, shook hands, and laid cornerstones of monuments.[40]

In April he traveled through Alabama to New Orleans. From there the party embarked on a steamboat trip to St. Louis with stops along the way. From St. Louis he went south to Nashville and on to Louisville. After leaving Nashville the party was involved in a boat wreck which apparently was not disastrous, but highly confusing. By May the General was hurrying along on a tight time schedule, since he had promised to be in Boston for Bunker Hill ceremonies on June 17. He went on through Cincinnati to Pittsburgh and overland to Buffalo. After a quick visit to Niagara Falls he descended on the Erie Canal. The group arrived in Albany on June 12, and left immediately for Boston, which was reached at noon on June 15, probably after some all night travel.[41]

After the Bunker Hill anniversary ceremonies, where Lafayette insisted on sitting with the veterans rather than on the platform of honor, he set out on a New England tour through Maine and Vermont. By the first of July he was back in New York. In the next month and a half he traveled again in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia visiting battlefields and attending commemorative ceremonies. He stopped again at Monticello for a farewell visit with Jefferson. By late August he was back in Washington for final visits to the White House and Mount Vernon and a round of farewell ceremonies. On September 9, 1825, he left from the mouth of the Potomac and sailed for France.[42]

It seems clear that General Lafayette was indeed treated as a guest throughout his stay in the United States. The manner in which his expenses were handled at each location he visited is not easily ascertained and might form the basis for a more detailed study in itself. A few examples can be mentioned to show that his support probably came mainly from appropriations of city and local governments with some contributions from merchants and others who donated their services.

Before his arrival, the National Journal in Washington commented:

> It is understood that he will be at no expense in the cities. He ought to be at no expense anywhere. It is hoped that he will not be permitted to expend one cent in the United States.[43]

That many people agreed with this view is shown by a newspaper article which described his first overland trip from New York to Boston. The reporter noted, "The committee which accompanied the General from New York was directed to pay his expenses on the road; but we hear that no inn-keeper would accept of any compensation."[44]

The Common Council of New York had ordered a warrant of $1,000 drawn for the official committee that planned Lafayette's reception and entertainment. Later a second warrant was drawn for $1,500 for the same purpose.[45]

V. Footnotes

[1] *New York Evening Post*, January 10, and 15, 1824.

[2] *A Short Biography of the Illustrious Citizen, Marquis de Lafayette*, by a Citizen of Washington, D. C. (Washington, 1824), pp. 23-34. (Resolutions from New York, Boston, Baltimore, and Richmond are reprinted as well as letters to and from Lafayette.)

[3] *New York Evening Post*, August 2, 1824, cf. July 26 and 27 for speculation about when the General might leave France.

[4] W. E. Woodward, *Lafayette* (New York, 1938), p. 419.

[5] *New York Commercial Advertiser*, August 17, 1824, reprinted in Edgar E. Brandon, *Lafayette*. *Guest of the Nation* (Oxford, Ohio, 1950), p. 38.

[6] *New York Commerical Advertiser*, August 18, 1924, in Brandon, p. 43.

[7] *New York American*, August 20, 1824, in Brandon, p. 44.

[8] *New York Commercial Advertiser*, August 21, 1824, in Brandon, pp. 44-45.

[9] Woodward, pp. 421-423.

[10] Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past from the Leaves of Old Journals*, 9th ed. (Boston, 1901), pp. 104-105.

[11] *Niles Weekly Register*, September 11, 1824.

[12] *Niles*, September 11, 1824.

[13] *New York American*, September 9, 1824, in *Lafayette Scrapbook*, Library of Congress.

[14] J. Bennett Nolan, *Lafayette in America Day by Day* (Baltimore, 1934), p. 248.

[15] *New York American*, September 9, 1824, in *Scrapbook*.

[16] *New York American*, September 9, 1824, in *Scrapbook*.

[17] A. Levasseur, *Lafayette in America in 1824 and 1825; or Journal of a Voyage to the United States*, trans. John D. Godman (Philadelphia, 1829), I, 93.

[18] *Niles*, September 18, 1824.

[19] Niles, September 18, 1824.

[20] Nolan, p. 248.

[21] Niles, September 18, 1824.

[22] Niles, September 18, 1824.

[23] Levasseur, I, 95.

[24] Nolan, p. 248.

[25] Niles, September 18, 1824.

[26] Nolan, p. 249.

[27] Lafayette, The Nation's Guest (Winterthur, Del., 1957). (A picture book of mementos in Winterthur Museum that has illustrations of a scene of Lafayette's landing at Castle Garden that was reproduced on various pieces of china.)

[28] Niles, September 25, 1824.

[29] James Fenimore Cooper, Letters and Journals, ed. James Franklin Beard (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), I, 115.

[30] Cooper, p. 117.

[31] Cooper, p. 118.

[32] Woodward, p. 425.

[33] Nolan, pp. 250-254.

[34] Nolan, pp. 254-259.

[35] Niles, December 18, 1824.

[36] A Complete History of the Marquis de Lafayette, by an officer in the late army (New York, 1826), p. 488.

[37] Complete History, p. 489.

[38] Complete History, p. 485.

[39] Complete History, p. 488.

[40] Nolan, pp. 272-280.

[41] Nolan, pp. 281-292.

[42] Nolan, pp. 293-306.

[43] National Journal (Washington), August 5, 1824, in Brandon, p. 30.

[44] Scrapbook, p. 24.

[45] Brandon, p. 54.

VI. WRITING THE STORY OF LAFAYETTE

The Legend before 1800

It is clear that General Lafayette was America's most popular hero in 1824. The dimensions of his heroic image, that is, the qualities and characteristics that were attributed to him, are of interest. The way in which Americans perceived Lafayette as a hero can be more clearly understood by studying the way in which his story was told to the public during the forty years before his last visit. The growth and change of the legend of Lafayette are revealed by examination of the histories of the Revolutionary War and the textbooks of American history that were written during those years.

Almost as soon as the terms of peace were settled, American writers began to deal with the history of the war. Their interpretations of the period were in defense of the revolution and in support of an independent American nation.[1] These writers emphasized the rightness of the patriots' cause and the superiority of American life. In this way, their books reflected a demand of the times for authoritative and defensive statements of the American view. Foreign accounts of the war, if they tended to be critical of the colonists' actions, were rejected and protested as soon as they appeared.[2]

These early post-revolution histories contain many passages which were written to promote feelings of national loyalty and patriotism. In the time of battle, the revolution was far from a unanimous effort of the American people. Although estimates vary as to the number of people who consistently and actively supported the war, contemporary writers conclude that this support came from a dedicated minority.[3] After independence was secured, there was active effort to build national unity and develop patriotic pride through education.[4]

The historians and textbook writers played their part in this effort. Their accounts tended to minimize the dissension within the colonies and to exaggerate the faults of the British, while emphasizing the virtues of the Americans.[5] As will be shown, the story of the young Marquis de Lafayette was often used to help substantiate the rightness of the American position as well as to exemplify and inspire devotion to American principles.

There is a standard story of Lafayette's decision to come to America that appears in several of the histories and textbooks of the late eighteenth century; identical versions of the story were printed in at least five separate publications before 1791. These accounts are the same except for differences in punctuation, capitalization or spelling. Since later scholars have agreed that these early historians plagiarized,[6] or at least borrowed material from each other, without hesitation, it is not surprising to find the same story of Lafayette in books by different authors.

This biographical sketch probably was published first in 1785 in David Ramsay's The History of Revolution of South Carolina. Ramsay integrates the sketch into his text prior to his description of the fighting in Virginia and the subsequent battle at Yorktown. Of Virginia, Ramsay writes that "The defense of that state was at this period of the war principally entrusted to the marquis de la Fayette. The enthusiastic zeal and great service of this distinguished French nobleman, merit a particular detail." Following this he describes Lafayette's decision to come to America and some of his military activities.[7]

The Columbian Magazine for September 1786 published a review of Dr. Ramsay's history and suggested that "Such of our readers as have not yet had the pleasure of perusing this valuable work, will, we trust, be pleased with the following short specimens of the author's style." The first "specimen" presented was the first long paragraph of the Lafayette sketch.[8]

The third publication in which the story of Lafayette appeared was the first American history textbook, Introduction to the History of America, compiled and printed by John M'Culloch in 1787.[9] He includes the complete sketch of Lafayette as well as short biographical notes about George Washington and Nathaniel Greene. The sketches are not integrated in the text, but follow descriptions of the fighting and a letter written by Washington.[10]

In 1789 Jedidiah Morse published his first edition of

The American Geography. In a section of notes following accounts of the war, he added accounts of Generals Washington, Montgomery, Greene, and Lafayette. The sketch of Lafayette is the same one that appeared in the previously mentioned histories. Morse modified the first few sentences slightly and wrote that "The enthusiastic zeal and great services of the Marquis de la Fayette merit a particular detail."[11]

A small volume containing four biographical accounts was published in 1790 under the title, A True and Authentic History of His Excellency, George Washington. . . . Also of the Brave Generals Montgomery and Greene, and the Celebrated Marquis de la Fayette. . . . To Which Is Added an Ode on General Washington's Birth Day by the Reverend Mr. Thomas Thornton.[12] The Library of Congress attributes the work to Morse and indicates on the catalog card, that the sketches are those which appear in his American Geography. However, there is nothing in the book itself which claims Morse's authorship and in fact, the binding is stamped "Thornton's Life of Washington." The sketch of Lafayette is essentially identical to the one that was included in the works described previously, and probably should be attributed to Ramsay.

This story, which was printed in several early histories, is the initial sketch that set the pattern of the Lafayette legend. The first paragraph, which had the greatest influence on later writers, is presented here. (The complete text may be found in the appendix.) This particular version is from Morse (1792), rather than Ramsay (1785). The Morse version is a complete biographical sketch, while Ramsay's account contains additional paragraphs and phrases which integrate the sketch into his war history. (The differences between the two versions are indicated in the complete text as it is found in the appendix.)

> The enthusiastic zeal and great services of the Marquis de la Fayette merit a particular detail. At the age of nineteen he espoused the cause of America, with all the ardor which the most generous philanthropy could inspire. At a very early period of the war, he determined to embark from his native country, for the United States. Before he could complete his intention, intelligence arrived in Europe, that the American insurgents, reduced to two thousand men, were flying through Jersey before a British force of thirty thousand regulars. This news so effectually extinguished the little credit which America had in Europe, in the beginning of the year 1777, that the commissioners of Congress at Paris though they had previously encouraged this project, could not procure a vessel to forward his intentions. Under these circumstances they thought it but honest to dissuade him from the present prosecution of his perilous enterprise. It was in vain they acted so candid a part. The flame which America had kindled in his breast, could not be extinguished by her misfortunes. "Hitherto," said he, in the true spirit of patriotism, "I have only cherished your cause--now I am going to serve it. The lower it is in the opinion of the people, the greater will be the effect of my departure; and since you cannot get a vessel, I shall purchase and fit out one to carry your dispatches to Congress and myself to America." He accordingly embarked and arrived at Charleston early in the year 1777. Congress soon conferred on him the rank of major-general. He accepted the appointment, but no without exacting two conditions, which displayed the elevation of his spirit: the one, that he should serve on his own expence; the other, that he should begin his services as a volunteer.[13]

This sketch of Lafayette projects a picture of a brave, young, generous and inspired nobleman who sought primarily to assist the American cause. His interest in personal glory is depicted as secondary to his interest in service to the Americans. The account is a tribute to

Lafayette and his bravery and generosity.

The fact that the same story of Lafayette appears in different books and in later editions of these books increases the probability that many Americans were exposed to the same account of Lafayette's devotion to the American cause and his decision to join the American army. It also increases the probability that one basic view of Lafayette was widely accepted.

Another similar version of the story appeared in the late eighteenth century. In 1788 William Gordon published his book, The History of the Rise, Progress and Establishment of Independence in the United States of America, which contains a somewhat differently worded account of Lafayette's story. Gordon inserted the story in a section in which he was reviewing some of the works of Congress. After quoting the resolution by which Congress granted a commission to Lafayette, he interrupts himself to give an account of "this noble phenomenon." The Lafayette that Gordon describes has the same noble motives as the hero of the previously quoted story. Gordon dwells at greater length on the intensity of Lafayette's desire to serve America and describes more fully the risks the young man ran and the sacrifices he made in order to come to America. Gordon also puts more emphasis on the prestige that a young foreign nobleman could lend to the American cause. He wrote:

> In 1776, the marquis, at the age of nineteen, espoused the cause of the Americans, and determined upon joining them in person. He communicated his intention to the American commissioners at Paris,

who failed not to encourage it, justly concluding that the eclat of his departure would be serviceable to their cause. Events however immediately occured, which would have deterred from his undertaking a person less determined than the marquis. News arrived in France, that the remnant of the American army, reduced to 2000 insurgents as they were called, had fled toward Philadelphia toward the Jerseys before an army of 30,000 regulars. This news so effectually extinguished the little credit which America had in Europe, that their commissioners could not produce a vessel to forward this nobleman's project. Under these circumstances they thought it but honest to discourage his prosecuting the enterprise, till a change in affairs should render it less hazardous or more promising. It was in vain however that they acted so candid a part. The flame, which the American sons of liberty had kindled in his breast, could not be interrupted by their misfortunes. "Hitherto," said he, in the true spirit of heroism, "I have only cherished your cause; now I am going to serve it. The lower it is in the opinion of the people, the greater effect my departure will have; and since you cannot get a vessel, I shall purchase and fit out one, to carry your dispatches to congress and me to America." He accordingly fitted out a vessel, and in the mean while made a visit to Great Britain, that the part he was going to act might be rendered the more conspicuous.

A step so extraordinary, a patron of so much importance, did not fail to engage universal attention. The French court, whatever were their good wishes toward America, could not at that time overlook his elopement. He was overtaken by an order forbidding his proceeding to America, and vessels were dispatched to the West Indies to have him confined in case he was found in that quarter. He acknowledged the receipt of the order, but did not obey it; and keeping clear of the West Indies, arrived in Charlestown. Congress could not hesitate a moment about paying a due attention to so remarkable a character, when intelligence of the same was communicated. The marquis had left a pregnant consort, and the most endearing connections. Independent of the risks he has now subjected himself to, in common with the leaders of the American revolution, he has exposed himself to the loss of everything at home in consequence of the laws of France, after hazarding a long confinement without the chance of being acknowledged by any nation, had he fallen into British hands on his passage to America.

He received the congress's mark of approbation with great condescension; and yet not without exacting two conditions, which displayed the dignity of his spirit--the one that he should be permitted to serve at his own

> expence--the other that he should begin his services as a volunteer. After joining the army, he lived with the commander in chief, and was happy in his friendship and affection.[14]

Gordon does not, as part of this biographical sketch, describe any of the military engagements in which Lafayette took part. He does mention some of them chronologically as they are part of his larger historical account.

This romantic view of the young nobleman, as given in these similar versions, is the core of the Lafayette legend. The major aspects of the legend seem in accordance with the motives and attitudes of the history writers and their audiences in the late eighteenth century. The fact that a nobleman with wealth and court influence who had no personal reasons for needing liberty or equality should support the American cause gave additional weight to the rightness of that cause. Lafayette was heroic not only because he supported American principles, but because he was willing to sacrifice comfort and family security to fight for them. Furthermore, he was willing to support the cause monetarily from his own fortune. This indeed should have convinced practical Americans of the sincerity of his belief.

The story of Lafayette is somewhat unique in its fairly consistent appearance in early American histories by American authors. While some such histories included sketches of other war heroes, (Morse also used biographies of Washington, Greene and Montgomery) the probability of finding a Lafayette story in an early American history is probably greater than that of finding an account of any other hero. At least this seems true for works by American authors. The English authors, W. D. Cooper and Edward Oliphant, do not include any descriptions of American heroes in their histories of the American Revolution.

It is also interesting to note that the story of Lafayette does not appear in direct conjunction with accounts of Washington in any of the histories cited. Although both Morse and M'Culloch include Lafayette's story in a series of biographical accounts, which also include a sketch of Washington, the two sketches are not contiguous, and there is very little mention of Washington in the account of Lafayette. Furthermore, the description of Lafayette does not appear in association with references to Washington. Ramsay alludes to Lafayette in the context of battles in which the marquis was a participant. Gordon describes Lafayette after quoting Congressional resolutions affecting the young man.

The appeal of Lafayette as a heroic figure appears to be independent of his personal association with Washington. Lafayette's reputation in the late eighteenth century was established in its own right, and while Washington's affection for Lafayette gave additional confirmation to the young man's acceptance as a hero, it was not a major factor in establishing his heroic stature.

It should be noted that Lafayette's military activities were not of primary interest to the early historians, although they described them in some detail. Recitals of the marquis' battle performances tend to drop out quickly as his story is told and retold through the years. The historians seem most impressed with Lafayette as an example of devotion and sacrifice for the American cause. Although they did not intentionally exaggerate or expand this story, the writers were content to repeat it without examination or change because it suited their purposes.

It seems understandable that American historians in the late eighteenth century did not depict Lafayette as a great military strategist or general. As nationalistic writers they would not have wanted to create the impression that America needed foreign military skills to win her freedom. Instead the writers wanted to show that the American cause had attracted influential followers from abroad, and the young marquis was an outstanding example.

It is also true, as described earlier, that Lafayette was not an outstanding military figure. His first taste of military service in actual war circumstances came in America, and he met the challenge bravely. The young soldier learned a great deal and performed well but not brilliantly. This adequate military service helped to substantiate the belief that he was indeed a fine and noble young man, and that was all his reputation needed. This view may explain the popularity and appeal of the story that Cornwallis had boasted in Virginia that "the boy cannot escape me." As a military leader, Lafayette was perceived as a boy--an unskilled youth who had offered his services, not a talented professional soldier whose sought-after assistance was deemed essential and invaluable. As a supporter of American independence, however, Lafayette appeared as an important figure with wealth, influence and family connections. He rose as an American hero because he was willing and eager to use these to support the American cause.

While the historians were working to justify the independence of America, there was also, in these post-revolution years, a growing belief among American writers that a new literature, American in attitude and content should be developed. It should speak of freedom and reason and moral dignity. Some writers believed that the American Revolution offered fresh and unique material for such a new literature. While this feeling was prevalent, a few authors set out enthusiastically, but their work had little lasting merit.[15]

Although the desirability of using materials from the war was seen by some writers, little fiction or drama based on the revolution actually appeared. One problem was stated by Daniel Jackson in 1811:

> Romance, founded on great events, and embracing eminent characters and important achievements, cannot be written, with any considerable degree of interest and effect, where the scenery is laid, and the drama cast, in America; because, should it be attempted, the theatre must be erected on the field of the revolution, an era not sufficiently remote, and comprising occurrences too recent, to be arrayed in the vesture of fiction. It will, however, furnish materials, and the most brilliant apparatus to a writer of some succeeding century.[16]

The difficulty involved in dealing with actual characters of the revolution is further demonstrated by the occasional nameless appearance of Washington in some works. For example,

---

William Dunlap in his 1798 play, Andre, used a general who must have been modeled from Washington even though he remains anonymous.[17] As late as 1821 Cooper employed the same device to include Washington in The Spy. It seems unlikely that the fiction and drama of the early nineteenth century contributed much to the casting of the Lafayette legend.

Lafayette does appear briefly in Joel Barlow's epic poem, The Vision of Columbus (1787), in which the author surveys the growth of America. Barlow later reworked the material into The Columbiad in which form it is probably better remembered.

In The Vision of Columbus, Barlow views the battle of Bunker Hill, then watches the gathering of the American army. Lafayette is one of the many generals he names and praises. His picture of the marquis, though more artistically phrased, is similar to that of the history books.

> Beneath a waving sword, in blooming prime,
> Fayette moves graceful, ardent and sublime;
> In foreign guise, in freedom's noble cause,
> His untried blade the youthful hero draws;
> On the great chief his eyes in transport roll,
> And fame and Washington inspire his soul.[18]

Barlow tends to put more emphasis on the adventurous side of a young hero inspired by fame, and less on the sacrifice and devotion that the history writers found important. Still, Barlow's Lafayette seems to fight first for "freedom's noble cause" and in that important sense he is the same hero the history books describe.

In the post-revolution years Lafayette was firmly established as an American hero. How widely his story was repeated and how often it was told away from the printed page are hard to estimate. The content of the story, and the portrayal of Lafayette as a devoted and influential supporter of American rights seem clear.

In the years after 1790, some gradual changes appear in the history books' treatment of Lafayette's story, although Morse continued to use the original sketch in his 1792 edition of The American Geography, and Gordon also used his sketch in later editions. Although there are some exceptions, the story generally becomes less glamorous and more routine as well as shorter and less detailed. The story also becomes more varied from one writer to the next, although it is still quite similar to the version Ramsay published in 1785. The differences between authors become more marked after 1800.

In 1791 Ramsay published a History of the United States which he expanded beyond his previous local history. In this work he included a sketch of Lafayette after a description of the battle of Brandywine, the fight in which Lafayette was wounded. This sketch by Ramsay (which may be found in the appendix) is similar to his earlier one, and contains many of the same phrases. It also resembles Gordon's in its added emphasis on the risks that Lafayette ran in his determination to join the Americans. The story is, however, considerably shorter than the 1785 sketch and includes fewer of the marquis' military adventures. Ramsay does mention Lafayette, as does Gordon, in additional appropriate areas in his text.[19]

In 1795 M'Culloch published A Concise History of the United States. In this book he included an abbreviated sketch of Lafayette which is the next to last item in the book and is followed only by a chronology of events of the war. This version (which may be found in the appendix) was apparently abstracted from the original sketch. The writing is terse and journalistic; while several of the original phrases are retained, much of the detail and most of the descriptive adjectives are discarded.[20]

In order to update the sketch a paragraph which describes something of Lafayette in the French Revolution and explains his imprisonment is added. M'Culloch also mentions that Congress sent Lafayette the salary which he had refused to accept while he was in the American army. In so doing, M'Culloch antícpates a theme that is heard more often in later stories of Lafayette. This brief sketch also appears in the 1797 edition of the book.[21]

Before the turn of the century the basic form of the Lafayette legend was set. The sketch, as used by nationalistic writers who were concerned about justifying the revolution and developing patriotism, served as an example of devotion and sacrifice for American ideals. The fact that an influential foreign nobleman believed in the American Revolution enough to support it physically and monetarily added weight to the contentions of the historians.

The Lafayette Sketch between 1800 and 1824

As mentioned previously, the accounts of Lafayette in the history books become even more varied after 1800. The tendency which was noted after 1790 towards shorter and less detailed accounts is seen more clearly after 1800. In addition, the differences between writers become greater and there is less similarity between accounts. Many accounts, however, still bear some resemblance to Ramsay (1785).

In 1805, Mercy Otis Warren, a lady whose bias was decidedly nationalistic, published a History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution. Since her description is brief and not detailed, with emphasis still on the sacrifices that an influential nobleman made to serve a righteous cause, it is typical of the Lafayette sketch in the early nineteenth century. Mrs. Warren wrote:

> Among others who suffered in the battle of Brandywine, the marquis de la Fayette, a young nobleman of France, was dangerously wounded. Warmed by an enthusiastic love of liberty, and animated by a laudable ambition, this amiable young gentleman had left the court of France without leave of the king: and quitting the pleasures of domestic felicity, he embarked at his own expense, and engaged in the service of the United States at an early period of the war, when the affairs of America wore the darkest aspect. His zeal and his heroism to the conclusion of the contest, placed the well earned laurel on his brow, and procured him the love, respect, and best wishes of the people throughout America.[22]

John Marshall's story of Lafayette shows a more independent viewpoint. Marshall, who published his five volumes of The Life of George Washington from 1803 to 1807 takes an unusually realistic view of Lafayette, although he generally speaks of him with respect. In his telling of the basic story, he does not dwell on Lafayette's idealism, but hints that the boy was something of an adventurer who did not have to face much opposition when he decided to fight in America. His sketch appears after a description of the expedition to Canada with Lafayette at its head. Marshall wrote:

> This young nobleman possessing an excellent heart, and all the military enthusiasm of his country, had left France early in 1777, ostensibly in opposition to the will of his sovereign, to engage in the service of the United States. His high rank and supposed influence at the court of Versailles, soon secured him the unlimited respect of his countrymen in America, and, added to his frankness of manners and zeal in their cause, recommended him strongly to congress. While the claims of others of the same country were so exorbitant that they would not be gratified on the subject of rank, he demanded no station in the army, would consent to receive no compensation, and offered to serve as a volunteer.
>
> He had stipulated with Mr. Deane for the rank of major general without emolument; but on the current of ill fortune which set in late in 1776, he was advised not to embark.
>
> The honorary rank of major general was conferred on him directly after his arrival in America, but without any immediate command. In that capacity, he sought for danger, and was wounded at the battle of Brandywine. He attached himself with the ardour of youth to the commander in chief, who felt for him in turn a warm and sincere friendship and paved the way to bestowing on him a command in the army equal to his rank.[23]

As has been shown, the biographical sketches of Lafayette that appeared after the turn of the century were shorter and less detailed than the earlier stories. While Ramsay continued to use his 1791 sketch in later editions, he added no biographical account of Lafayette to his Life of George Washington (1807) although he did mention some of

Lafayette's activities.[24]

Morse used the biographical sketch less often too, and in his 1812 edition of Geography Made Easy there was only one sentence about Lafayette.[25] Similarly, M'Culloch, who had previously shortened the account and moved it to the end of his 1795 edition, dropped it altogether from the 1807 edition of his Concise History.[26]

An exception to this trend of presenting shorter, less detailed accounts of Lafayette's arrival in America, appeared in The Portfolio for June 1815. This anonymous article, written with flourish, is probably the grandest statement of the Lafayette legend before 1824. A few phrases are presented here; the first few paragraphs which tell the basic legend are included in the appendix:

> La Fayette, descended from one of the first families in France, possessed of a large fortune, and married at the early age of nineteen to the woman of his heart, had the courage to abandon his home, its comforts, and its mistress, at the very outset of life, to the higher claims of a laudable ambition. . . . news arrived in France, that the remnant of the American forces, reduced to two thousand insurgents, as they were called, had fled towards Philadelphia. . . . This news was a deathblow to the little credit which we still retained in Europe, . . . he was not to be discouraged by these difficulties. The flame of liberty glowed in his breast, and being bent upon sharing in our glorious struggle, however desponding our situation might appear, he told the commissioners that the lower the fortunes of the American people, the more acceptable would be his services;[27]

The conclusion of this article is interesting, because it introduces a new note into the story of Lafayette. Previously all accounts, with the exception of M'Culloch (1795, had been concerned with what the marquis did for America.

The new note touches on American assistance to Lafayette. The impression is conveyed that his release from prison was due to American efforts on his behalf. "At length, . . . the emperor becoming ashamed of his injustice, affected to listen with a friendly ear to the solicitations of the American government."[28]

The author then describes how arrangments were made to turn the Lafayettes over to the charge of the American consul, whose lengthy description of the intense gratitude and emotion of the family is quoted. The article concludes:

> The marquis now resides near Paris, in the enjoyment of good health, and I believe, a tolerable competency. . . . Long may he, amid the tranquil scenes which now surround him, derive augmented happiness by contrasting them with the stormy times of injustice and tyranny, which he encountered with so much fortitude.[29]

A second Portfolio article in 1816 also describes efforts to help Lafayette. The article is an account of the attempt made by Dr. Bollman and Francis Huger to rescue Lafayette from the Austrian prison of Olmutz in 1794. The description, however, tells little about Lafayette except that he had been unjustly imprisoned and was in poor health.[30]

Later history writers also reflect this note of emphasis on what America had done to help the General. In 1820 a History of North America, attributed to John Talbott, was published. Talbott writes little about Lafayette except to note that Washington admired his gallant conduct at Yorktown. The biographical sketch is not included. In a footnote to another section, however, he describes the land grant made to Lafayette by the United States government and concludes that the General is now comfortably taken care of:

> The American Congress, apprised of his situation, without any communication with him, passed a resolution (in which Mr. Jefferson warmly interested himself,) to grant him 11,500 acres of land . . . precisely the quantity originally allotted to officers of his rank (Major general) in the American army. By this delicate proceeding he was enabled to discharge all the debts which he had contracted; and the comparatively small fortune, which he now enjoys, in common with his numerous family, remains clear of all incumbrance.[31]

This new note, which deals with what America had done to repay her debt to her hero, is not consistent among all writers of the period. It is persistent enough, however, to indicate a possible trend of feeling that wanted to reduce the stature of the old hero, or at least to relieve a sense of obligation towards him.

While such a trend is not easy to establish, it is evident that the Lafayette story was settling down into a routine and not very glamorous recital which carried few details and little eloquence. An account of this sort was used by William Grimshaw in his 1822 History of the United States.[32] This abbreviated account was apparently adapted from Gordon (1788) and Ramsay (1791). The account may be found in the appendix.

An even more routine and skeletal account of Lafayette appeared in Frederick Butler's History of the United States of America in 1821. This paragraph follows his description of Howe's victory at Chad's Ford on the Brandywine and his move into Philadelphia.

> Pending these operations the Marquis La Fayette arrived in America, and tendered his services to Congress, as a volunteer in the American service, and Congress conferred

> upon him a commission of brigadier general in the army of the United States. The marquis joined the army, and served at his own expence, and became not only a member of the family, but the intimate companion of the commander in chief. On the 31st of July, 1777, he made the first display of his zeal and talents as a soldier, at the battle of Chad's Ford, and acquitted himself with great honour.[33]

Butler, like many of his predecessors, does mention Lafayette in appropriate places throughout his history.

An 1823 history by Charles Goodrich does not contain the Lafayette sketch as such, or give any biographical details about the marquis. It does refer to him with regard to the action in Virginia. Goodrich also concludes that after the defeat of Cornwallis, "The names of Washington, Rochambeau, DeGrasse, and La Fayette, resounded everywhere."[34]

It is clear that the tendency of the history books was to speak only briefly and generally about Lafayette. The newer, younger writers did not perceive Lafayette in the heroic dimensions their predecessors employed. These writers were further from Lafayette, probably knew less about him, and had less need to tell his story. The rightness of the American cause was sufficiently established by this time, so that an influential hero who represented devotion and conviction was not as much in demand. The revolution had been vindicated and justified, it no longer needed to be defended, and Lafayette's story was not as timely and appropriate as it once had been.

Any legend will eventually stabilize unless it is occasionally re-energized and retold with new interest. Since, at that time, there was apparently little interest in or need for revitalizing his story, it seems likely that in 1820, General Lafayette was on his way to a quiet niche in the history books. He would not have been forgotten there, but he would not have retained the stature of a popular public hero. Except for the general interest and affection that Lafayette's 1824 visit aroused in the American people he would likely not have been held in high public esteem for many years.

VI. Footnotes

[1] David D. Van Tassel, Recording America's Past (Chicago, 1960), p. 43.

[2] Van Tassel, p. 36.

[3] Harry J. Carman, Harold C. Syrett, and Bernard W. Wishy, A History of the American People (New York, 1960), I, 197.

[4] Merle Curti, The Roots of American Loyalty (New York, 1956), pp. 124-125.

[5] Sydney G. Fisher, "The Legendary and Myth-making Process in Histories of the American Revolution," Proceedings, American Philosophical Society, LI (1912), 56.

[6] Van Tassel, p. 39, cf. Orin G. Libby, "William Gordon's History of the American Revolution," American Historical Association Annual Report 1899, pp. 367-388, and "Ramsay as a Plagiarist," American Historical Review, VII (July 1902), 697-703.

[7] David Ramsay, The History of Revolution of South Carolina (Trenton, 1785), II, 310.

[8] The Columbian Magazine or Monthly Miscellany, (September 1786), p. 22.

[9] Alice W. Spieseke, The First Textbooks in American History and Their Compiler, John M'Culloch (New York, 1938), p. 45.

[10] John M'Culloch, comp. Introduction to the History of America (Philadelphia, 1787), pp. 118-119.

[11] Jedidiah Morse, The American Geography (Elizabeth Town, 1789).

[12] A True and Authentic History of His Excellency, George Washington (Philadelphia, 1790).

[13] Jedidiah Morse, The American Geography (London, 1792), pp. 136-137.

[14] William Gordon, The History of the Rise, Progress and Establishment of Independence of the United States of America (London, 1788), pp. 500-501.

[15] Benjamin T. Spencer, The Quest for Nationality (Syracuse, 1957), p. 40.

[16] Spencer, pp. 43-44.

[17] Percy H. Boynton, *Literature and American Life* (Boston, 1936), p. 187.

[18] Joel Barlow, *The Vision of Columbus* (Hartford, 1787), Book V, p. 169.

[19] David Ramsay, *History of the American Revolution* (London, 1791), II, 11-12.

[20] John M'Culloch, *A Concise History of the United States, from the Discovery of America to 1795* (Philadelphia, 1795), p. 240.

[21] Spieseke, p. 45.

[22] Mercy Otis Warren, *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution, interspersed with biographical, political, and moral observations* (Boston, 1805), p. 374.

[23] John Marshall, *The Life of George Washington* (London, 1804-1807), III, 379.

[24] David Ramsay, *The Life of George Washington* (New York, 1807).

[25] Jedidiah Morse, *Geography Made Easy* (Boston, 1812).

[26] Spieseke, p. 91.

[27] "Interesting Notices of the Life of the Marquis DE LA FAYETTE," *The Portfolio* (June 1815), pp. 499-512.

[28] *The Portfolio* (1815), p. 510.

[29] *The Portfolio* (1815), p. 512.

[30] *The Portfolio* (August 1816), pp. 93-112.

[31] [John Talbott], *History of North America* (n.p., 1820), II, 164.

[32] William Grimshaw, *History of the United States from Their Settlement as Colonies to the Cession of Florida* (Philadelphia, 1822), pp. 136-137.

[33] Frederick Butler, *A Complete History of the United States of America* (Hartford, 1821), III, 215-216.

[34] Charles A. Goodrich, *History of the United States* (Hartford, 1823), p. 239.

VII. THE LAFAYETTE LEGEND AT THE TIME OF HIS VISIT

In 1824, the number of printed words devoted to Lafayette increased sharply. Biographical and descriptive sketches appeared in newspapers and periodicals. A number of individual publications about the General also appeared. Most of these took the form of small pamphlets of twenty or thirty pages, although a few assumed full book size proportions.

The typical small pamphlet or booklet included a biographical sketch, a descriptive account of Lafayette copied from the newspapers, and a record of events of his tour to date. Some also included letters to and from Lafayette, resolutions of city councils that were planning to welcome him and poems that had been written for the occasion. Several of these little booklets were anonymous and frankly termed compilations of material about Lafayette. Some of them resemble little souvenir albums of Lafayette's visit, and quite possibly they were purchased for that purpose although the booklets themselves say nothing about this.

The biographical sketches are particularly interesting because they tend to follow the pattern of the Lafayette story that had been developed much earlier. The later versions are generally more eloquent; the plight of the Americans in the early years of the war becomes darker and more desperate, and the actions of the young Lafayette appear even more noble and heroic.

One such account, although longer than some, was published by John Foster in A Sketch of the Tour of General Lafayette on His Late Visit to the United States. In his biographical sketch Foster describes Lafayette's decision to come to America and the unhappy state of the Americans:

> There is something truly romantic in the history of this celebrated personage. In the year 1776, at the immature age of nineteen, he espoused the cause of the Americans, and nobly resolved to afford our country all possible assistance by his personal services and influence. At this era, the affairs of America were represented in France as so deplorable that it might be supposed sufficient to repress the most determined zeal. Reports were propagated in that country that our army, reduced to a mere rabble, was flying before an army of thirty thousand regulars, nor was this very wide from the reality. In consequence of this, our commissioners found it impossible to procure a vessel to convey the Marquis and their own despatches to Congress; they could not therefore feel justified in encouraging his bold contemplated enterprize. This embarrassment, however, had the effect of increasing rather than of restraining his youthful ardor and heroism. He imparted to the commissioners his determination to purchase and fit out a vessel to convey himself and their despatches to America.[1]

Foster then mentions the French court's opposition to the marquis's plan, and describes the fighting at Brandywine. He then gives some information about Lafayette's other military adventures and his later life in France. Following this sketch are two accounts of Lafayette's career in France which were transcribed and abridged from French sources. Next he prints a detailed account of Lafayette's imprisonment in Prussia and Austria, with descriptions of the harsh treatment he received there and the hardships his wife suffered in order to be his companion in prison. This sad picture is followed by an account of Bollman and Huger's attempt to help Lafayette escape. To complete the booklet an essay describing the General in 1824 is included. This essay was also reprinted in some of the other booklets as well as in the newspapers and will be described in more detail later on. Finally, Foster adds a description of the triumphal tour.

Many of these booklets seem to have been hastily compiled and rushed into print to meet the demand created by a sudden new interest in Lafayette. Sometimes the compiler pasted together extracts from different sources with rather strange results. One such work was the anonymous *Memoirs of the Military Career of the Marquis de La Fayette during the Revolutionary War* (1824). This booklet begins with a portion of the Lafayette sketch just quoted from Foster. After the description of Brandywine, Foster states, "In August 1778, the marquis repaired to Rhode Island, to assist in the expedition under Major General Sullivan, in conjunction with the French fleet."[2]

The compiler of the *Military Career*, however, at this point inserts a few disjointed lines from Marshall's *Life of Washington*, and his account reads:

> In March 1778, this young nobleman possessing an excellent heart and all the military enthusiasm of his country, together with his rank and supposed influence at the court of Versailles, soon secured him the unlimited respect of his countrymen in America; and added to his frankness of manners and zeal in their cause, recommended him very strongly to Congress.[3]

Work such as this is not indicative of a scholarly interest in Lafayette, but rather of an eagerness to benefit from the market created by his tour. It provides additional evidence that public appreciation of Lafayette, which had been waning, was revived suddenly at the time of his visit.

Another short booklet account of Lafayette's first arrival in America omits some of the detail of the basic pattern story, but enhances the description of Lafayette's sacrifices as well as the darkness of the American cause. This author, also anonymous, writes:

> The ancestors of the Marquis, for generations back, were particularly distinguished for fearless, undaunted bravery, and contempt of danger, which traits were sustained by the Marquis himself, when, at nineteen years of age, he relinquished all the allurements of a princely fortune, in a beautiful country, with the blandishments of the spendid Court of Versailles, and embarked in his own ship to offer his services in fighting the battles of a country, (as said by the Europeans,) at the "ends of the earth." He arrived here in 1777, at the most gloomy period of the revolutionary war--a time when the conquering army of Burgoyne was about making bold advances into the heart of our country; . . . his arrival threw a halo of brightening hope over the late darkened political horizon.[4]

In a sketch such as this, one can see the image of Lafayette, the boy savior, beginning to emerge. As will be shown, this tone becomes more pronounced as the story is told and retold during the time of the visit and immediately following his departure.

Another short booklet from this period was published by Gilbert Hunt and entitled The Tour of General La Fayette through the U. States.[5] Hunt's account while wordy is very similar to the others. It is notable chiefly for such romantic inaccuracies as asserting that Lafayette had been under the immediate patronage of Marie Antoinette at the time he left, and that he had told his wife that he was just going on a short secret mission from which he would return almost immediately. Such fallacies did not become an integral part of the Lafayette sketch or legend, but the fact that they were mentioned at all is indicative of the romantic aura that surrounded the old General's past.

In 1824 George Ticknor wrote an account of Lafayette for the North American Review. The article was later reprinted and circulated separately. Ticknor, in accord with the tendencies of the times, dramatizes the sacrifices that Lafayette made and enlarges on the sufferings of the Americans. Through this process of elevating Lafayette's position while depressing that of the colonists, he is able to make Lafayette's actions appear even more noble and gallant than before. Ticknor begins by reviewing the General's distinguished ancestors, and then he discusses briefly the boy's childhood and education. He shows how Lafayette was placed in a splendid situation very early in life and states that his individual character, and warm and sincere manners "made him powerful in the confidence of society wherever he went."[6]

Ticknor continues:

> It seemed, indeed, as if life had nothing further to offer him, than he could surely obtain by walking in the path that was so bright before him. It was

> at this period, however, that his thoughts and feelings were first turned towards these thirteen colonies, then in the darkest and most doubtful passage of their struggle for independence. He made himself acquainted with our agents at Paris, and learnt from them the state of our affairs. Nothing could be less tempting to him, whether he sought military reputation or military instruction, for our army at that moment retreating through New Jersey, and leaving its traces in blood from the naked and torn feet of the soldiery as it hastened onward, was in a state too humble to offer either. Our credit, too, in Europe was entirely gone, so that the commissioners, as they were called, without having any commission, to whom Lafayette still persisted in offering his services, were obliged, at last, to acknowledge that they could not even give him decent means for his conveyance. "Then," said he, "I shall purchase and fit out a vessel for myself." He did so. The vessel was prepared, we believe, at Bourdeaux; and sent round to one of the nearest ports in Spain, in order to be beyond the power of the French Government.[7]

Ticknor's article is also interesting because his view is something of a transition from the earlier use of Lafayette as an influential foreigner whose support helped justify the rightness of the patriots' actions, to the later view of Lafayette as the savior of America and one of those most responsible for the American victory. Ticknor combines something of these two ideas in this paragraph:

> The sensation produced by his appearance in this country was, of course, much greater than that produced in Europe by his departure. It still stands forth, as one of the most prominent and important circumstances in our revolutionary contest; and, as has often been said by one who bore no small part in its trials and success, none but those who were then alive, can believe what an impulse it gave to the hopes of a population almost disheartened by a long series of disasters. And well it might; for it taught us, that in the first rank of the first nobility in Europe, men could still be found, who not only took an interest in our struggle, but were willing to share our sufferings; that our obscure and almost desperate contest for freedom in a remote quarter of the world, could yet find supporters among those, who were the most natural and powerful allies

> of a splendid despotism; that we were the objects of a regard and interest throughout the world, which would add to our own resources sufficient strength to carry us safely through to final success.[8]

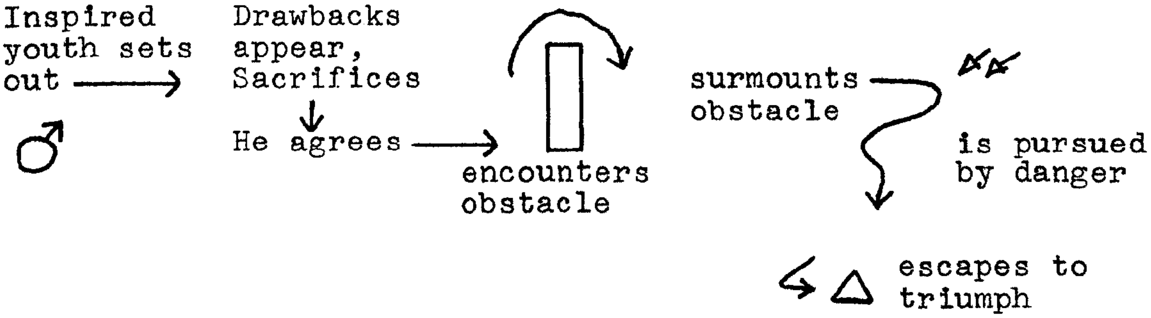
Biographical material about the General continued to appear after his departure in 1825. One book length compilation, A Complete History of the Marquis de Lafayette, includes the basic sketch of Lafayette with insertions of background information about the progress of the fighting in America and events in Britain and France. One passage is quoted here to demonstrate the passion and eloquence with which Lafayette's heroism was presented. (Additional passages relevant to the sketch may be found in the appendix.)

> When the destinies of America were tottering on the brink of destruction; when a triumphant enemy was overwhelming the Jerseys with deeds of desolation; when even the firmness of Washington was shaken, the young and gallant Lafayette resolved to cast his bread upon the waters, and mingle in a conflict which appeared almost desperate in the eyes of united Europe. He espoused the cause of this country, when it had not a single acting advocate beyond the waters of the Atlantic. At that period, the representations in France relative to the state of American affairs, were most deplorable and sufficient to repress the most determined zeal. The army of Washington was represented as a mere rabble, flying before thirty thousand British regulars: nor was this far from reality . . .[9]

The "pattern" of the Lafayette story has been referred to previously, but no precise analysis was attempted. Now that a number of versions have been discussed, it seems appropriate to isolate some of the elements of the story in preparation for a further analysis of changes through the years.

The following is the basic pattern of the Lafayette sketches. A highborn youth is inspired by a worthy cause and resolves to serve it. Drawbacks appear--he must give up his comfortable life with his wife and family and risk the loss of his fortune. He is willing to make these sacrifices and take these risks. Then an obstacle appears--there is no ship available for him. He surmounts the obstacle by buying his own ship. The voyage begins and new dangers appear--his own government is pursuing him to force him to return, and the enemy would like to stop his progress too. He moves steadfastly on and escapes from his pursuers. His efforts are rewarded--he wins a commission from Congress and the affection of his commanding officer. He goes on to greater glory.

The pattern of the Lafayette sketch might be diagrammed as follows:


Inspired youth sets out
Drawbacks appear, Sacrifices
He agrees
encounters obstacle
surmounts obstacle
is pursued by danger
escapes to triumph

This "standard" story of Lafayette evolved in the late eighteenth century, and its basic pattern remained unchanged through the forty years of his absence. There were, as will be shown, shifts in the emphasis placed on various elements of the story throughout the years.

When the story is divided into these elements, there is a basis for comparison of each of the versions presented. For individual elements of the story, the relevant portions of the various accounts are arranged in tables. (These tables may be found in the appendix.) The different versions are arranged chronologically so that changes through the years are more apparent.

The first element, the description of the young nobleman's enthusiasm for the American cause is shown in Table I (p. 109). Although this description does not change as much through the years as do other aspects of the legend, some variations should be noted. Both Mrs. Warren and John Marshall in the early nineteenth century appear to be adopting a more realistic view of an ambitious and militarily oriented young man. However, later versions do not follow this line and tend either to repeat the eighteenth century version, or not to mention the marquis's inspiration.

After 1824 there is considerably more variation among writers. Generally there is a tendency to assume that Lafayette was inspired by the American cause and to put more emphasis on the potential service that he could render to the patriots. The Complete History of 1826, which is the most eloquent statement of the legend that has been presented here, emphasizes both Lafayette's inspiration and the service he could offer as "champion and friend." Table I contains the statements of the first element from each of the versions under study.

The second element is Lafayette's agreement to make the sacrifices and suffer the deprivations that are required by his decision to go to America. There appears to be a fairly clear trend toward enhancing and glamorizing the things that Lafayette relinquished. This is particularly true after 1824 when his heroic image was revitalized and refurbished. Although his risks and sacrifices are mentioned before 1824, only the Portfolio in 1815 puts any major emphasis on them. The statements of the second element are given in Table II (p. 111).

The third element, the obstacle that appeared when the commissioners were unable to provide a ship for his journey is presented in Table III (p. 113). The treatment of this element is particularly interesting because it shows as clearly as any, the increasing splendor of the legend after 1824.

The news of the American retreat and the ensuing lack of credit for Americans in Paris are consistently important parts of the story and serve to indicate the strength of Lafayette's devotion to the American cause. In the very early versions of Ramsay and Gordon the retreats in America are important primarily because they made it impossible for the commissioners to obtain a ship. Through the years, the sad plight of the Americans is developed into something of a secondary drawback or obstacle. That is, more emphasis is placed on Lafayette's eagerness to serve even in the face of great danger and possible defeat.

A comparison of descriptions of the fourth element, the manner in which Lafayette surmounted the transportation obstacle by buying his own ship and faced the commissioners' arguments with words of encouragement, is presented in Table IV (p. 116). The treatment of this element shows relatively little change through the years. The early accounts seem to emphasize the importance of his purchasing a ship a little more than the later ones that put more emphasis on his over-all reaction to American misfortunes. These differences are relatively minor though, and all agree that Lafayette surmounted the obstacles in a grand manner.

The final elements of the story are not presented in tables, because their treatment is fairly consistent through the years, and their importance to the story is only to reinforce the views that have already been expressed by the various writers. The elements that have been discussed carry the major content of the legend.

This comparison of the various versions of Lafayette's story element by element also serves to demonstrate two points that were made in the earlier discussion. First, the sketch of Lafayette tends to become less detailed, more abbreviated and less emotional until 1824. This trend is particularly evident in Ramsay (1791) and M'Culloch (1795). The Portfolio (1815) article is an exception to this trend and probably reflects a mood of rising national feeling and pride that followed the end of the War of 1812. The article apparently did not set off any lasting revival of interest in Lafayette. Grimshaw's 1822 sketch is a tired retelling of the early Ramsay and Gordon accounts and does not contain any new emotional appeal.

After 1824, the accounts of Lafayette reach up to a new emotional peak that even the original story did not approach. While the number of words given to the basic sketch does not increase significantly, the increase in eloquence and fervor is marked. For example, the American's retreat through the Jerseys appears quite consistently in accounts written before 1800, but not until 1825 is the flight marked by "traces in blood from the naked and torn feet of the soldiery . . ."[10]

A second point which was discussed earlier is also made more evident by the comparison of various treatments of the elements of the story. This is the fact that the accounts are all amazingly similar. Such phrases as "thirty thousand British regulars," "two thousand insurgents," and "carry your dispatches to congress and myself to America," appear with considerable predictability.

The similarity in the early versions is pretty clearly a function of plagiarism and sharing a story. Ramsay's 1791 account of Lafayette appears to have been rewritten from his earlier sketch, and M'Culloch's account seems to be an abstract or condensed version of the original story. It is harder, though, to explain the similarity of the later accounts as due only to copying. Some versions of the story such as the 1824 Short Biography are somewhat different in detail and probably derive from more than one source. A possible conclusion is that these later sketches represent more eloquent and dramatic recital of a familiar and well learned story that the writer now feels free to tell in his own words with his own literary touches. It seems clear that the legendary view of the young Lafayette was widely accepted by Americans and had an existence of its own that was independent of one author or one history book.

In addition to remembering a legendary, historic Lafayette, the American people welcomed a real and living man to their shores in 1824. This man was both a hero stepped out of the past and a character in his own right. If it is true, as has been postulated previously, that Lafayette's lasting popularity was a result of his last visit to America, then it must follow that the old General made a marked impression on the people during the months of his visit.

Clearly he did. He played many roles to many people. To the old veterans he was a returned comrade, and they gloried in his reflected light. To others he was a nobleman, an elder statesman, and a gentleman of wisdom and repute, whose early predictions about the success of the United States had been proved correct. While people were interested in his early story, they also wanted to hear about the man who was now visiting them.

One story of the General and his life in 1824 was often reprinted at the time of the visit. It appeared in newspapers and was often included in the small biographical booklets that were published then. It represents an attempt to characterize him and his personal life in a current setting. According to this account, "Lafayette is now about 68 years of age; with a fresh and vigorous constitution for one of his years--although it was severely tried in the dungeons of Olmutz." The reporter mentions his wife who shared his imprisonment, sacrificed her life for him and won his everlasting affection.

Of Lafayette's children, the writer points out that their names do honor to America; the daughters are called Virginia and Carolina and the son is named George Washington. With their respective families (thirteen grandchildren) they share his Castle of La Grange. "Lafayette is their head--their protector--the being of all others on earth endeared to them by a thousand ties."

After presenting an abbreviated version of the Lafayette sketch, the author returns to the scene at La Grange for his concluding statement about the General:

> Whenever he takes a walk into the fields, he generally takes one of his grandchildren with him. He amuses himself with their prattling, joins in their little sports, and contributes to their happiness. Such is the man whose name fills the whole of Europe with his fame--the man who has contributed to establish the liberties of the new world.[11]

The people were also interested in hearing the story of young Lafayette told again, and they responded to it warmly. The General was in the Harvard audience that heard Edward Everett give a Phi Beta Kappa address in 1824. Josiah Quincy was also there, and in his journal he commented on the oratorical peak reached by the speaker as he talked of Lafayette. Mr. Quincy wrote:

> When, toward the conclusion, he alluded to the noble conduct of our guest in procuring a ship for his own transportation, at a time when all America was too poor to offer him a passage to her shores, the scene was overpowering. Every man in the assembly was in tears.[12]

Before continuing to examine the kind of popular hero Lafayette was in 1824, a more general statement and definition about the nature of heroes should be inserted. As an operational definition, it might be agreed that a man will be called a hero if he receives public applause and acclaim, and if he can be held up as a model or example of noble and admirable qualities. He may become such a hero for several reasons. Three such reasons are suggested here; there may be more.

A man may receive public applause and admiration because (1) He has special skills or abilities that are admirable, or because he has accomplished unusual deeds that are admirable. (2) He is a prominent personage who took an admirable part in an important event or action which was directed toward the benefit of the people whose hero he is. (3) He has sacrificed and given beyond the call of duty for the benefit of those people whose hero he is.

The first sort of heroism, the performance of unusual admirable deeds, is the sort that is achieved by astronauts, football players and mountain climbers. Such men become popular heroes because people can identify with them and receive a vicarious thrill of success from their performance. Such heroism is usually shorter-lived than the other varieties mentioned, and such a hero is likely to be replaced when a new man who surpasses his exploits comes along to catch the public fancy. A man who becomes a hero for the second reason is more likely to be a lasting hero depending on the importance of his own action, the importance of the events in which he took part, and the amount of benefit that the people believe they have received. A man who becomes a hero for the third reason probably must be an important man of great resources before he begins to contribute to the public benefit. The sacrifices of a small or insignificant man do not carry the dramatic or noble impact of those of an outstanding man.

For the Americans, Lafayette was a hero for both the second and third reasons. He was a hero because he had performed admirably in an important event, and because he was an important person who had given unstintingly from his immense resources. Probably in 1784 and before the turn of the century, the third reason, his sacrifice and devotion was a more important determinant of his heroic stature than the second. It has been shown that his story was used as a model to help vindicate the American cause and as an example to inspire loyalty to the new nation.[13]

In 1824, the second reason was probably more important in explaining his heroic stature. For patriotic young Americans who believed in their country's superiority, he was a man who had played an important part in the major event on the oratorical peak reached by the speaker as he talked of Lafayette. Mr. Quincy wrote:

> When, toward the conclusion, he alluded to the noble conduct of our guest in procuring a ship for his own transportation, at a time when all America was too poor to offer him a passage to her shores, the scene was overpowering. Every man in the assembly was in tears.[12]

Before continuing to examine the kind of popular hero Lafayette was in 1824, a more general statement and definition about the nature of heroes should be inserted. As an operational definition, it might be agreed that a man will be called a hero if he receives public applause and acclaim, and if he can be held up as a model or example of noble and admirable qualities. He may become such a hero for several reasons. Three such reasons are suggested here; there may be more.

A man may receive public applause and admiration because (1) He has special skills or abilities that are admirable, or because he has accomplished unusual deeds that are admirable. (2) He is a prominent personage who took an admirable part in an important event or action which was directed toward the benefit of the people whose hero he is. (3) He has sacrificed and given beyond the call of duty for the benefit of those people whose hero he is.

The first sort of heroism, the performance of unusual admirable deeds, is the sort that is achieved by astronauts, football players and mountain climbers. Such men become popular heroes because people can identify with them and receive a vicarious thrill of success from their performance. Such heroism is usually shorter-lived than the other varieties mentioned, and such a hero is likely to be replaced when a new man who surpasses his exploits comes along to catch the public fancy. A man who becomes a hero for the second reason is more likely to be a lasting hero depending on the importance of his own action, the importance of the events in which he took part, and the amount of benefit that the people believe they have received. A man who becomes a hero for the third reason probably must be an important man of great resources before he begins to contribute to the public benefit. The sacrifices of a small or insignificant man do not carry the dramatic or noble impact of those of an outstanding man.

For the Americans, Lafayette was a hero for both the second and third reasons. He was a hero because he had performed admirably in an important event, and because he was an important person who had given unstintingly from his immense resources. Probably in 1784 and before the turn of the century, the third reason, his sacrifice and devotion was a more important determinant of his heroic stature than the second. It has been shown that his story was used as a model to help vindicate the American cause and as an example to inspire loyalty to the new nation.[13]

In 1824, the second reason was probably more important in explaining his heroic stature. For patriotic young Americans who believed in their country's superiority, he was a man who had played an important part in the major event which had secured their beloved nation and won its independence. There was a strong and common tendency at the time of the visit to place great emphasis on the importance of Lafayette's part in the Revolutionary War.

In the speeches and articles that were written about him in 1824-1825 and afterwards, phrases about his "gallant services" and his "distinguished and noble contributions" were heard constantly as speakers and writers vied with one another to develop appropriate expressions of gratitude. By the time the General returned to France in 1825, there must have been many who believed that the independence of the United States might not have been won without the Marquis de Lafayette. He was clearly perceived by many as not only champion but savior of American liberties. Such a view is presented in the Complete History of 1826, with reference to the enthusiastic reception the General received wherever he went:

> These were not the momentary triumphs of a conqueror, who returns flushed with some recent victory; but the triumphs of the hearts of other generations, who rise up to bless the patriot hero of their country, who took their fathers by the hand, led them to victory and glory; and when he had given them an exalted rank among the nations of the earth, stepped aside, and left them to pursue their enjoyments of freedom, happiness, and honour.[14]

Lafayette's ascension to such heights of worship was also due in part to the role he played while he was The Nation's Guest. He responded warmly to the pressures of the crowds, and he never seemed to grow weary or impatient with the attention he received. Woodward has pointed out that he knew all of the old veterans even if he had never seen them before.[15] Josiah Quincy recalled that as he was driving with the General towards the next Massachusetts town where a reception was planned, Lafayette asked him about the town and its outstanding features. When they arrived, The Nation's Guest was able to converse knowingly with those who greeted him and pleased the people with his interest in their individual community.[16] His love for Americans was as real and sincere as theirs for him.

Dixon Wecter has discussed some of the characteristics that Americans find admirable in the men they call their heroes. Some of these seem immediately to fit Lafayette and help to explain his immense public popularity. For one thing, Wecter suggests that if a hero is aristocratic, he should also have a touch of radicalism.[17] By this he means that such a hero should seem in touch with the common man. Lafayette filled this role well, since one basic element of his story was that he was a nobleman whose heart belonged to the American people. At the time of the visit, one writer put the feeling into verse and called Lafayette:

> The man whose mighty heart could blend
> The names of Lord and Liberty,
> And melt his noble coronet
> Into the shrine where all the free
> Could kneel and pray for LA FAYETTE.[18]

In line with this tendency, it is interesting to note how often modesty and an unassuming manner were attributed to Lafayette. It was said of him, "Lafayette is particularly remarkable for the unaffected simplicity of his manners. He was distinguished for his want of pride, his distaste for great parade, when he was among us--he preserves the same noble trait in his character."[19]

Wecter also suggests a similar characteristic, that an American hero is a man of goodwill.[20] This has already been demonstrated with regard to Lafayette. Further evidence appears in much of what was written and said about him during his visit. For example, one descriptive account reported, "Lafayette is as much distinguished for his amiable and affectionate temper, as for his respect to the liberties of man. His heart melts with generous emotions, as well as that of the humblest and most undistinguished of men."[21]

In summarizing the dimensions of Lafayette the hero, at the time of his 1824 visit, it seems safe to say that he was a grander hero on a broader scale than he had been before. The major component of his early image, his sacrifice to the American cause, was still present and more glorified. In addition, the importance of his contributions to America was exaggerated until he approached the position of America's savior.

In addition, new components were added to his picture as Americans saw and met him in person. These were personal dimensions such as his warmth, his patience and his genuine feeling for Americans. As a grand old hero returned from the past, he took on the character of an elder statesman, venerated for his age, his wisdom and his fatherliness.

VII. Footnotes

[1] John Foster, A Sketch of the Tour of General Lafayette on His Late Visit to the United States, 1824 (Portland, 1824), p. 1.

[2] Foster, p. 6.

[3] Memoirs of the Military Career of the Marquis de LaFayette during the Revolutionary War (Boston, 1824), p. 7. (Carefully compiled from the most authentic sources.)

[4] A Short Biography of the Illustrious Citizen, Marquis de Lafayette, by a citizen of Washington, D. C. (Washington, 1824), p. 6.

[5] Gilbert J. Hunt, The Tour of Lafayette through the U. States (New York, 1825).

[6] [George Ticknor], "Review of Two Books," North American Review, XX (January 1825), 147-180.

[7] Ticknor, pp. 149-150.

[8] Ticknor, p. 151.

[9] A Complete History of the Marquis de Lafayette, by an officer in the late army (New York, 1826), pp. 15-17.

[10] Ticknor, p. 150.

[11] New York Evening Post, August 7, 1824.

[12] Josiah Quincy, Figures of the Past from the Leaves of Old Journals (Boston, 1901), p. 107.

[13] In line with this analysis, it is interesting to note that the young marquis, particularly at the time of his first return to France in 1779, was a popular hero in French society for the first reason, his daring and unusual deeds.

[14] Complete History, p. 491.

[15] W. E. Woodward, Lafayette (New York, 1938), p. 422.

[16] Quincy, pp. 151-152.

[17] Dixon Wecter, The Hero in America (New York, 1941), p. 16.

[18] New York Evening Post, August 17, 1824.

[19] New York Evening Post, August 7, 1824.

[20] Wecter, p. 14.

[21] New York Evening Post, August 7, 1824.

APPENDIX

The remainder of the original Lafayette sketch (first paragraph quoted on p. 60) as given by Jedidiah Morse, The American Geography. London, 1792, with notes to show how this version differs from that given by David Ramsay, The History of Revolution of South Carolina. Trenton, 1785.

> He was soon appointed to command an expedition to Canada. The plan was to cross the lakes on the ice; the object, to seize Montreal and St. John's. He was now at the age of twenty, and must have keenly experienced the allurements of independent command; but his cool judgment, and honest heart, restrained him from indulging a passion for military fame, under circumstances that might have injured the cause which he had so zealously espoused. He found that, in case of his proceeding, the army under his command would be in danger of experiencing a fate similar to that of the unfortunate Burgoyne. With a boldness of judgment, that would have done honor to the most experienced general, and without advancing beyond Albany, he relinquished the expedition. Soon after, he received the thanks of Congress for his prudence.
>
> In the four campaigns which succeeded the arrival of the marquis de la Fayette in America, he gave repeated proofs of his military talents, in the middle and eastern states; but the events that took place under his command in Virginia, deserve particular notice.

In the above paragraph after the semicolon Ramsay writes, "but as these operations do not fall within the prescribed limits of this history, I proceed to relate those events which took place under his command in the Southern states, and which had an influence on the publick affairs of South Carolina." Morse and Ramsay both continue:

> Early in the year 1781, while the war raged to the southward of Virginia, the marquis de la Fayette was detached on an expedition against Portsmouth; but here his active zeal received a check no less fatal to his hopes than when he was obliged to relinquish the expedition to Canada. The engagement near the capes of the Chesapeek, between the French chef d'escadre d'Estouches,

and the British admiral Arbuthnot, which took place on the fifth of March, 1781, defeated the enterprise. Upon this event, he marched back to the Head of Elk, where he received an order from General Washington to return to Virginia, to oppose General Philips, who had joined General Arnold at Portsmouth. Although the troops under his command were in want of almost every thing, he nevertheless proceeded with them to Baltimore. Here he learned that General Philips was urging preparations to embark at Portsmouth, with upwards of three thousand men. With the Marquis de la Fayette it was a moment of extreme distress and embarrassment. In his whole command, there was not one pair of shoes; but the love and confidence he had universally excited, enabled him to obtain a loan of money, which procured him some necessaries for his troops, and gave renewed vigor to his march. He supposed Richmond to be the object of General Philips, and therefore marched thither with so great expedition, that he arrived at that place the evening before General Philips. He was joined the first night after his arrival by Major-General Baron Steuben, with a corps of militia. In this manner was the capital of Virginia, at that time filled with almost all the military stores of the state, saved from the most imminent danger. The British appeared the next morning at Manchester, just opposite to Richmond. The two armies surveyed each other for some time, and then General Philips, apprehending it to be too hazardous to attack the Marquis de la Fayette in his strong position, very prudently retired.

Such was the great superiority of numbers, by the combination of the forces under General Arnold, General Philips, and Lord Cornwallis--so fatal to all the southern states would have been the conquest of Virginia that the Marquis de la Fayette had before him a labour of the last consequence, and was pressed on all sides by innumerable difficulties.

In the first moments of the rising tempest, and until he could provide against its utmost rage, he began to retire with his little army, which consisted of about a thousand regulars, two thousand militia, and sixty dragoons. Lord Cornwallis, exulting in the prospect of success, which he thought to be heightened by the youth of his opponent, incautiously wrote to Great-Britain, "that the boy could not escape him." The engagement, however, which was to confirm his promise, was sedulously avoided. Finding it impossible to force an action, he next endeavoured to cut off the communication of the Marquis de la Fayette with General Wayne, who, with eight hundred Pennsylvanians, was advancing from the northward. The junction, however, was effected at

> Rackoon Ford, without loss. The next object of Lord Cornwallis, was to get possession of the American stores, which, for their greater security, had been moved from Richmond to Albemarle old courthouse, above the Point of Fork. While the troops commanded by the Marquis de la Fayette and General Wayne were forming a junction, Lord Cornwallis had gotten between them and their public stores. The possession of these was a principal object with both armies. The Marquis de la Fayette, by forced marches, got within a few miles of the British army, when they were yet distant two days march from Albermarle old court-house. Once more the British general considered himself sure of his adversary. To save the stores he knew was his design, but to accomplish that object, his lordship saw no practical way but by a road, in passing which, the American army might be attacked to great advantage. It was a critical moment, but the Marquis de la Fayette had the good fortune to extricate himself. He opened in night, by part of his army, a nearer road to Albemarle, which, having been many years disused, was much embarrassed, and, to the astonishment of Lord Cornwallis, posted himself in a strong position the next day between the British army and the American stores.
>
> His lordship, finding all his schemes frustrated, fell back to Richmond, whither he was followed by the Marquis de la Fayette. The main American army in Virginia was now reinforced by the troops under Major-General Baron Steuben, and by volunteer corps of Virginia and Maryland gentlemen. And the Marquis de la Fayette had the address to impress Lord Cornwallis with an idea, that his force was much greater than he actually commanded. His lordship, therefore, retreated to Williamsburg.

Here Ramsay adds a brief description of an attack on the British by Butler, about a bluff attack by General Wayne who almost was trapped by the British and the move of Cornwallis and his troops to Jamestown. Then both accounts continue:

> After a series of manoeuvres, which it is not necessary to relate, and in which the British general displayed the boldness of enterprise, and the young marquis the sound judgment of age, blended with the ardour of youth, the former fixed himself and his army at York-town. The latter, under various pretences, sent the Pennsylvania troops to the south side of James River; collected a

> force in Gloucester county, and made sundry arrangements subservient to the grand design of the whole campaign, which was the capture of Lord Cornwallis, and the British army under his command.

In the above sentence Ramsay ends at "campaign" and then continues with a description of the arrival of the French forces and the attack on Yorktown. He makes little further mention of Lafayette. Morse concludes:

> Sometime after the capture of Cornwallis, the Marquis de la Fayette went to France, where he successfully used his endeavours to promote the commercial and political interest of these states.
>
> Pennsylvania, in order to show her esteem for this gallant nobleman, has lately erected part of her western territory into a separate county, and named it FAYETTE.

The Lafayette sketch as given by David Ramsay, History of the American Revolution. London, 1791.

> The killed and wounded, in the royal army, were near six hundred. The loss of the Americans was twice that number. In their list of the wounded were two of their general officers, the marquis de la Fayette and general Woodford. The former was a French nobleman of high rank, who, animated with the love of liberty, had left his native country, and offered his service to congress. While in France, and only nineteen years of age, he espoused the cause of the Americans, with the most disinterested and generous ardour. Having determined to join them, he communicated his intentions to the American commissioners, at Paris. They justly conceived, that a patron of so much importance would be of service to their cause, and encouraged his design. Before he had embarked from France, intelligence arrived in Europe, that the American insurgents, reduced to 2000 men, were fleeing through Jersey before a British force of 30,000. Under these circumstances, the American commissioners at Paris thought it but honest to dissuade him from the present prosecution of his perilous enterprise. It was in vain that they acted so candid a part. His zeal, to serve a distressed country, was not abated by misfortunes. Having embarked in a vessel, which he purchased for the purpose, he arrived at Charleston,

> early in 1777, and soon after joined the American army. Congress resolved, that, 'in consideration of his zeal, illustrious family and connexions, he should have the rank of major general in their army.' Independent of the risk he ran as an American officer, he hazarded his large fortune in consequence of the laws of France, and also the confinement of his person, in case of capture, when on his way to the United States, without the chance of being acknowledged by any nation; for his court had forbidden his proceeding to America, and had dispatched orders to have him confined in the West Indies, if found in that quarter. This gallant nobleman, who, under all these disadvantages, had demonstrated his good will to the United States, received a wound in his leg, at the battle of Brandywine; but he nevertheless continued in the field, and exerted himself both by word and example in rallying the Americans.

The Lafayette sketch as given by John M'Culloch, A Concise History of the United States. Philadelphia, 1795.

> The Marquis de la FAYETTE, was born about the year 1757. At the age of 19, he espoused the cause of America, and determined to embark for the United States. About this time intelligence arrived in France, that General Washington was flying thro' New Jersey before a victorious British army. This only increased his ardour. He purchsed a vessel, sailed for America, and arrived in Charleston, early in 1777. Congress conferred on him the rank of major general. He accepted the appointment, on condition that he should serve at his own expence, and join the army as a volunteer.
>
> In the five campaigns which suceeded the arrival of the marquis, he gave repeated proofs of his military talent; but the events that took place under his command in Virginia, contributed most to his glory.
>
> He was a tremendous advocate for the United States in France, and, by his letters was instrumental in disposing that court to enter into alliance with them. He was the first who proposed the sending a French army to America.
>
> On his return to France at the peace, he was active and influential in effecting a revolution in that country. By refusing to concur in deposing the king, he was obliged to flee for his life. He was captured by the enemy, and is still kept prisoner. His whole estate was confiscated by the French. Since his

confinement Congress have done themselves honour by making up his pay while in their service, with interest, and transmitting it to him.

The Lafayette sketch as given by The Portfolio. June 1815.

The marquis de la Fayette, is one of the few living actors of our revolution. Most of the worthies of that important period repose in the grave, or tremble on its brink. To their sons and to our latest posterity it belongs to cherish their memories and record their virtues. As an American, penetrated with gratitude and admiration for the rare services of the subject of this memoir, it cannot be thought obtrusive, I hope, to place before my countrymen certain passages in his life, which have never yet been published, and to connect them with other notices of this illustrious man, so as to form a brief sketch of his eventful history.

La Fayette, descended from one of the first families in France, possessed of a large fortune, and married at the early age of nineteen to the woman of his heart, had the courage to abandon his home, its comforts, and its mistress, at the call of Freedom's voice, and to sacrifice all those charms, at the very outset of life, to the higher claims of a laudable ambition. It was no ordinary mind that could resolve on such a step. Not yet twenty years of age, this "noble phenomenon" addressed himself to the American commissioners at Paris and offered his personal services in our cause. Franklin and his colleague received his offer with eagerness. Scarcely, however, had he made the proposal when news arrived in France, that the remnant of the American forces, reduced to two thousand insurgents, as they were called, had fled towards Philadelphia through the Jerseys, before an army of thirty thousand regulars. This news was a death-blow to the little credit which we still retained in Europe, and prevented the commissioners from procuring a vessel to convey the marquis hither. They confessed to him their inability to aid his enterprise, and advised him to delay its prosecution until some more propitious moment should occur. But he was not to be discouraged by these difficulties. The flame of liberty glowed in his breast, and being bent upon sharing in our glorious struggle, however desponding our situation might appear, he told the commissioners that the lower the fortunes of the American people, the more acceptable would be

> his services; and in the true spirit of heroism, concluded thus: "Since you cannot get a vessel, I shall purchase and fit out one to carry your despatches to congress and myself to America." A ship was accordingly purchased and equipt, and although overtaken by an order from his court, forbidding him to proceed, he embarked and arrived at Charleston in the year 1777.
>
> Congress, elated, encouraged, and flattered by an auxiliary of so much spirit and of such promise, appreciated very highly the risks he had already ran, [sic] and those he offered to encounter in common with themselves, . . .

The Lafayette sketch as given by William Grimshaw, History of the United States. Philadelphia, 1822.

> Two distinguished foreigners served under the American banners at the Brandywine; the Marquis De La Fayette and count Pulaski; the one, a native of France, the other, of Poland. Animated by the love of liberty, La Fayette, a nobleman of high rank, had left the country of his birth, and offered his service to congress. While in France, and only nineteen years of age, he espoused the cause of the Americans, with the most disinterested and generous ardour; and, having determined to join them, communicated his intentions to their commissioners at Paris. His offer was gratefully received. They justly considered, that a patron of so much importance would be of the utmost service to their cause.
>
> Before he embarked, intelligence arrived in Europe, that the American patriots, reduced to two thousand men, were flying before a British force of thirty-thousand; under which circumstances, the commissioners thought it their duty to dissuade him from the present prosecution of his dangerous enterprise. But their candour was expressed in vain. His zeal to serve a struggling country, was heightened, not abated, by her misfortunes. His personal risk was not the only one which might have deterred him. He hazarded his large fortune, by the laws of France; and also imprisonment, in case of capture when on his way to the United States: for, his sovereign having forbidden his proceeding, despatched orders to the West Indies, to have him, if found in that quarter, confined. He was appointed a major-general in the American army; an honour, of which he showed himself in the highest manner deserving. Though wounded in the late battle, he continued in the field; exerting himself, not only by his voice, but by his example, to rally the broken troops.

The Lafayette sketch as given by A Complete History of the Marquis de Lafayette. New York, 1826.

> America was in the infancy of her strength, when Lafayette, animated with the glorious cause, left all the luxuries and indulgences of home, to cross the Atlantic, and offer himself to the Americans as a champion and friend. Animated by the enthusiasm which generous minds are accustomed to feel for great enterprises, he espoused their cause with a partiality common to almost all the men of that time, and particularly to the French. . . .
>
> When the destinies of America were tottering on the brink of destruction; when a triumphant enemy was overwhelming the Jerseys with deeds of desolation; when even th firmness of Washington was shaken, the young and gallant Lafayette resolved to cast his bread upon the waters, and mingle in a conflict which appeared almost desperate in the eyes of united Europe. He espoused the cause of this country, when it had not a single acting advocate beyond the waters of the Atlantic. At that period, the representations in France relative to the state of American affairs, were most deplorable and sufficient to repress the most determined zeal. The army of Washington was represented as a mere rabble, flying before thirty thousand British regulars: nor was this far from reality. . . .
>
> . . . Inflamed with the desire to participate in the events which were echoed by all Europe, he communicated, about the close of the year 1776, his intention of repairing to America; and they (Franklin and Deane) encouraged him in that resolution. But when they were informed of the reverses in New Jersey, they were compelled themselves almost to despair of the success of the revolution, and with an honourable sincerity, endeavoured to dissuade the Marquis from carrying his design into execution. They even declared to him that their affairs were so deranged by this unhappy news that they were not able to charter a vessel for his passage to America. "Now then," replied the gallant nobleman "is precisely the moment to serve your cause; the more people are discouraged, the greater utility will result from my departure; and if you cannot furnish me with a vessel, I will freight one at my own expense, to convey your despatches, and my person to the shores of America." And as he said, he did.

TABLE I

LAFAYETTE, THE YOUNG NOBLEMAN, ESPOUSES THE AMERICAN CAUSE

A comparison of statements from several sources

Original Sketch (Morse 1792)	Gordon 1788
At the age of nineteen he espoused the cause of America, with all the ardor which the most generous philanthropy could inspire. At a very early period of the war, he determined to embark from his native country, for the United States.	In 1776, the marquis, at the age of nineteen, espoused the cause of the Americans, and determined upon joining them in person . . . a patron of so much importance . . .
Ramsay 1791	M'Culloch 1795
. . . a French nobleman of high rank, . . . animated with the love of liberty, . . . While in France and only nineteen years of age, he espoused the cause of the Americans with the most disinterested and generous ardour.	At the age of 19, he espoused the cause of America, and determined to embark for the United States.
Mrs. Warren 1805	Marshall 1803-1807
. . . a young nobleman of France . . . Warmed by an enthusiastic love of liberty, and animated by a laudable ambition, this amiable young gentleman had left the court of France.	This young nobleman possessing an excellent heart, and all the military enthusiasm of his country . . .
Portfolio 1815	Grimshaw 1822
. . . at the call of Freedom's voice . . . It was no ordinary mind that could resolve on such a step. Not yet twenty years of age, this "Noble phenomenon" . . .	Animated by the love of liberty, . . . a nobleman of high rank, . . . While in France, and only nineteen years of age, he espoused the cause of the Americans with the most disinterested and generous ardour.

TABLE I (continued)

Butler 1821 The Marquis La Fayette arrived in America, . . .	*Short Biography* 1824 The ancestors of the Marquis, for generations back, were particularly distinguished for fearless, undaunted bravery, and contempt of danger, which traits were sustained by the Marquis himself, when, at nineteen years of age, . . . to offer his services in fighting the battles of a country . . .
Foster 1824 . . . at the immature age of nineteen, he espoused the cause of the Americans, and nobly resolved to afford our country all possible assistance by his personal services and influence.	[Ticknor] 1825 . . . his thoughts and feelings were first turned towards these thirteen colonies . . .
Complete History 1826 . . . animated with the glorious cause, . . . offer himself to the Americans as a champion and friend. Animated by the enthusiasm which great minds are accustomed to feel for great enterprises, he espoused their cause with a partiality. . . . the young and gallant Lafayette resolved to cast his bread upon the waters and mingle in a conflict . . . He espoused the cause of this country, when it had not a single acting advocate beyond the waters of the Atlantic . . . inflamed with the desire to participate.	

TABLE II

LAFAYETTE IS WILLING TO SACRIFICE HIS COMFORT AND RISK HIS FORTUNE

A comparison of statements from several sources

Original Sketch (Morse 1792)	Gordon 1788
No mention.	The marquis had left a pregnant consort, and the most endearing connections.
Ramsay 1791	M'Culloch 1795
. . . he hazarded his large fortune in consequence of the laws of France . . .	No mention.
Mrs. Warren 1805	Marshall 1803-1807
. . . and quitting the pleasures of domestic felicity . . .	No mention.
Portfolio 1815	Grimshaw 1822
. . . descended from one of the first families in France, possessed of a large fortune, and married at the early age of nineteen to the woman of his heart, had the courage to abandon his home, its comforts, and its mistress, . . . to sacrifice all those charms, at the very outset of life . . .	He hazarded his large fortune, by the laws of France; . . .
Butler 1821	*Short Biography* 1824
No mention	. . . he relinquished all the allurements of a princely fortune, in a beautiful country, with the blandishments of the splendid Court of Versailles, . . .

TABLE II (continued)

Foster 1824	[Ticknor] 1825
No mention.	It seemed indeed, as if life had nothing further to offer him, than he could surely obtain by walking in the path that was so bright before him. . . .
Complete History 1826	
. . . left all the luxuries and indulgences of home . . .	

TABLE III

NEWS OF AMERICAN RETREATS AND ATTEMPTS TO DISSUADE LAFAYETTE

A comparison of statements from several sources

Original Sketch (Morse 1792)	Gordon 1788
. . . intelligence arrived in Europe, that the American insurgents reduced to two thousand men, were flying through Jersey before a British force of thirty thousand regulars. This news so effectually extinguished the little credit which America had in Europe, in the beginning of the year 1777, that the commissioners . . . could not procure a vessel to forward his intentions. Under these circumstances, they thought it but honest to dissuade him from the present prosecution of his perilous enterprise.	News arrived in France, that the remnant of the American army, reduced to 2000 insurgents as they were called, had fled toward Philadelphia through the Jerseys before an army of 30,000 regulars. This news so effectually extinguished the little credit which America had in Europe, that the commissioners could not produce a vessel to forward this nobleman's project. Under these circumstances they thought it but honest to discourage his prosecuting the enterprise, till a change in affairs should render it less hazardous or more promising.
Ramsay 1791	M'Culloch 1795
. . . intelligence arrived in Europe, that the American insurgents, reduced to 2000 men, were fleeing through Jersey before a British force of 30,000. Under these circumstances, the American commissioners at Paris thought it but honest to dissuade him from the present prosecution of his perilous enterprise.	About this time intelligence arrived in France, that General Washington was flying thro' New Jersey before a victorious British army.
Mrs. Warren 1805	Marshall 1803-1807
. . . an early period of the war, when the affairs of America wore the darkest aspect.	. . . on the current of ill fortune which set in late in 1776, he was advised not to embark.

TABLE III (continued)

Portfolio 1815 News arrived in France, that the remnant of the American forces, reduced to two thousand insurgents, as they were called, had fled towards Philadelphia through the Jerseys, before an army of thirty thousand regulars. This news was a deathblow to the little credit which we still retained in Europe and prevented the commissioners from procuring a vessel to convey the marquis hither. They confessed to him their inability to aid his enterprise, and advised him to delay its prosecution until some more propitious moment should occur.	Grimshaw 1822 . . . intelligence arrived in Europe, that the American patriots, reduced to two thousand men, were flying before a British force of thirty-thousand; under which circumstances, the commissioners thought it their duty to dissuade him from the present prosecution of his dangerous enterprise.
Butler 1821 No mention.	*Short Biography* 1824 . . . a country (as said by the Europeans) at the "ends of the earth." He arrived here in 1777, at the most gloomy period of the revolutionary war--a time when the conquering army of Burgoyne was about making bold advances into the heart of our country.
Foster 1824 At this era, the affairs of America were bordering on despair, and were represented in France as so deplorable that it might be supposed sufficient to repress the most determined zeal. Reports were propagated in that country that our army, reduced to a mere rabble, was flying before an	[Ticknor] 1825 Nothing could be less tempting to him, whether he sought military reputation or military instruction, for our army at that moment retreating through New Jersey, and leaving its traces in blood from the naked and torn feet of the soldiery as it hastened onward, was in a state too

TABLE III (continued)

army of thirty thousand regulars, nor was this very wide of reality. In consequence of this, our commissioners found it impossible to procure a vessel to convey the Marquis and their own despatches to Congress; they could not therefore feel justified in encouraging his bold contemplated enterprise . . .	humble to offer either. Our credit, too, in Europe was entirely gone, so that the commissioners, as they were called, without having any commission, . . . were obliged at last, to acknowledge that they could not even give him decent means for his conveyance . . .
Complete History 1826 At that period, the representations in France relative to the state of American affairs, were most deplorable and sufficient to repress the most determined zeal. The army of Washington was represented as a mere rabble, flying before thirty thousand British regulars; nor was this far from reality . . . when they were informed of the reverses in New Jersey, they were compelled themselves almost to despair of the success of the revolution and with an honourable sincerity, endeavoured to dissuade the Marquis from carrying his design into execution. They even declared to him that their affairs were so deranged by this unhappy news that they were not able to charter a vessel for his passage to America.	

TABLE IV

LAFAYETTE'S REACTION TO AMERICAN MISFORTUNES AND TO THE ATTEMPTS TO DISSUADE HIM

A comparison of statements from several sources

Original Sketch (Morse 1792)	Gordon 1788
It was in vain they acted so candid a part. The flame which America had kindled in his breast, could not be extinguished by her misfortunes. "Hitherto," said he, in the true spirit of patriotism, "I have only cherished your cause--now I am going to serve it. The lower it is in the opinion of the people, the greater will be the effect of my departure; and since you cannot get a vessel, I shall purchase and fit out one to carry your dispatches to Congress and myself to America." He accordingly embarked.	It was in vain however that they acted so candid a part. The flame, which the American sons of liberty had kindled in his breast, could not be interrupted by their misfortunes. "Hitherto," said he, in the true spirit of heroism, "I have only cherished your cause; now I am going to serve it. The lower it is in the opinion of the people, the greater effect my departure will have; and since you cannot get a vessel, I shall purchase and fit out one, to carry your dispatches to congress and me to America." He accordingly fitted out a vessel . . .
Ramsay 1791	M'Culloch 1795
It was in vain that they acted so candid a part. His zeal, to serve a distressed country, was not abated by her misfortunes. Having embarked in a vessel, which he purchased for the purpose, he arrived . . .	This only increased his ardour.
Mrs. Warren 1805	Marshall 1803-1807
. . . he embarked at his own expense, . . .	No mention.
Portfolio 1815	Grimshaw 1822
But he was not to be discouraged by these difficulties. The flame of liberty	But their candour was expressed in vain. His zeal to serve a struggling

TABLE IV (continued)

glowed in his breast, and being bent upon sharing in our glorious struggle, however desponding our situation might appear, he told the commissioners that the lower the fortunes of the American people, the more acceptable would be his services; and in the true spirit of heroism, concluded thus: "Since you cannot get a vessel, I shall purchase and fit out one to carry your despatches to congress and myself to America." A ship was accordingly purchased and equipt.	country, was heightened, not abated, by her misfortunes. . . .
Butler 1821 No mention.	*Short Biography* 1824 . . . embarked in his own ship . . .
Foster 1824 This embarrassment, however, had the effect of increasing rather than of restraining, his youthful ardor and heroism. He imparted to the commissioners his determination to purchase and fit out a vessel to convey himself and their despatches to America.	[Ticknor] 1825 "Then" said he, "I shall purchase and fit out a vessel for myself." He did so.
Complete History 1826 "Now then," replied the gallant nobleman" is precisely the moment to serve your cause; the more people are discouraged, the greater utility will result from my departure; and if you cannot furnish me with a vessel, I will freight one at my own expense, to convey your despatches, and my person to the shores of America." And as he said he did.	

LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED

Primary Sources

Barlow, Joel. *The Vision of Columbus*. Book V. Hartford, 1787.

Butler, Frederick. *A Complete History of the United States of America*. Hartford, 1821.

A Complete History of the Marquis de Lafayette. By an officer in the late army. New York, 1826.

Cooper, James Fenimore. *Letters and Journals*, ed. James Franklin Beard. Vol. I. Cambridge, Mass., 1960.

Foster, John. *A Sketch of the Tour of General Lafayette on His Late Visit to the United States, 1824*. Portland, 1824.

Goodrich, Charles A. *History of the United States*. Hartford, 1823.

Gordon, William. *The History of the Rise, Progress and Establishment of Independence of the United States of America*. London, 1788.

Grimshaw, William. *History of the United States from Their Settlement as Colonies to the Cession of Florida*. Philadelphia, 1822.

Hunt, Gilbert J. *The Tour of Lafayette through the U. States*. New York, 1825.

"Interesting Notices of the Life of the Marquis DE LA FAYETTE," *The Portfolio* (June 1815), pp. 499-512.

Lafayette, Marquis de. *Memoirs, Correspondence and Manuscripts of General Lafayette*. New York, 1837.

Lafayette Scrapbook, Library of Congress. (Clippings from 1824-1825 newspapers)

Levasseur, A. *Lafayette in America in 1824 and 1825*; or Journal of a voyage to the United States, trans. John D. Godman. 2 vols. Philadelphia, 1829.

Marshall, John. *The Life of George Washington*. 5 vols. London, 1804-1807.

M'Culloch, John. *A Concise History of the United States, from the Discovery of America to 1795*. Philadelphia, 1795.

_______, comp. *Introduction to the History of America.* Philadelphia, 1787.

Memoirs of the Military Career of the Marquis de Lafayette during the Revolutionary War. Boston, 1824.

Morse, Jedidiah. *The American Geography.* Elizabeth Town, 1789.

_______. *The American Geography.* London, 1792.

_______. *Geography Made Easy.* Boston, 1812.

New York Evening Post, 1824.

Niles Weekly Register (Baltimore, Md.), 1824.

The Portfolio (August 1816), pp. 93-112.

Quincy, Josiah. *Figures of the Past from the Leaves of Old Journals.* 9th ed. Boston, 1901.

Ramsay, David. *History of the American Revolution.* London, 1791.

_______. *The History of Revolution of South Carolina.* Trenton, 1785.

_______. *The Life of George Washington.* New York, 1807.

"Review of Dr. Ramsay's History . . . ," *The Columbian Magazine or Monthly Miscellany* (September 1786), pp. 22-24.

A Short Biography of the Illustrious Citizen, Marquis de Lafayette. By a citizen of Washington, D. C. Washington, 1824.

[Talbott, John]. *History of North America.* Vol. II. N.p., 1820.

[Ticknor, George]. "Review of Two Books," *North American Review*, XX (January 1825), 147-180.

A True and Authentic History of His Excellency, George Washington . . . Philadelphia, 1790.

Warren, Mercy Otis. *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution*, interspersed with biographical, political and moral observations. Boston, 1805.

Secondary Sources

Boynton, Percy H. Literature and American Life. Boston, 1936.

Brandon, Edgar E. Lafayette, Guest of the Nation. Oxford, Ohio, 1950.

Carman, Harry J., Harold C. Syrett, and Bernard W. Wishy. A History of the American People. Vol. I. 2nd ed. New York, 1960.

Cunliffe, Marcus. The Nation Takes Shape: 1789-1837. Chicago, 1959.

Curti, Merle. The Roots of American Loyalty. New York, 1956.

Dangerfield, George. The Era of Good Feelings. London, 1953.

Fisher, Sydney G. "The Legendary and Myth-making Process in Histories of the American Revolution," American Philosophical Society Proceedings, LI (1912), 53-75.

Fishwick, Marshall W. American Heroes, Myth and Reality. Washington, D. C., 1954.

Foerster, Norman, ed. American Poetry and Prose. Boston, 1957.

Gottschalk, Louis. Lafayette and the Close of the American Revolution. Chicago, 1942.

_______. Lafayette between the American and the French Revolution. Chicago, 1950.

_______. Lafayette Comes to America. Chicago, 1935.

_______. Lafayette Joins the American Army. Chicago, 1937.

_______. The United States and Lafayette. Rock Island, Illinois, 1958.

Kite, Elizabeth S. "Lafayette and His Companions on the 'Victoire'," Records of the American Catholic Historical Society (March, June, September, December, 1934).

Lafayette, The Nation's Guest. Picture book of mementos at Winterthur Museum. Winterthur, Delaware, 1957.

Loth, David. The People's General: The Personal Story of Lafayette. New York, 1951.

Maurois, Andre. *Adrienne. The Life of the Marquise de La Fayette*, trans. Gerard Hopkins. New York, 1961.

Nolan, J. Bennett. *Lafayette in America Day by Day*. Baltimore, 1934.

Nye, Russel Blaine. *The Cultural Life of the New Nation, 1776-1830*. New York, 1960.

Sedgwick, Henry D. *Lafayette*. Indianapolis, 1928.

Spencer, Benjamin T. *The Quest for Nationality*. Syracuse, 1957.

Spieseke, Alice W. *The First Textbooks in American History and Their Compiler, John M'Culloch*. New York, 1938.

Thompson, Warren S. and P. K. Whelpton. *Population Trends in the United States*. New York, 1933.

Van Tassel, David D. *Recording America's Past*. Chicago, 1960.

Waterman, William R. *Fanny Wright*. New York, 1924.

Wecter, Dixon. *The Hero in America*. New York, 1941.

Woodward, W. E. *Lafayette*. New York, 1938.