

# Gazette of the American Friends of Lafayette

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## Our First Decade: Tenth Annual Meeting YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA SATURDAY, MAY 30th

NEXT May the Society of The American Friends of Lafayette completes the first ten years of its existence. It has been the custom for the Society to hold its meetings in historical places with which Lafayette was identified in some way. After careful consideration the Council has decided that even in this time of national emergency we are justified by the patriotic and cultural objects of the Society in holding our annual meeting as usual. This meeting is to take place at Yorktown, Virginia, on May 30th next. A most fitting climax to our first decade. For it was by the victory at Yorktown, in which Lafayette and our French allies were the deciding factor, that we won that rich heritage of liberty which we are fighting to preserve today.

The plans for the meeting are somewhat tentative at this time. We hope to hold the business meeting in the Moore House where the Articles of Capitulation were signed in October 1781. Through the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. George W. Blow the luncheon will be held on the grounds of the historic Nelson House, of which they are the owners. The House will be closed to the public on that day and in the event of bad weather a buffet luncheon will be held in the House. We will be addressed at the luncheon by one or more distinguished guests.

It is further planned to have an outstanding exhibit of historical material relating to Lafayette and our French Allies in the American Revolution. These materials will be housed in the old Custom House, through the courtesy of the de Grasse Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, who own the house. The exhibi-

tion will remain on view for several weeks. Some of the material has never been exhibited before and should have keen interest, not only for our members, but for the many visitors to Yorktown at this time of the year.

If sufficient interest is shown, it is proposed to charter busses leaving New York on Thursday, following in part the route of Lafayette to Yorktown.

We have been assured of the fullest cooperation by Mr. Elbert Cox, Superintendent of the Colonial National Historical Park at Yorktown, as well as other courtesies there and at Williamsburg.

Full details will be sent to our members later, but it would be of great help to the Committee if those who will be able to attend would notify our Secretary, Mr. Theodore E. Norton, Easton, Pennsylvania, as soon as possible.

The Committee on the Yorktown Meeting is composed of: Col. Louis Annin Ames, Chairman; George Weller Blow (owner of the Nelson House, Yorktown); Mrs. George Weller Blow; Mrs. George Durbin Chenoweth, Regent of the Comte de Grasse Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Yorktown; Elbert Cox, Superintendent of the Colonial Historical Park at Yorktown; Stuart W. Jackson; J. Bennett Nolan; and Dr. Earl G. Swem, Librarian of the College of William and Mary.

S. W. J.

## Publication Program

ON September 6th a meeting of the Executive Council was held in the New York City headquarters of President Kendall. Among other business there was a long discussion of possible publication activities for the Society. It was finally determined to publish a periodical, the GAZETTE, and a number of bound pamphlets and books (all subject to the limitation of

our available funds). The general field of our publications will be Lafayette and Franco-American relations during the era of Lafayette. President Kendall appointed a publications committee of Messrs. Chinard, Columbia, Gottschalk, Jackson, Monaghan (chairman) and Norton. All the publications of the Society will be sent, in consideration of the payment of the annual dues, to all active members of the Society. The associate members will receive copies of the GAZETTE. A limited number of our pamphlet and book publications will be made available for sale to the general public.

It is planned to issue three or four numbers of the GAZETTE during 1942. We welcome suggestions and contributions from our readers.

The first two items in the bound pamphlet series are being prepared. One will be a folio publication of some sixteen pages and will include a full-color reproduction of a magnificent map (18 by 13 inches) of Yorktown—drawn by Du Perron in October 1781. We are saving the details of this publication as a grand surprise for the next issue of the GAZETTE. The Editor would venture the opinion that this item alone would be (and will be) adequate proof that our publication program is well under way.

The second item will be a small book of some forty pages: the unpublished letters of Lafayette and his wife to Mr. and Mrs. John Jay. This will contain some twenty-three new social and political letters, with an introduction and notes by Professor Frank Monaghan of Yale.

The third item has not yet been fixed upon, but we have our choice of five excellent manuscripts. We are well under way. All communications concerning the GAZETTE and the other items of the publication program should be addressed to Dr. Frank Monaghan, 1927 Yale Station, New Haven, Conn.

## Princeton Meeting

LAST May the annual meeting of the American Friends of Lafayette was held at Princeton, N. J. It was an assemblage characterized by learning, hospitality and good cheer. At the luncheon there were three interesting and impressive speeches: Stuart W. Jackson on "The Origins and Aims of the American Friends of Lafayette"; Bernhard Knollenberg on "A Librarian-Lawyer Looks at Washington and the Revolution"; and Messmore Kendall on "Washington and Genet." Princeton hospitality more than upheld its ancient reputation. The Princeton University Library assembled a special exhibition of historical materials for the members of the Society.

New officers of the Society were elected: President: Messmore Kendall, of Dobbs Ferry and New York City; Vice-President: Louis Annin Ames of Essex Falls, N. J.; Secretary and Treasurer: Theodore E. Norton of Lafayette College, Easton, Pa.

An important resolution was passed by the members of the Society: "The American Friends of Lafayette reaffirm their belief in the ideals for which Lafayette fought in America. We are firmly confident that these ideals will triumph and will always remain the common ideals of America and France."

Some members thought that this resolution was a vague, if not timid, expression of opinion in view of the current world crisis. This feeling was gradually accentuated to the point that, at the next meeting of the executive council at Mr. Messmore Kendall's apartment in New York City, a more vigorous clarification was unanimously voted.

## Long Live Free France

WE are obviously not a political organization, but the members of the council felt that the present crisis represented a fundamental challenge—not of politics, but of basic ideals. The Council unanimously voted to send a telegraph message to President

Roosevelt reaffirming our belief in the ideals which motivated Lafayette and requesting that immediate and full aid be extended to the Free French forces fighting with General de Gaulle. Copies of the resolution were communicated to the principal news agencies and to the New York headquarters of the Free France movement.

M. Jacques de Sieres, personal representative of General de Gaulle in the United States, replied in part, under date of September 12: "The General, informed of your noble gesture, has sent us the following cable:

FOR MR. MESSMORE KENDALL: I ASK YOU TO THANK THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF LAFAYETTE FOR ITS DEMARCHE WITH REGARD TO PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, AND TO EXPRESS TO THE COUNCIL MY GRATITUDE FOR ITS ACTION IN FAVOR OF THE FREE FRENCH FORCES.

Your act fills us with the deepest gratitude. . . . An encouragement such as the resolution passed by your Executive Council adds to our ever-increasing confidence in final victory. . . . Please extend to the members of your organization my heartfelt thanks for their great assistance. At the present moment, we can only thank those, such as you, who seek to encourage us, but a time will come when we will prove that we are worthy of the faith entrusted in our leader and our cause."

## Membership

A MOST recent communication from Secretary Norton indicates that the Society now has 94 active members and approximately 800 associate members. With the recent action of the Executive Council in planning and establishing a publication program a new phase of our activities has begun and new interest has been created. We have added some fifteen new active members during the past nine or ten weeks. But these are not enough. Within the present year we should reach a minimum of 200 active members. If each present active member undertook to add merely one new

active member the goal would be easy. Active members secure, in partial return for their annual dues of \$5, all the publications of the Society. Tentative plans for 1942 include the publication of three bound pamphlets or books and three or four issues of the GAZETTE. Let every member get a new member. Applications for membership in the Society should be sent to Mr. Theodore E. Norton, Lafayette College, Easton, Pa.

## Things To Come

¶ IN future issues of the GAZETTE: a detailed program of the Yorktown Meeting, together with suggestions about what you ought to see in Virginia. Also some unpublished materials on the French at Yorktown. ¶ A bibliography of recent books on Franco-American relations during the era of Lafayette. ¶ Perhaps a few brief book notes, if we can find the necessary space. ¶ A description by our Secretary Norton of the Lafayette materials that are in the custody of Lafayette College. ¶ News of what our members are researching and writing. ¶ And, well, just what would you like to have in the next issue of your GAZETTE? (P.S. Have you become an active member of the Society and, if you are, did you get *that new member?*).

## Notes and Queries

ONE of the chief purposes of the GAZETTE is to keep all persons interested in working on Lafayette and his era in touch with each other. We hope that all such persons will become active members of the Society, but in any event we think we shall become the clearing house for all those who seek scholarly aid and who wish to give similar assistance. The Editor will try to set aside a column or two in each issue of the GAZETTE for notes and queries that fall within the scope of the interests of members of the Society. Please send your contributions in, but please be brief. Otherwise the Editor will get out a blue pencil—hoping to retain the sense, but determined to conserve space.

## An Unpublished Account of the Battle of Green Springs, Between Lafayette and Cornwallis, 1781, by a Participant.

THE following letter, written by Major William Galvan, a French officer serving under the Marquis de Lafayette in the Virginia campaign of 1781, is Galvan's version of his own exploit in the battle of Green Springs on July 6, 1781. The letter was written to Richard Peters, Secretary of the Board of War, who, as Galvan ought to have known, was a close friend of Anthony Wayne and was therefore not likely to be won over by Galvan's disparaging remarks concerning the commander of the Pennsylvanians. For Peters undoubtedly learned, perhaps before he received Galvan's account, that it was Wayne's quick thinking and daring that saved Galvan and the whole advance party from capture or annihilation. At any rate, Peters appears to have turned Galvan's letter over to Wayne, for it is still in the great collection of Wayne papers in The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The same day that Galvan forgot his modesty and penned this self-laudatory account, Lafayette, an eyewitness of the engagement, issued general orders which included the following: "The brilliant conduct of Major Galvan and the Continental detachment under his command, entitle them to applause." But Galvan was too impetuous to wait for the plaudits of his general to take effect upon Congress, the fountain head of commissions, or even to wait for his letter to Richard Peters to bring about the desired conclusion. On August 21 he sent a memorial to Congress and in November he importuned that long-suffering body with two additional letters. On December 14 Congress acted, doubtless in order to stop the flow of letters: "notwithstanding Congress entertain a just sense of the merit of Major Galvan, the good of the service will not permit his being promoted at this time."

A year later, on July 24, 1783, dis-

appointed in love as in war, Galvan spent the day cheerfully with his fellow-officers in the City Tavern in Philadelphia, but during the afternoon retired to his room, where, dressed in regimentals and seated before a mirror, he wrote farewells to William Bingham and two other friends and then committed suicide. "I march off," he wrote, "as gaily and almost as eagerly as when our friend Gen. Wayne sent me to attack Lord Cornwallis, and I hope I shall be more successful in outflanking love, than the British army."

JULIAN P. BOYD

Camp Near Norrell's Mill 8th July 1781

DEAR SIR

On the 3rd Instant the Marquis having received information that the enemy had evacuated Williamsburg and were marching to Jamestown, we left our Camp near New Kent Court house and proceeded to Norrell's Mill where we arrived the 5th. There we received intelligence that the greatest part of their army had crossed the river and in consequence the two brigades of Continentals moved off early on the 6th in order to attack what remained at James town. Our march which ought to have been and was really designed to be very rapid, happened however to be considerably retarded by the uncertainty, variety and contradiction of the reports that were brought. The intelligence was so fatally delusive as to induce the General to send back the whole of the Light Infantry and to leave behind the greatest part of the Pennsylvanians, so that we proceeded, only with a few riflemen, McPherson's legion of 80 men, Colonel Stuart's battalion, one field piece and the advance guard commanded by me as field officer of the day, the whole under General Wayne. About 2 o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived to a large brick house at the Green Springs where we halted to learn if possible exactly what number of the enemy were on this side of the river. Every report seeming to confirm that it was not considerable, we resolved to attack and advanced accordingly within a mile of the enemy's last incampment where we formed in a wood: Colonel Mercer with ten or twelve Volunteer Light Horse was sent to reconnoitre, and the riflemen were detached on our front where they kept firing at the small parties with which the enemy had covered their Number and their Dispositions. The Marquis, who was with us, had sent for the rest of the Continental Troops: the scattered firing of the riflemen (now and then returned by the advanced parties of the enemy) had continued for about two hours when on a sudden we heard a field piece firing towards our right. A little after the canon (*sic*) ceased

firing, and a report was brought that the piece was retreating, upon which I applied to General Wayne for permission to go and carry it off; this being granted and a regiment of Light Infantry commanded by Major Willis being arrived and sent to support me with a field piece under Capt. Savage, I moved towards the place where the firing had been heard: we soon came up with several parties of the riflemen from which I could learn nothing of the pretended retreating field piece, neither could they better inform me of the situation of the enemy, nor I see any part of their line; upon this I kept moving forward and met Col. Mercer whose horse had been killed and who, wounded himself, had the gallantry to guide my little column till we came in full sight of the British line. I found their left extended as far as I could see, a wood prevented my discovering much of their right, but from my prepossession of the inconsiderable number they had on this side, and from the great extension of their left, I judged that the extremity of their right flank could not be far distant and without further hesitation resolved to turn it. I therefore wheeled to the left and soon came to a large open field, where I perceived them drawn up and stretching out of my sight with a field piece opposite to me which had already begun to play. In this critical situation a retreat, when so far from the American line and only within 300 yards of the British was excessively dangerous; I knew that all our Continentals were sent for and would soon be up. I expected to be immediately reinforced by Major Willis and the artillery with him, therefore I determined to engage all what was before me, but to do it with less disadvantage and get out of the immediate direct fire of the artillery. I continued moving parallelly to their line and under their fire till I came to a skirt of wood that terminated the field I was in: there I wheeled to the right, came up within 60 yards of the enemy's line, displayed and begun a smart running fire. I found myself very much disappointed in seeing that Major Willis had not followed me. I immediately dispatched to desire him to come up and display at my right, but the movements of the enemy's left had obliged him to retreat, and I remained 15 minutes alone under the fire of the whole British line, which kept advancing at the same time, tho' very slowly. They being at last close to me and no support arriving, I formed my Party in column and retreated in an order which does honor to the American discipline. I soon met the Pennsylvania brigade advancing in line: I immediately wheeled my column about and placed my Self at their left flank to cover that point, considerably outflanked by the right of the enemy, and in this order we proceeded about thirty yards during which the enemy had halted and were pouring an immense fire upon us. I found that our step was slackening and together with Colonel [Josiah] Harmer, who commanded the regiment next to me, we endeavored to ani-

mate the troops to a brisker charge, but they halted and begun to fire. I displayed my little column a little obliquely to the left of Colonel Harmer and began to fire like the rest tho' I saw that this would be our ruin. Our stop encouraged the British and, tho' our fire was as brisk as could be expected from so small a line, they began to move rapidly upon us and the right of the Pennsylvanians to give way, the left followed, and the enemy making a devil of a noise of firing and huzzaing (tho' by the by they did not push on very fast) all on our side became a scene of confusion. I attempted two or three times to stop it, but our flight was too rapid to be checked. The Marquis who had been a close spectator of the whole affair ordered me to endeavour to rally the men in the rear of a marsh which was a most eligible spot, but the men that passed by were exhausted by the fatigue of the march, of the action and of the flight: I attempted with as little success to throw some riflemen in the brick house where we arrived a little after. It was at this place that the Marquis reestablished order and from it we marched in the night to Norrell's Mill. Capt. Savage saved his piece, the Pennsylvanians who had two lost them both, the horses having been shot: the slowness of the enemy's pursuit was very remarkable and must be owing to the great loss they suffered: ours does not exceed 120 killed and wounded, no officer among the former but great many among the latter; almost every field officer's horse killed or wounded. One of the Marquis's horses killed—not a man in the whole detachment was more exposed than him: the enemy have precipitately crossed the river, leaving our wounded on this side. They are apparently leaving this state.

It will not be improper to mention in honor of the System of Columns which I have endeavoured to promote in our army that to my manouevring wholly in that order I owe what may appear a little brilliant [*sic*] in my conduct that day: I must add that the novelty of seeing so small a body as mine moving along their line and in the very center of it, operated so surprisingly upon the enemy that they never attempted to advance a step upon me while I remained in that order, and we were encouraged to do it only when, after my displaying, they found out by the small volume of my fire what little they had to dread. I really believe that had the Pennsylvanians charged in columns by battalions well conducted the day would have been ours, though against four times our number.

You will not blame me, my Dear Sir, when opportunities of an officer distinguishing himself are so scarce, to make the best of this to claim a promotion which circumstances known to you intitle me to exclusive of this last affair. You may recollect that I was recommended twice by your board for a commission of Lt. Colonel, and that, when I received that of Major, both you and Colonel Grayson promised to recommend me for promotion in two or three months. I have waited

for opportunities, one has fortunately offered, and Congress are too wise to stifle the zeal of their servants by a neglect which I have already too long experienced. I beg that you will shew this letter to Colonel Grayson and join with him to lay a Memorial in my name before Congress and obtain me what I have both your words for. I hope Mr. Lovel who has already been so good to me will join you also. I have no time to write to him: Please to shew him this, and present my best respects to him.

I am with respect and sincere attachment  
Dear Sir

Your Most Obedient Humble  
Servant

GALVAN

P.S. I will take it as a particular favour from you to order one of my horses to be taken care of in the public stable.

## The Franco-American Review

MANY members of the Society were interested in the late and lamented historical quarterly, the *Franco-American Review*. Some were patrons, some were contributors, others were subscribers. After two full years of publication (eight issues) it was decided to suspend publication. It will be remembered that it was a mutual effort, by Americans and by Frenchmen, to finance and edit a co-operative publication. The bulk of the work (and the bulk of the finances) was the responsibility of the American Board. The efforts of the French editors became weaker and more confused; calamity was in the air of France and in the hearts of Frenchmen. The *Review* had attained a paid circulation of almost five hundred, but this was hardly enough to justify continuance beyond the promised experimental period of two years. The financial management reports, with some degree of pride, that the *Review* closed its books in the black and not the red. Subscribers received full refunds and the patrons for the second year received refunds of some seventy-five percent of the monies they had already contributed. This was typical of the integrity and good management with which the entire project was handled.

During the two years of its publication the *Review* presented many

valuable articles and numerous important documents. The remaining stock of copies of the magazine was given to the Yale University Library where they are available to any interested persons for a small fee. Orders should be addressed to Mr. Bernhard Knollenberg, Librarian (and a recent new active member of the Society), Yale University.

## Lafayette On The Air

THE Cavalcade of America, the coast-to-coast radio program sponsored by the DuPont Company, on January 12th, devoted an entire weekly broadcast to Lafayette. It was entitled "The Gentleman from Paris" and presented Charles Boyer in the title role. As far as we can discover this was the first time the Marquis has been made the principal character in a dramatic program of such wide importance. The estimated radio audience for the evening was between five and six million listeners. The script began with Lafayette's early interest in the American Revolution and ended with his first return to France. The script took some liberties with the facts, but the distortions were hardly apparent to the vast majority of the audience. All in all, it was an entertaining and inspiring radio play. For the benefit of members who collect all Lafayette materials your Editor is trying to arrange to secure a limited number of mimeographed copies of the script as broadcast. If you would like to have one please indicate your interest.

## Talleyrand In America

IT is good news for all students of Franco-American relations of the eighteenth century that the American Historical Association has agreed to publish "Talleyrand's Notes on European-American Business Relations" edited by Hans Huth and Wilma J. Pugh. The typescript of the manuscript, together with introduction and notes, is more than 250 pages. The letters and memoirs cover a period from June 10, 1794, to Jan. 12, 1796.