

"Humanity has won its
battle. Liberty now
has a country."
-Marquis de Lafayette

Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert du Mortier Lafayette was born to a noble French family in 1757. He was orphaned at the age of thirteen and became one of the wealthiest, eligible noblemen of France. The next year he was commissioned in the Musketeers. He was married at the age of fourteen and became an officer in the French army.

Even though his upbringing groomed him for service in the royal court he had other ideas of service. At the age of twenty, he set sail for the thirteen colonies to volunteer for the Continental Army. He became an officer and a hero of the War. He formed a strong father son relationship with George Washington and lasting bonds with his fellow officers. Lafayette would go on to participate in the French Revolution, continuing his dedication to bridging the gap between the aristocracy and proletariat.

Before his death in 1834, Lafayette returned to America for a much celebrated fifteen month tour of all twenty-four states.

Marquis de Lafayette
Jean-Antoine Houdon
Plaster
France, 20th Century
1967.04.001

Sculptor Jean-Antoine Houdon created a life masque of Lafayette in 1785 by placing layers of plaster of Paris over Lafayette's face. There are three versions created after the original, all of which in the Louvre Museum in Paris. The one exhibited here is a 20th c. Louvre-made copy. This later 1790 version replica hides Lafayette's well documented long sloping forehead with a wig.

Fraunces Tavern Museum Purchase

Fraunces Tavern® Museum “Lafayette” Exhibition Labels
May 2015 - June 2017

General Lafayette
John Ward Dunsmore
Oil on Canvas
America, 1936
1936.02.039

John W. Dunsmore was a late 19th c. early 20th c. illustrator. He was a member of the Museum's parent organization, Sons of the Revolution in the State of New York. Dunsmore's portrait of Lafayette gently illustrates the American Revolutionary War hero.

Gift of George A. Zabriskie Memorial, 1936

Gen. The Marquis De La Fayette
Jean Baptist Le Paon (1736-1785), Artist
Henry Bryan Hall (1808-1884), Engraver
William Pate, Plate Maker
Engraving
America, 1850-1900
1987.07.005

This print was made after Jean Baptiste Le Paon's 1783 painting of Lafayette after the Continental Armies victorious Siege of Yorktown in 1781. The original painting depicts Lafayette and enlisted Virginia slave, James Armistead who was a double agent under Lafayette. James was emancipated in 1787 and changed his name to James Armistead Lafayette.

Gift of Louis Bach

M. le Marquis de la Fayette
Philibert Louis DeBucourt (1755-1832)
Mezzotint Engraving
Paris, France, 1790
1986.08.010

This engraving depicts Lafayette wearing the uniform of the French National Guard, which he established in 1789. The National Guard's officers were known to be middle-class sympathizers. This engraving illustrates Lafayette's lifelong dedication to fighting for equality.

Gift of Stanley D. Scott

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M. De La Fayette
Anker Smith (1759-1819), Engraver
C. Foster, Publisher
Line Engraving
England, 1791
1987.01.037

This small portrait is a reproduction of the 1790 version exhibited to the left. It was printed in June of 1791 for the British publication, "Literary Magazine & British Review."

Gift of Louis L. Bach

Lafayette
Ary Scheffer (1795-1858), Artist
Jean Marie Leroux (1788-1870), Engraver
Line Engraving & Stipple
France, 1824
1988.05.008

This portrait of a sixty-five year old Lafayette is a reproduction of a 1822 French painting by Ary Scheffer that set the international image of an aged Lafayette. The original was reproduced in over sixty unique pieces. This exhibition includes four of them.

Gift of Elizabeth Ann De Shazo

Lafayette
Ary Scheffer (1795-1858), Artist
Henry Bryan Hall (1808-1884), Engraver
Stipple Engraving
America, 1822-1900
1987.07.003

This small portrait of a sixty-five year old Lafayette is an American reproduction of the 1822 French painting by Ary Scheffer.

Gift of Louis L. Bach

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Sash
Silk
France, 1700s
1915.01.001

This officer's sash belonged to Lafayette. It is told that he used it to bind a wound he sustained to the left leg during the Battle of Brandywine in September of 1777. What appears to be blood stains can be seen throughout the weave of the sash. Lafayette's wound would prevent him from further fighting until November of that year.

Gift of Dr. Edwin E. Swift

Certificate
America, 1778
MS52

In Pennsylvania during the early spring of 1777, a twenty-six year old Ambrose Walden entered military service with the Continental Army with the commission of Ensign. On March 14, 1778, Walden was promoted to the rank of First Lieutenant. This is Walden's Certificate of Allegiance to the United States, signed by Lafayette. If the British had won the War, this type of document would be proof of treason, resulting in the death penalty for Walden.

Fraunces Tavern Museum Collection

Calling Card
Engraving
France, 1820-1824
1941.04.001

Calling cards were commonly used in the 18th and 19th centuries as a way to notify someone you wished to call upon. With this card, Lafayette was calling the Hon. Lewis Condict, M.D. (1773-1862) of Morristown, New Jersey. Dr. Condict was a member of the New Jersey State Legislature and one of the Commissioners who settled the boundary dispute between New York and New Jersey. He was the Chairman of the Reception Committee to Lafayette at Morristown in 1825, for which he delivered the address to Lafayette on July 14, 1825.

Fraunces Tavern Museum Collection

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Pistols
Wood, Brass, Silver and Steel
France, fl. 1743
L1931.01.001a&b

This pair of officer's or gentleman's silver-mounted muzzle loading holster flintlock pistols is believed to have been presented by Lafayette to David Miller, whom it is told, used them in the Revolutionary War and War of 1812.

Fraunces Tavern Museum Collection

Letter
Paper & Ink
Washington, D.C., 1825
MS225

At the invitation of President James Monroe, Lafayette returned to America in August of 1824 with the intention of visiting the thirteen original states. He was so warmly received that he extended his visit fifteen months to allow for a visit to all twenty-four states. On August 12, 1825 Lafayette wrote this letter to the Mayor of Fredericksburg, Virginia Robert Lewis concerning his arrival. Robert Lewis was George Washington's nephew.

Gift of William Alexander Smith

Platter
James and Ralph Clews (1819-1836)
Glazed earthenware with transfer-printed decoration
Staffordshire, England
1949.01.001

During Lafayette's 1824-1825 American tour he visited all twenty-four states. After spending one night on Staten Island with Vice President Daniel Tompkins, Lafayette was ferried to New York City aboard the steamboat Chancellor Livingston on August 16, 1824. In the Battery, fifty thousand citizens welcomed the hero to Castle Garden with artillery salutes, martial music and the ringing of bells.

Gift of Harry C. Green, D.D.S.

Fraunces Tavern® Museum “Lafayette” Exhibition Labels
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Pill Slab
Maker unknown
Earthenware
England, 1825
1974.02.002

Pill slabs were used as a surface to combine medicinal ingredients and to roll pills. This pill slab has no wear on the face or back and was probably never used to make pills. Its only purpose may have been as decoration to celebrate Lafayette's 1824-1825 American tour.

Gift of Gerald R. Watland

Coffee Pot
Enoch Wood & Sons
Glazed earthenware with transfer-printed decoration
Staffordshire, England, 1824
1976.03.004a&b

Advances in ceramic technology around 1780 enabled English manufacturers to produce cheap pottery that resembled more expensive porcelain. Commemorative pieces like this coffee pot, which was part of a set were mass-produced.

Lafayette kept a cameo portrait of Benjamin Franklin in his estate, La Grange. He visited Franklin's tomb while on his American tour of 1824-1825. This pot commemorates that scene outside Philadelphia.

Given in memory of William B. Goodwin, SRNY member by his daughter, Mrs. James McKinley Rose

Commemorative Ribbon
H. Korn, Seller
Silk
Philadelphia, 1824
1935.02.001

During the nineteenth century, silk ribbons were a popular means of commemorating major events, political campaigns and the deaths of prominent public figures. Lafayette's 1824-1825 American tour was marked with numerous souvenirs, including this silk ribbon.

Donated by Dr. William H. Fox

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Badge

Maker unknown

Printed silk, with applied fabric and metal star

Philadelphia, 1834

1985.05.001

Lafayette's death on May 20, 1834 in Paris was marked in the United States by memorial parades, eulogies, and the marketing of souvenirs. This badge was produced for the memorial parade in Philadelphia on July 21, 1834 commemorating Lafayette's death. Mourning badges pinned to ones clothes were worn to publicly express grief.

Gift of Gary J. Stass

Funeral Honors to the Memory of La Fayette

Author unknown

Broadside

Albany, 1834

1984.07.002

This program was prepared for a funeral service for Lafayette that was held in Albany, New York on July 2, 1834. The hymns and odes were written to lament the death of Lafayette on May 20th of that year.

The Albany Female Academy was opened in 1814 by Ebenezer Foot because his wife insisted he build a school for their daughter before he would be allowed to build the Green Street Theater. It has continued to grow in recognition and enrollment over the centuries. It is still an active single-gender school.

Fraunces Tavern Museum Collection

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Jug
Richard Hall and Son, Ceramicist
Glazed earthenware
England, 1875
1976.03.003

George Washington and Lafayette were often placed together on commemorative souvenirs like this centennial jug because they were revered as heroes of the War for Independence and their extraordinarily close relationship mimicked that of a father and son. Washington never had biological children and Lafayette's father was killed when he was a child.

Given in memory of William B. Goodwin, SRNY member by his daughter, Mrs. James McKinley Rose

Ribbon
A.O. Crane & Co., Printer
Printed silk
Boston, 1875
1984.07.001

This ribbon was created to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill in 1875. For the centennial celebration, many Boston craftsmen produced commemorative items, like this ribbon, honoring the city's Revolutionary War history.

Fraunces Tavern Museum Collection