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LAFAYETTE IN AMERICA IN 1824 AND 1825

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO THE UNITED STATES

Unabridged English Translation by Alan R. Hoffman

Original Title: *Lafayette en Amérique en 1824 et 1825* - published in French in 1829

Author: Auguste Levasseur, Private Secretary to General Lafayette During His Trip

- **Lafayette was an American general at 19 and the “Hero of Yorktown”.**
- **Travel through America just 50 years after the American Revolution.**
- **Learn details of Lafayette’s private visits with the Founding Fathers.**
- **His enlightened views on slavery and the plight of Native Americans.**

Auguste Levasseur’s *Lafayette in America* is a journal of General Lafayette’s 1824-1825 Farewell Tour of all 24 United States. In this book, Lafayette’s private secretary describes how the now 67-year-old hero of the American Revolution and apostle of liberty in Europe was welcomed in an adoring frenzy by the American people. With its panoramic view of the young country – its burgeoning cities and towns, its technological innovations like the Erie Canal, and its industrious people – this book captures America on the cusp of its jubilee year.

A decade before Tocqueville, Levasseur came, observed and reported on the state of the American Republic. He describes the Americans’ enormous pride in the republican institutions created by the revolutionary generation and the ensuing growth and prosperity. He recounts their intense feeling of gratitude towards those who had won the republic, among whom Lafayette was the sole surviving major general of the Continental Army.

Levasseur also chronicles Lafayette’s affectionate visits with his old friends John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe and John Quincy Adams, and his encounter with Senator Andrew Jackson. A keen observer, Levasseur gives us a sense of the characters of these men who, with Lafayette’s paternal friend George Washington, led the United States through its first six decades.

ALAN R. HOFFMAN, translator, holds a B.A. degree in history from Yale University and a J.D. degree from Harvard Law School. He lives in southern New Hampshire and practices law in Boston. Passionate about American history and Lafayette, he spent three years working on this first unabridged English translation of Levasseur’s journal and readying it for publication. He is a member of the American Friends of Lafayette and the Massachusetts Lafayette Society, and he lectures on Lafayette.

Auguste Levasseur, author, was a young French officer who was involved in conspiratorial activity against the Bourbon Monarchy in the early 1820’s. After serving as Lafayette’s private secretary and writing this journal, he was involved in the Revolution of 1830 and later served in a diplomatic post under King Louis-Phillipe.

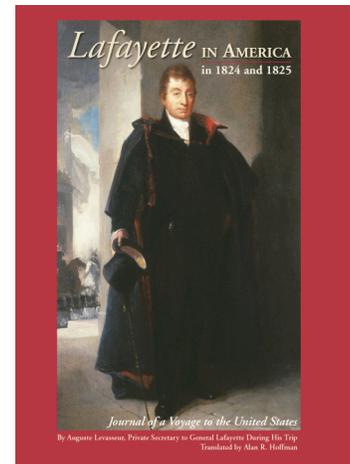
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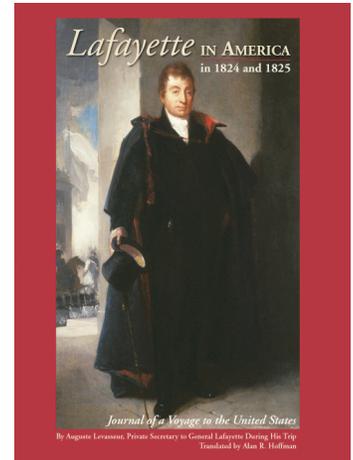
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Advance Reader's Comments

“Alan R. Hoffman has made a very great contribution with his translation of Levasseur’s Journal.”

David McCullough, author of *1776, John Adams and Truman*



“Alan R. Hoffman has done a masterful job of reacquainting us with a classic text that deserves wider recognition. Auguste Levasseur’s account of Lafayette’s visit to America in 1824-25 is a ringside seat at one of the great events in American social and cultural history. Through this **fine new English translation**, we are able to come along as Lafayette travels to all twenty-four states in the Union, accepts the adulation of a nation, and has adventures aplenty, including a harrowing shipwreck. What makes the account all the more valuable as a commentary on America is that it reveals how very fitting was Lafayette’s sobriquet ‘The Nation’s Guest’, as he insisted on spending time not just with the country’s elite, but also with ordinary citizens, African Americans, and American Indians.”

Diane Windham Shaw, Special Collections Librarian, Lafayette College

“Levasseur’s journal offers a **lively, day-to-day account of a European’s experience of the United States in the fiftieth year of independence**. As he relates the details of what he saw and heard, his encounters and conversations with people of all kinds, the enthusiasm of the great crowds that welcomed Lafayette, the reader gains a sense of how close Americans still felt to their Revolution and how proud they were of what they had done.”

Edmund S. Morgan, Sterling Professor of History, Emeritus, Yale University

“I found the translation to be easily read and was **struck by the consistency in the narrative...I was impressed by the elegant prose presented throughout.**”

Emily A. Graefe, Legal Assistant, BC Law School student, Class of 2010

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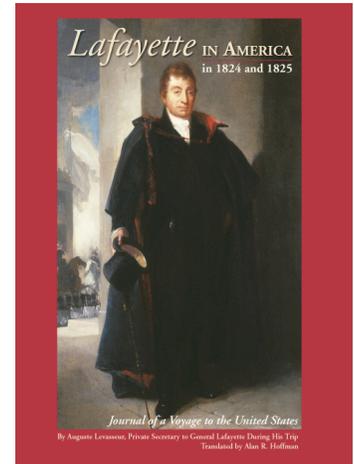
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Q & A with the Translator - Alan R. Hoffman

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How did you become interested in General Lafayette and what made you want to translate this work?

I have always had an overriding interest in the Revolutionary period, but I had only a vague notion of who Lafayette was until 2002. Upon reading a book, which contained a chapter about Lafayette's 1824-1825 visit, I became very interested in Lafayette and I tried to read everything I could get my hands on. I found Levasseur's journal only in the original French, so I decided to translate it. One reason I wanted to get the translation published was because this man, General Lafayette, was one of the greatest men of his time and is underappreciated today.

What was it like when you realized you could still read French and had an opportunity to restore your hero's rightful place in history?

When I picked up the French edition and could read it, I was quite surprised because I hadn't read French for many years. When I decided to do the translation, it was at first a hobby. Over a two-year period the stack of hand-written pages of the translation reached nearly eight inches high. During this time, I decided to publish.

There were some typos and unusual grammatical choices that you changed. How did you decide what to change and what to leave in its original form?

It was a judgment call. For example, Levasseur had an affinity for the semicolon. There would be numerous clauses separated by semicolons, and then he'd start a new thought without any period and continue with another string of clauses separated by semicolons. The meaning would get lost. I often broke up these strings of clauses with periods. I sometimes "re-paragraphed" to make Levasseur's meaning clearer.

You've called General Lafayette a 19th-century superstar. We learn from your book that he was closely associated with our first six presidents. Why was he so well liked?

Lafayette had "star" quality. He was self-effacing, charming and charismatic. When he arrived in America in 1777, he announced that he was there "to learn, not to teach." Lafayette impressed George Washington and other generals in battle, as well as in war councils. He had very close friendships with at least nine of the Founding Fathers. Washington considered Lafayette as his adopted son and Lafayette named his own son after his paternal friend.

Lafayette has been described as the first international abolitionist and was also loved by Native Americans. How was he able to connect with the different demographics?

For a man who was raised a member of the nobility, he definitely had the common touch. He was receptive to all people. If I were to do another book on him, I think the focus would be his relations with Native Americans and African Americans. He was a hero to all. Everywhere he went people wanted to shake his hand; to touch him.

What would you most like people to understand about Lafayette?

I would like to restore Lafayette to his rightfully high place in the pantheon of American heroes. I hope that by spreading the story of Lafayette on his Farewell Tour, as well as the history of the Revolution as told in Levasseur's flashbacks, this book will help to highlight his unique place in American history.

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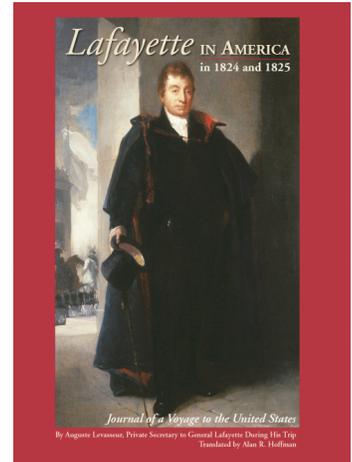
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Talking Points - 2007 is The Year of Lafayette!

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• September 6, 2007 is the 250th anniversary of Lafayette's birth. An exhibition entitled "A Son and His Adopted Father, the Marquis de Lafayette and George Washington," began in 10/06 at Mount Vernon, moves to Lafayette College in 08/07 and then will travel to the New York Historical Society in 11/07, closing in 03/08. **The jacket image, a portrait of Lafayette painted in 1826 by Thomas Sully, is a featured painting in the exhibition.**



- As the "Hero of Yorktown", Lafayette helped to end the American Revolution. During his Farewell Tour, "The Nation's Guest," as Lafayette was called, was beloved by all Americans, from the common people to the elite. Today over twenty cities and towns, plus thousands of roads, parks and squares, are named for him, as is Mount Lafayette in New Hampshire's Presidential Range and Lafayette College in Easton, PA.
- Lafayette came to America in 1777 at age 19 and was commissioned as a Major General in the Continental Army. George Washington was Lafayette's paternal friend and godfather to his son. Lafayette's face appeared, second only to Washington's, on many denominations of paper money in the 1800's. At least three commemorative stamps for Lafayette have been issued by the Post Office, in 1952, 1957 and 1977.
- Lafayette's intense lobbying on our behalf in France, in 1779 and early 1780, was a major factor in the decision by the French Ministry to send 5,000 troops and a portion of the French fleet to Newport in 1780, and to dispatch the French fleet from the West Indies with additional troops in 1781. Without the French forces, there would have been no victory at Yorktown, and we might still be singing "God Save The Queen".
- Lafayette was a friend and associate of our first six Presidents - Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and John Quincy Adams - as well as other Founding Fathers like Franklin, Hamilton and Thomas Paine.
- Lafayette is described by one historian as the first international abolitionist. He was a member of abolitionist societies in England, France and America. In 1783, he proposed to George Washington that they buy a plantation and free all the slaves as an example which others would follow. He later did just that in Cayenne, now French Guiana.
- During a 1784 visit to America, Lafayette facilitated the negotiation of the Treaty of the Six Nations between the Iroquois and the US. He was treated as a beloved father by the Creeks when he visited "Creek Nation" in 1825. After he ferried across the Chatahouchee River, Creek warriors refused to allow his feet to touch the moist soil on the riverbank and carried him from the boat to dry land in a small carriage.

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