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Lafayette Farewell tour by Marquis de Lafayette was like visit by rock stars, pope

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Posted: Sunday, May 4, 2014 2:00 am

By Ed Waters Jr. News-Post Staff | [0 comments](#)



The Marquis de Lafayette visited Frederick as part of his farewell tour of 1824-25. The tour was the subject of a talk Saturday afternoon by Alan Hoffman at All Saints' Episcopal Church in Frederick.



Posted on May 4, 2014 by Ed Waters Jr. His visit was equated to that of the Beatles and Pope John Paul II coming to the United States.

States.

The Marquis de Lafayette, who as a 19-year-old nobleman had used his own funds for a ship and troops to come to the aid of the colonies fighting the British, returned in 1824-25 for a farewell tour at the age of 67. Lafayette would die in 1834.

Alan Hoffman, an attorney who lives in New Hampshire but practices law in Boston, described Lafayette's triumphant tour Saturday afternoon to a large crowd at All Saints Episcopal Church in Frederick. Hoffman is the first scholar to complete an unabridged translation of the journal of Lafayette's tour from French to English.

"Lafayette in America in 1824 and 1825: Journal of a Voyage to the United States" was published in 2006. Following Lafayette's farewell tour, Hoffman is visiting the same 24 states the French visitor did.

"I've been to 19 states and Washington, D.C.," Hoffman said in an interview before the presentation. He has made 120 presentations on his book since 2007.

Hoffman said he read a book in 2002 that described the 50th anniversary of the founding of the U.S. The book noted Lafayette's tour and sparked Hoffman's interest to become a scholar of the French nobleman and general.

Hoffman said it was his first visit to Frederick, where Lafayette, at age 67, stayed Dec. 29-31, 1824, at the home of Col. John McPherson, known now as the McPherson-Ross House at 105 Council St.

Lafayette especially liked Baltimore, where he visited seven times during his tour, spending a total of 19 days.

Theresa Michel, who resides in the McPherson-Ross House and is a member of Preservation Maryland, said the

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visit by Hoffman was aided by several groups such as American Friends of Lafayette and the French embassy. Michel invited folks to her home after Hoffman's presentation.

Michel noted the journal shows the close relationship Lafayette retained with the remaining founding fathers on his farewell tour. The visitor had watched a game of lacrosse among Indians in Alabama and promoted the end of slavery in the new nation.

During Lafayette's visit to South Carolina, Hoffman said, slaves and freed blacks were kept away from the general's visit. But one older black gentleman entered the meeting place and Lafayette remembered the man as fighting alongside white soldiers.

"He was treated like a conquering hero in each state," Hoffman said of Lafayette, like the Beatles or Pope John Paul II visits to the U.S. Lafayette's image appeared on private bank currency, an image only surpassed in volume by that of George Washington.

Souvenir makers quickly sprang up as the general came to each town with flags, ribbons, even ladies gloves with Lafayette's image on them. President Woodrow Wilson used the history of Lafayette's support of the colonies in their fight to convince America to go into World War II to save France.

During the Revolutionary War, Lafayette had fought bravely and was wounded in the leg at the Battle of Brandywine, Pennsylvania, but continued to fight with the colonists.

Edward Carl, who wrote about Lafayette's visit for a Hood College course that was published in the Historical Society of Frederick's Journal, said the French general promoted economic development and his ideas were adopted by Americans pushing westward and prospering, in an interview prior to the presentation.

During Lafayette's visit, he was seen by about 3 million people, or about one-quarter of the population of the United States at the time.

John Fieseler, executive director of the Tourism Council of Frederick County, said there are visitors who come to Frederick to see the Hessian Barracks and other things from the Revolutionary War, during an interview after the presentation. The Civil War is a major draw for tourists, but there are those who also are interested in the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Spanish American War and other historical events and Frederick's ties to those events.

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Lafayette

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