

General Marquis de La Fayette

Fayette County was one of the original three counties formed when Kentucky County, Virginia was divided by the Virginia Act in 1780 (the other two were Jefferson and Lincoln counties). Fayette County It was reduced to its present boundaries in 1799. The county is named for the Marquis de Lafayette.

French aristocrat Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert du Motier, marquis de Lafayette, fought with American colonists against the British and, as a leader of the liberal aristocrats and outspoken advocate of religious toleration, was a powerful influence in the first few years of the French Revolution.

Where and when La Fayette was made a Mason is not known. There are at least two different versions. One account suggests he was made a Mason in France before coming to the America. Another is that he was made a Mason in a military lodge at Valley Forge.

When La Fayette made his last visit to the United States in 1825, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania received him with distinguished honors, but before doing so appointed a committee to investigate and report upon his Masonic regularity. The committee reported that they had made careful investigation and were fully satisfied, but unfortunately their report gave no information whatever as to the evidence upon which this conclusion was based

A rare 18th century program of the inauguration of Lodge St. Jean de la Candeur in Paris in December, 1775 was discovered in 1941. The program invited to the inauguration ceremonies "the Honorary, Regular and Subordinate Officers, and Deputies, of all Lodges composing the Grand Orient of France, and all brethren who could be recommended as regular Masons." Special notation in the program were 100 French soldiers who were invited and present. The Marquis de Lafayette is listed among the visiting Brethren. While this seems to establish conclusively that Lafayette was a Mason in 1775 before coming to America, it leaves unanswered the question of when and where he was made a Mason.



The 22 year old La Fayette arrived in American 1777. He volunteered for service in the colonial army and Benjamin Franklin recommended him to Washington's command. La Fayette served without pay and was assigned to Washington's staff where he eventually was given combat command and fought in several major engagements. He became a lifelong friend with Washington.

Following the war he returned to France and following a long career of soldiering and politics, returned to America in 1824-25 where he visited all states except Georgia. He was hailed as a hero of the revolution and banquets were held in his honor throughout his tour.

A banquet was held in his honor at the at the Grand Masonic Hall in Lexington when he visited in May 1825. The last surviving general of the American Revolution was elaborately entertained for dinner and breakfast the next morning.

In 1825 he became the first person granted honorary United States citizenship by Congress. When he returned to France he took with him a container of American soil. Upon his death, at at his instructions to be buried in American and French soil, the contents of the container was mixed with the French soil in which he was buried.

