

Bro. General La Fayette, Mason

As I have said frequently, one of the most prolific sources of information for the Masonic Philatelist is what might be regarded as "dry" reading—proceedings of a Grand Lodge. Scanning some old numbers of the Grand Lodge of Illinois, here is what I found.

In the 1883 volume there is an account taken from the Tennessee proceedings of that year. On May 4, 1825, Bro. Gen. Lafayette visited Nashville and was introduced to the Grand Lodge by Bro. (President) Andrew Jackson, P.G.M., given the grand honors and seated at the right hand of the Grand Master. To him, the then Grand Master said:

"The Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons of Tennessee, with all brotherly affection, tender you their sincere congratulations, and bid you welcome. They feel an equal pride and pleasure in recognizing you as a brother, and in receiving within these consecrated walls the early friend and companion of the illustrious and venerated Washington, with whom the name of Lafayette will be transmitted to the latest posterity, inscribed upon the imperishable rolls of a glorious immortality."

Commenting on that event, the 1883 Tennessee proceedings said: "What a glorious day for the Masons of Tennessee! There sat side by side within the Grand Lodge, Jackson and Lafayette. Jackson, the grandest man of his day, the soldier of iron-hearted valor, the successful defender of his country's rights; Lafayette, the daring and heroic young Frenchman, who of all others was most beloved by the people of America. Prominent Masons from all over the State had assembled there, being drawn hither by the interesting events then transpiring . . . What Mason can now, at this remote day, look upon this scene without feelings of pride?"

Where Lafayette was made a Mason has not been established. This is believed to have occurred in an Army Lodge at Valley Forge. He was an honorary member of the Grand Lodges of Delaware, Tennessee and New Hampshire and of Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 (Washington's own). He was exalted in Jerusalem Chapter No. 8, R.A.M., New York and knighted in Morton Encampment No. 4, K.T., New York. He was also a Scottish Rite Mason.

Bro. Gen. Lafayette frequently spoke of Freemasonry. On one occasion, he said: "Freemasonry is an order whose leading star is philanthropy, and whose tenets inculcate an increasing devotion to the cause of virtue and mortality.

Past Grand Master Bert S. Lee of Missouri adds the information that Lafayette is one of the three honorary P.G.M.'s of the Grand Lodge of Missouri and that he attended the Grand Lodge on his visit to the U.S.

Grand Secretary T. E. Doss of Tennessee adds that the records of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee indicate that Lafayette was the only Mason ever elected to honorary membership in that Grand Lodge.

—J. A. M.



Gen. Marquis de Lafayette
"Brother Protector" O.E.S.

From the July, 1957 issue of the EMPIRE STATE MASON, we glean the following and interesting sidelight of Bro. Gen. Lafayette, the Mason. "The Ancient and Honorable Order of the Eastern Star," established prior to 1793, was introduced into the Colonies by General Lafayette, who is recorded in the "Thesaurus" as a "Brother Protector," the title given to Master Mason members.

La Fayette, His Biography

LA FAYETTE, MARIE JOSEPH PAUL YVES ROCH GILBERT du MOTIER, Marquis de, (1757-1834) born at the Chateau of Chavaniac in Auvergne, France, Sept. 6, 1757. At 13 orphaned, but a very, very rich orphan. At 16, married Marie Adrienne Fraicoise de Noailles.

Was Capt. of Dragoons when English colonics in America proclaimed their independenc. He later wrote in his memoirs "at the first news of this quarrel, my heart was enrolled in it."

On Dec. 7, 1776, an arrangement was made by which La Fayette was to enter the American Armed Service as a major-general. When the British learned that he was fitting out a ship at Bordeaux with arms, their ambassador asked for the arrest of La Fayette, which was effected but he escaped from custody in disguise, and sailed from a port in Spain, where his ship had been sent from Bordeaux. He landed near Georgetown, S. Carolina and from there went to Philadelphia.

At 19, he presented himself to Congress and asked for the highest rank after the Commander-in-Chief. This refused, he offered himself as a simple volunteer, but because of his zeal, illustrious family and connections, he was given the rank of major general. (Even in the early days, one could pull rank.) The next day, La Fayette met George Washington and they became lifelong friends.

In his first battle, Brandywine, Sept. 11, 1777, he was wounded. When he recovered he secured command of a division as a result of a communication from Washington to Congress, Nov. 1, 1777.

Early in 1778 he commanded troops detailed for the Canadian Expedition. His retreat from Barren Hill, May 28, 1778 was considered masterly and he fought at Monmouth on June 28. After England declared war on France Feb. 6, 1778, La Fayette asked permission to re-visit France, which he did on Jan. 11, 1779 and remained away 6 months. The battle of Yorktown terminated his military career in the U.S.

He then returned to France where he was active in securing a general peace. In 1781, he was promoted to the rank of Marechal de Camp (major general) in the French Army. In 1784, he re-visited the U.S. as a guest of the nation.

In 1787, La Fayette joined the Assembly of Notables and became a leader in the French Revolution. On July 11, 1789 he presented to the National Assembly, a declaration of rights, modelled on Jefferson's Declaration of Independence of 1776. By acclamation, on the second day of the new regime, La Fayette was chosen colonel-general of the new National Guard of Paris. It was he who proposed the combination of colours of Paris, red and blue and the royal white into the tri-color cockade of Modern France.

In the Constituent Assembly he pleaded for the abolition of arbitrary imprisonment, for religious tolerance; for popular representation; for trial by jury; for emancipation of slaves; freedom of the press; abolition of titles of nobility and the suppression of privileged orders. He was the friend of liberty, as well as of order and when Louis XVI fled to Varennes, he issued orders to stop him. Shortly after he was made lieutenant-general in the army, he retired to private life.

However, in 1791, when three armies were formed to attack Austria, La Fayette was placed in command of one of them. But when he definitely opposed himself to the further advance of the Jacobin party in 1792, the assembly declared him a traitor. He fled to Liege, where, as one of the prime movers of the Revolution, he was taken and held as a prisoner of state for 5 years; first in Prussia and afterward in Austrian prisons. Napoleon stipulated in the treaty of Campo Formio (1797) for La Fayette's release. He lived in retirement during the First Empire but returned to public affairs under the First Restoration and he took part in the political events of the Hundred Days. From 1818-1824, he was deputy for the Sarthe, speaking and voting on the Liberal side.

He re-visited America in 1824 where he was over-whelmed with popular applause and was voted the sum of \$200,000 and a township of land. When he returned to France in 1825, he sat in the Chamber of Deputies for Meaux. During the Revolution of 1830 he took command of the National Guard. In 1834, he made his last speech—on behalf of Polish political refugees. He died on May 20, 1834.

THE APRON

The beautiful apron that appears on the cachets commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the birth of Brother General Marquis de Lafayette, were reproduced and sent to various Lodges in 1902. This is the letter that accompanied each such apron:

GRAND LODGE OF PENNSYLVANIA,
F. & A. M.
Celebration of the Sesqui-Centennial
Anniversary of Washington's
Initiation as a Free Mason
To be held at Philadelphia on Wednesday,
November the 5th A.D.
1902; A. L. 5902
Masonic Temple, Philadelphia
October 22, AD 1902; AL 5902
To the Worshipful Master, Officers
and Brethren of Lodge No.

Dear Sirs and Brethren:

Herewith is sent to your Lodge, a reproduction on Satin of the Masonic apron which Madame de Lafayette worked on white satin with colored silks, and which her husband, Brother the Marquis de Lafayette presented to Washington, when he visited Mount Vernon, in August 1784.

After Washington's death, this apron was presented by his legatees, in 1816, to the Washington Benevolent Society of Philadelphia, and when that Society dissolved in 1829, it was presented to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. From the original apron, which is carefully preserved in the Library of the Grand Lodge, the Committee of Arrangements have had the reproduction made; in order to preserve it, it might be well to have it suitably framed.

For the Committee

John M. Lambertson
Secretary
Edgar A. Tennis
Grand Master, Chairman

Apron presented to Bro. Washington
by Bro. La Fayette.



After the painting by Court which is in the Versailles Museum in France is the design by Ervine Metzler for the 3¢ LaFayette issue for Sept. 6.



Reference: MP. Vol. 14, No. 1, August – September 1957

Photo presentation on the next page.





John Ward Dunsmore's depiction of La Fayette (right) and Washington at Valley Forge.



La Fayette and Washington at Mt. Vernon, 1784.