



The Massachusetts Lafayette Society Newsletter

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President's Letter – January 2016



Dear Friend of Lafayette,

Last year, which saw Lafayette's 258th birthday, was a milestone in the trajectory of Lafayette's posthumous reputation, and the Massachusetts Lafayette Society played its part.

Fueled by the voyage of *L'Hermione* and the work of The Hermione-Lafayette Association, Lafayette's life and career were placed on center stage on the east coast where the replica frigate made stops and drew crowds of thousands in many important port cities including Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Boston. The prospect of the *Hermione's* visit generated other commemorative activity tending to educate the public about Lafayette's important role in the American Revolution. Yorktown, the mandated inclusion of Lafayette in the 4th and 5th grade curriculum in Virginia, and the creation of Virginia's "Lafayette Day" commemorating Lafayette's arrival in the Commonwealth to commence the famous Virginia Campaign. Thus, following Massachusetts in 1935 and New Hampshire in the 1950's, the Old Dominion became the third state to honor Lafayette in this way. By the end of 2015, three new historical treatments of Lafayette arrived. One of them, entitled "Lafayette and the Not So United States" by TV and radio celebrity Sarah Vowell actually hit the *NY Times* best-seller list last Fall. Not since 2007, the 250th anniversary of Lafayette's birth, has America celebrated Lafayette to this extent.

Two of the MLS's events this year focused on Lafayette and the *Hermione*. On May 2, we commemorated Lafayette's arrival aboard the *Hermione* in Boston in 1780 carrying the news that the French Expeditionary Force was coming on the every spot where the frigate docked. See first article below. On July 11, along with our partners, the Shirley-Eustis House and the Lexington Minutemen, we took a below-



President Hoffman gives a gift to the
Captain of *L'Hermione*.



deck tour of the ship, repaired to the SEH for a reception and tour of the Lafayette bedroom and heard Dr. Robert Selig talk about the W3R routes of the French Army as well as of Lafayette's prequel route from Boston where he disembarked on April 28, 1780 and traveled to Washington's headquarters in Morristown, New Jersey. See third article below.

On May 20, we conducted our Lafayette Day ceremonies at the Boston Athenaeum, laid a wreath at the Lafayette Monument in the Lafayette Mall, which runs parallel to Tremont Street, and had our traditional luncheon and speaker at the Union Club. See second article below.

We are planning a number of events in the first half of 2016. On Thursday, March 17, we will visit the Royal Mansion in Medford, with its original slave quarters, to hear and see Board member Rich Detwiller's "Lafayette Faces and Places" slide talk. On May 20, we will celebrate Massachusetts Lafayette Day and be greeted by the new Consul General, Valéry Freland. During the weekend of June 9 to June 12, MLS members will have the opportunity to join the American Friends of Lafayette who are holding their annual meeting in Boston where Samuel Adams organized the American Revolution, where the Battles of Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill pushed the Colonies to the point of no return and where Faneuil Hall became known as the "Cradle of Liberty." As Lafayette visited all these places during the Farewell Tour, so will we.

Best regards,

Alan R. Hoffman, President



L'Hermione



May 2 Commemoration of the Arrival of *L’Hermione*

by David Noonan

On a sunny – albeit windy - May 2, 2015, the Massachusetts Lafayette Society, W2R-US - the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route – the U.S. Park Service joined with dozens of invited guests to celebrate the unveiling of a (stand-in) informational panel* on Hancock’s Wharf,** the site of the ancient Boston wharf where the young Marquis de La Fayette disembarked from the 34–gun French frigate *l’Hermione* on April 28, 1780, carrying secret dispatches from King Louis XVI to General George Washington.

Distinguished representatives and guests from New England patriotic and military organizations, including the French Consul General at Boston, the 73th Commander of the American frigate U.S.S. Constitution, “Old Ironsides”- and the Deputy Superintendent of the Boston National Historical Park, joined the neighborhood, North End, and public at large in participating in the colorful and historic event.



Lexington Minutemen.

After a formal military “presentation of arms,” by the Lexington Minutemen, and playing of the American and French national anthems, Alan Hoffman - who is a noted expert on LaFayette’s many visits to America and who serves as President of the Massachusetts LaFayette Society, as well as the national American Friends of Lafayette, gave a

explanatory overview about the “stand-in” panel project, and history of the event’s sponsoring organizations.

Letters of congratulations from Massachusetts Governor Charles Baker and Boston Mayor Martin Walsh, were read by Board members Bill Dunham and David Noonan, Jr., and a special communication from Count Gilbert de Pusy de Lafayette in Paris was read by guest Michele Vlahos.



MC David Noonan and Board Members.

French Consul General Fabien Fleschi read excerpts from “Vergenne’s Instruction to Lafayette” - now in the French National Archives - and there were readings from other historic correspondences and histories: “*L’Hermione*’s Arrival At Marblehead,” “Lafayette’s Letter to Washington Upon Arrival at Boston Harbor,” “A Letter From General Washington to Captain LaTouche, “Hancock’s Wharf,” “A Full Newspaper Account of Lafayette’s Arrival in Boston,” “Lafayette’s Letter to His Wife,” “Visits to Town Hall,” and “Lafayette’s Lodgings on State Street” were read by Commander Sean Kearns, Assistant Superintendent Giles Parker, Society President Hoffman and Board Members Debbi Bouras, Rick Detwiller, Bill Dunham, David Noonan, Jr., Myriam Zuber, and new MLS member Jason Tigano.



Special Guest Speaker, David Lincoln Ross, Editorial Director, Friends of Hermione-Lafayette in America, gave a brief history of the *L'Hermione*'s rebirth in Rochefort, France, and proffered an invitation to visit it at Rowe's Wharf in Boston on July 11th and 12th.

The Consul General, MLS President Hoffman, and Commander Kearns then unveiled the "stand-in" panel followed by a gun salute and cheers that reverberated down the harbor.



Consul General Fieschi and Commander Kearns unveil the Interpretive Panel.

* "stand-in" panel: The Hancock's Wharf property is soon to be developed. The permanent panel will be mounted once the new hotel is built. A special thank you to Philip DeNormandie of The DeNormandie Companies who gave us permission to erect the panel.

**Hancock's Wharf was a dock on the [waterfront](#) of [Boston](#) in the 1700s owned by [John Hancock](#) and previously his uncle, [Thomas Hancock](#). The wharf was originally known as Clark's Wharf, named after Thomas Clark. Up until the construction of Long Wharf in 1710, this was the largest and busiest wharf in Boston. In 1761 it became the property of Thomas Hancock, John Hancock's uncle. In 1764 John bought a warehouse and store on this wharf. Hancock's Wharf began from near the foot of Fleet Street and the junction of Fish and Ship Streets. Both of the latter streets are now roughly the present-day Commercial Street. The site is now occupied by Lewis Wharf built between 1836-40, as were the handsome granite structures that still stand upon it.

Boston: Massachusetts Lafayette Day May 20, 2015

by Jerry Meekins and Bill Dunham

The Massachusetts Lafayette Society (MLS) hosted its annual program starting from the Bayard Henry Long Room of the Boston Athenaeum.

President Hoffman has cultivated a special partnership with the leadership of the Boston Athenaeum in recent years. In addition to providing a wonderful venue for our May 20 event, they hosted in the summer of 2015 a special Lafayette Painting Exhibition in honor of the arrival of the replica of the Lafayette ship *Hermione* to Boston. Also the Athenaeum considers its Jean-Antoine Houdon bust of Lafayette to one of its brightest stars! The collection also includes a plaster bust of George Washington by Houdon; *Lafayette, Washington* – and *Franklin* – came from Thomas Jefferson's

Monticello through the Coolidge family of Massachusetts.



Houdin Bust of Washington.



The dais consisted of Polly Lyman, Board Member of the Massachusetts Lafayette Society, Brigadier General Len Kondratiuk, Alan Hoffman, President, Fabien Fieschi, Consul General, Richard Blumenthal, Headmaster, International School of Boston, David Dearing, Curator, Boston Athenaeum.



President Hoffman addresses the audience.

Agenda:

Presentation of the Colors by the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts.

National Anthems performed by The International School of Boston Chorus.

Reading of the Massachusetts Lafayette Day proclamation in French and English.

Alan Hoffman's Address to the Group on Lafayette's Important Role in the Franco-American Alliance in the American Revolution.

Consul General, Fabien Fieschi, Legion of Honor medal presentation to WWII veteran, PFC Filios, combat medic.

David B. Dearing, Ph.D. Susan Morse Hills Curator of Paintings & Sculpture and Director of Exhibitions, describing the Lafayette Exhibition at the Athenaeum.



Consul General Fieschi awards the Legion of Honor Medal to WWII Veteran PFC Filios.

At the conclusion of this segment, there was the procession to the Lafayette Mall for the laying of a wreath at the Lafayette Monument in the Boston Common.



Rick Detwiller, the Consul, Lexington Minuteman Bill Poole, and Polly Lyman.

Many of our group went to the Oak Room of the nearby Union Club for a luncheon. The Guest Speaker was Professor John Stauffer, Professor of English and African and African-American Studies at Harvard University. He spoke about Lafayette's influence on Boston's Abolitionists, focusing on the influence on Charles Sumner who was a great admirer of General Lafayette.

This concluded this year's celebration.



Lafayette-Hermione Event at the Shirley-Eustis House

By Frederic C. Detwiller

Members of the Massachusetts Lafayette Society and Shirley-Eustis House Association enjoyed a special below-decks tour on the morning of July 11, 2015 of Lafayette's ship *Hermione* at Rowe's Wharf in Boston. At noon, guests returned to the Governors Shirley-Eustis House for a luncheon hosted by SEHA President Archer O'Reilly and Executive Director Patti Violette along with volunteer board members. Visitors were allowed to tour the house including the recently-restored Lafayette Bed Chamber where he stayed in 1824. Lafayette's visit to the house overnight on August 23-24, 1824 and his subsequent dinner with Massachusetts Governor William Eustis and other dignitaries on Aug. 27th are documented by numerous sources. See the account of Mrs. Eustis whose husband surprised her with his request to prepare a dinner party on the morning of the 24th.

The Lafayette Chamber's period restoration was described by Furnishings Committee Chair Rick Detwiller to attendees who included the Lexington Minutemen and other visitors. The present Count Lafayette, who dined with the Captain of the *Hermione* that day, was able to visit to see the Lafayette Chamber a day later. The original shaving glass mirror used by Lafayette on its stand on the dresser belongs to the Massachusetts Lafayette Society and the SEHA. The bed in which Lafayette slept at the Hale House in Dover, NH during his 1824-25 tour of the US was conserved and loaned to the Shirley-Eustis House where it will be on display for the next three years along with other Lafayette items. Among treasures on view at the house are the Lafayette decanter and glasses, from which Lafayette and Governor Eustis drank a toast, donated by former "This Old House" host Bob Vila.



Lexington Militia and Rick Detwiller view the Lafayette Chamber with Lafayette's bed from the William Hale House, Dover, NH, on loan courtesy of Historic New England. SEHA Photo.



Count Gilbert de Pusy La Fayette, Count Alexandre de Pusy La Fayette (the son of Gilbert), John Kapelos, Michele Marinthe Vlahos and David Noonan. SEHA Photo by Patti Violette.



After the tour, a lecture was given in the Eustis Carriage House by Robert Selig on the Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route (W3R). The visitors enjoyed his graphic presentation showing many of the sites along the route between Boston, Newport and Yorktown by Rochambeau's army. He also described the "prequel" route that Lafayette took after disembarking from the *Hermione* in Boston on April 28, 1780 to Morristown, New Jersey where he informed Washington about the dispatch of the French Expeditionary Force to America. The Carriage House also houses the Eustis Coach in which Lafayette rode from the Rhode Island border to the Eustis House, then called Shirley Place. The coach seen by visitors was sold by the Eustis Estate in 1867 to Fred Hassam, whose son American Impressionist Childe Hassam records in his journal learning to paint seated in the old coach. The coach

then passed through several owners and was housed in several places including the Baker estate at Ridge Hill Farms in Wellesley, Henry Ford's Wayside Inn in Sudbury and the Daniel Webster estate in Marshfield.



Dr. Robert Selig Lecturing in the Carriage House.

Lafayette's Visit to Shirley Place, Aug. 1824 as Told by Madame Eustis
(From "The Story of Shirley Place" By Ida Ayers, *New England Magazine* 1897)

After taking possession of Shirley Place, Dr. Eustis was repeatedly sent to Congress, where his wife accompanied him in the great coach, living in Washington during the sessions. In Washington society she was as great a favorite as she had been in Europe. In 1824 Dr. Eustis was elected governor of Massachusetts; and during that year came Lafayette on his triumphal visit to America. One of the most important of his visits was that to Boston. He was met at the boundary of the state by an escort provided by Governor Eustis, who himself waited for his old friend at his house. Shirley Place was brilliantly illuminated to receive the visitor. Lafayette arrived at two in the morning. He was accommodated in the guest chamber, which after that for over forty years was left furnished as at the time when he used it. His body-guard bivouacked on the lawn, and at daybreak the next morning they waked Lafayette with music. Mrs. Eustis, seeing that all was in readiness for the Marquis's

breakfast, went down stairs to look after the wants of the soldiers. She found them sitting on the lawn, feasting upon griddle cakes which were cooked on a large flat soapstone griddle built at the side of the winter fireplace. Lafayette and Governor Eustis departed for the city after breakfast, escorted by the light infantry whose martial music had awakened the Marquis and by a cavalcade of citizens who had started from Boston for Shirley Place at seven in the morning.

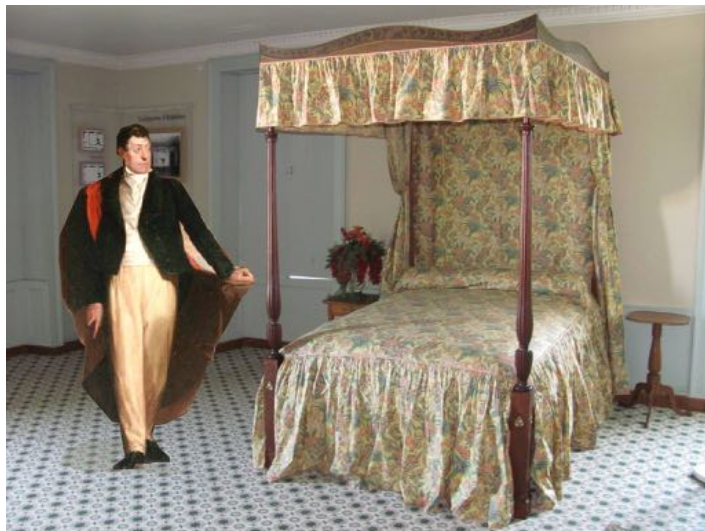
Mrs. Eustis was feeling happy that Tuesday morning, August 24, 1824, for everything had gone well, and no doubt she was in a hurry to get to Boston to see the great celebrations there. But her plans were spoiled. Her husband turned to her as he was starting away and said:

"Lafayette must dine here the day after tomorrow."

"How is that possible?" she exclaimed. "It must be done."



There had been a hitch in the plans somewhere, and the gap had to be filled by a feast at Shirley Place, to which a large company was invited. In speaking of the event to friends of mine, Mrs. Eustis said that the first thing she did after hearing this was to go to her room and have a good cry; and then she made her plans. She had to depend on the home 'force alone, and that with the most capable servants gone to Boston with her husband. There were no caterers nor provision stores nearer than Boston. Thither she went and ordered supplies. Then how to seat the company was the problem. She ordered a carpenter to make two great curved tables, which together would form a horseshoe. These were placed one in the dining room and one in the great hall, with ends touching at the foot of the stairs. Mrs. Eustis presided at one table, and the Mayor of Boston at the other. Besides Lafayette the special guests were General Dearborn, Ex-Governor Brooks, the Lieutenant-Governor, and the Council, with the military staff. The affair was a grand success. Mrs. Eustis considered it the greatest triumph of her life, for it was truly a home-made feast, all the cooking having been done by herself and her servants in the two kitchens....



Lafayette, as depicted by Samuel F.B. Morse in 1825, explores the Lafayette Chamber at the Shirley-Eustis House including his bed and mirror. Composite graphics by F.C. Detwiller.



One by one the old friends dropped out of her life; and although she had prominent relatives, they were of a younger generation. One of her nieces married the late Prof. A. P. Peabody of Harvard. Her favorite brother married the daughter of John Jacob Astor. Their son made Mrs. Eustis a short visit when she was too feeble to leave her chair, and delighted her greatly by presenting to her two miniatures on ivory of his father and mother. At this time she was much in the Lafayette chamber, knitting socks for the Union soldiers. The associations of the place doubtless attracted her, and the view of the harbor was especially pleasant. A lonely feeling took possession of her during those days. She used to say: "I was born on the last day of the week, the last day of the month, and the last day of the year. I am the last of everything." When the Civil War broke out., her constant prayer was that she might be spared to see its close. While she waited for the outcome of the struggle, she knit thirteen pairs of socks, and recounted the stories of her life to her nurse., who stayed with her during her last five years. She was accustomed to remark that few people were permitted to witness the birth of a nation, to watch it grow, growing with it. and to see its life struggle end in victory, as she was at last able to do. She died in 1865, in her eighty-fifth year. She is buried beside her husband at Lexington.

With her death the prosperous days of Shirley Place came to an end. The first step in the downward direction occurred with the sale at auction of the relics and furniture. This occurred in November, 1865. Among other valuable things



which were sold then was a secretary given by General Warren to Eustis, the furniture of the Lafayette chamber, a portrait on ivory of the Duchess of Orleans given by her to the governor, and the old family coach, built by Knowles and Thayer of Amherst, which sold for thirty dollars.

The house was sold at auction in 1867. Since then it has passed through several hands. [It has since been restored by the Govs. Shirley-Eustis House Association.]

Award-winning Author's Lafayette Novel for Young Readers Coming Soon

MLS member Dorothea Jensen is happy to report that her publisher has sent her new historical novel for middle graders/young adults, *A Buss from Lafayette*, to the printer. It will be released on April 22, 2016, but is available for pre-order now from BQBPublishing.com, Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com, Kobobooks.com, and iBooks, as well as many bookstores.

billed as a young adult novel, it is truly a tale for adults of all ages.”

More information and buy links for *A Buss from Lafayette* are available at <http://www.dorotheajensen.com>.

Set in Hopkinton, New Hampshire, during Lafayette's Farewell Tour, *A Buss from Lafayette* is about Clara Hargraves, 14, who has a couple of big problems. First of all, she has a stepmother, "Prissy" Priscilla, formerly her spinster schoolteacher aunt, who keeps trying to make her act like a proper young lady. Secondly, she has red hair that makes her a target for teasing. Clara, however, has a secret plan she hopes will change this.

In June, 1825, Clara's town is abuzz because General Lafayette, hero of the American War of Independence, is about to visit their state. In one eventful week, Clara learns a lot about her family, herself, and, most of all, about Lafayette and his huge and vital role in America's Revolutionary War. She also just might find that her problems are not quite so terrible after all.

One young reader has said of *A Buss from Lafayette*, "It is like getting two stories in one book. I got to learn all about Clara and I also got to learn all about Lafayette!"

One somewhat older reader, MLS President Alan Hoffman, previewed *A Buss from Lafayette* and called it "a warm, funny, coming-of-age novel" and concluded, "Though *A Buss From Lafayette* is



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