

May 20, 1934

[Sa Foyt's 100th Anniversary of Death]

FDR Speech File

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ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
at the Commemoration Ceremony in
honor of the One Hundredth Anniversary
of the Death of
Gilbert du Motier Marquis de LaFayette
May 20, 1934

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Ambassador, Mem-
bers of Congress, Gentlemen of the Supreme Court, my friends:

A century ago President Andrew Jackson, in communi-
cating the melancholy news of the death of LaFayette to the
Congress of the United States, called it "afflicting intelli-
gence". And so it was. It made more than one nation mourn,
none more than our own. The Marquis de LaFayette was referred
to in a General Order to our Army and Navy as "the distin-
guished friend of the United States"; and the Congress, with
rare felicity, added to this the phrase, "the friend of Wash-
ington, and the friend of liberty."

In this three-fold role of friendship we the people
of this Nation have enshrined him in our hearts, and today we
cherish his memory above that of any citizen of a foreign
country. It is as one of our Nation's peerless heroes that
we hail him, just as his beloved France enshrined him in the
Pantheon of her immortal sons.

Many generations later, more than two million Amer-
ican boys, backed by the solidarity of a great Nation, went

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

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to France. Those soldiers and sailors were repaying the debt of gratitude we owe to LaFayette and at the same time they were seeking to preserve those fundamentals of liberty and democracy to which in a previous age he had dedicated his life.

There is no higher tribute we can pay to his memory than this we pay today. In communicating his death to the Nation, President Jackson ordered that "the same honors be rendered him as were observed upon the decease of Washington." Jackson was moved by the tenderness of a personal friendship -- moved, as he said, "by personal as by public considerations" to direct that every honor be paid "the last Major General of the Revolutionary Army."

We know the exquisite relationship which existed between Washington and LaFayette, and I am indeed pleased that the Ambassador of the French Republic has referred to this friendship. It was that of father and son. For the great Virginian the Frenchman had a veneration and love which approached homage. To him Washington was an ideal -- almost more than human.

With Andrew Jackson, the friendship bore perhaps a more personal and intimate cast, because the two were more of an age. Both were mere youngsters at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. Jackson, a boy of ten in 1777, first saw

LaFayette when he landed in Charleston and before he started northward to meet the Congress. The sight of the gallant young Frenchman was so deeply engraved in the heart of Andrew Jackson that half a century later it was as vivid as the day it was etched. Jackson himself, even in boyhood, was to contribute his mite "to shake off the yoke of tyranny, and to build up the fabric of free government." And when LaFayette visited our shores again in 1824, Jackson wrote him a pean of welcome, in which he referred to the state of his "own youthful feelings" on the occasion of that first visit. His coming then, he said, "aroused every patriot from a state of despair to that of confidence in our bleeding cause, while the shout of victory or death was sung through the welkin. It inspired an enthusiasm becoming the people who had resolved to be free."

When they met here in Washington LaFayette said this to the Hero of New Orleans, "Had you witnessed my anxiety, when on a sudden all Europe was pacified, and the flower of the British Army were on their way to Louisiana, you would still better judge what I felt of relief, joy and pride on receiving the glorious account of your victory. I have long anticipated the pleasure to take you by the hand, and whatever be your future movements I will not leave the

United States before I have seeked and found opportunity to express in person my high regard and sincere friendship."

This first meeting was as simple and genuine as their natures. Jackson had come to Washington for the session of the Congress, as Senator from Tennessee. He put up with his old friend, John Gadsby, at the Franklin House; and immediately learned that LaFayette was a guest in the same Inn. The Mayor of Washington had informed the President of the United States that "the friend of the people (LaFayette) must be the guest of the people, and could not stay at the White House."

It was a memorable Congress that year, the last to elect a President of the United States, and Andrew Jackson was in the thick of the storm. The two old soldiers saw much of each other during that long winter and as a member of the Senate Jackson took part in all the ceremonies held in honor of the French patriot.

It stands on the record of the day that "LaFayette was the only man who ever was, in his personal capacity, publicly received by the Senate of the United States." The record shows that they received him "as a brother, rather than a stranger, as one of a loving family, come from a distant shore, after a long and weary absence, to revisit the friends of his youth."

Senator Barbour of Virginia presented him. The President and the Senators rose from their seats, uncovered, and the General, advancing toward the Chair of the Senate, was invited to take a seat prepared for him on the right of the Chair. The Senate then was adjourned, the while the Senators flocked about their guest and gave him a warmhearted welcome.

It was given to the House of Representatives to extend the welcome of the Nation. Exactly such an assembly as this now before me met in the Hall of Representatives, every branch of the Government fully in attendance. Henry Clay, the Speaker, in expressing what was in the hearts of the people, said, "the vain wish has sometimes been indulged that Providence would allow the patriot, after death, to return to his country, and to contemplate the immediate changes which had taken place." To LaFayette had come, he said, "the realization of the consoling object of that wish."

"General, you are in the midst of posterity."

"No, Mr. Speaker," replied LaFayette, "posterity has not begun for me since, in the sons of my companions and friends, I find the same public feelings in my behalf which I have had the happiness to experience in their fathers."

I like to remember also the picture of the visit

of General LaFayette to General Jackson at the Hermitage. When LaFayette landed at Nashville, the people stood far back and let Jackson go forward alone to greet him and to welcome him as his feet touched the shore.

At the official welcome of the State of Tennessee, a group of Revolutionary soldiers, some thirty or forty of-
ficers and men, stepped forward to greet the old patriot. He saluted each of them with animation and affection. Suddenly his eye fell on one whom he had known in France, who had come with him to America and had been at his side during the Revolution. This worn and wearied old soldier had ridden one hundred miles to see his old General, and when they met they fell into each other's arms, kissed each other as only Frenchmen can perform that act of devotion, and sobbed aloud.

The next day Jackson entertained him at the Hermitage. The people seemed to sense that history was being made and left them much to themselves. They talked about the French and American Revolutions, and much about Napoleon. Jackson took pride in showing him over the house he had built for his beloved wife. He produced a box of pistols, and opening it, asked LaFayette if he knew whose pistols they were. "Yes," said LaFayette, "they are the ones I gave to General

Washington in 1778, and," he added, "I feel a real satisfaction in finding them in the hands of a man so worthy of such a heritage."

Today I have brought to show to the Congress of the United States another link between LaFayette and our country -- a sword which has never yet been shown to the American people.

After the termination of the World War and the re-occupation of Alsace by the French, this sword was rediscovered. Its history is this: Shortly before the death of Washington his old companions in arms -- those gallant Frenchmen who had taken part in our War of the Revolution -- joined together and had this sword made by special order to be presented to their former Commander-in-Chief.

Before the presentation could be made, Washington died, and 133 years later, through the fine courtesy and feeling of the present Government of France, the sword was brought to America by a distinguished descendant of General LaFayette and presented to the present President of the United States. This sword rests and will rest for all time below the portrait of President Washington in the White House.

I like to associate LaFayette and Jackson. LaFayette's last letter to Jackson was an appeal for help from Congress for the family of a brave Frenchman who had served in our

Revolutionary War. His last thoughts were of Congress and of Jackson. He instructed his son to send to Jackson, for transmittal to the Congress, "a copper plate on which was inscribed the first engraved copy of the American Declaration of Independence to be deposited in their Library as a last tribute of respect, patriotic love and affection for his adopted country."

It is a singular coincidence that Jackson's mind many years later turned to LaFayette in his last hours. When Jackson's will, signed with his palsied hand, was opened, it was found that he had bequeathed to George Washington LaFayette "the pistols of General LaFayette which were presented by him to General George Washington, and by Colonel William Robertson presented to me." These he desired sent to the son of his old friend, as his will declared, "as a memento of the illustrious personages through whose hands they have passed, his father, and the Father of his country."

Mr. Ambassador, I trust that you will inform our good friend, the President of the French Republic, the Government of France, and through them the people of France, that on this Hundredth Anniversary of the death of Gilbert du Motier Marquis de LaFayette we, the representatives of the people of the United States, have assembled once more to do honor to the friend of America.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 19, 1934

FILE MEMO

Attached is a copy of the speech to be
made by the President before the Joint Session
of Congress May 20, 1934.

W.L.M.

Speech
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A century ago President Andrew Jackson, in communicating the melancholy news of the death of Lafayette to the Congress of the United States, called it "afflicting intelligence." And so it was. It made more than one Nation mourn, none more than our own. The Marquis de La Fayette was referred to in a General Order to our Army and Navy as "the distinguished friend of the United States"; and the Congress, with rare felicity, added to this the phrase, "the friend of Washington, and the friend of liberty."

In this three-fold role of friendship we the people of this Nation have enshrined him in our hearts, and today we cherish his memory above that of any citizen of a foreign country. It is as one of our Nation's peerless heroes that we hail him, just as his beloved France enshrines him in the Pantheon of her immortal sons.

Many generations later, more than two million American boys, backed by the solidarity of a great Nation, went to France. These soldiers and sailors were repaying the debt of gratitude we owe to La Fayette and at the same time they were seeking to preserve those fundamentals of liberty and democracy to which in a previous age he had dedicated his life.

There is no higher tribute we can pay to his memory than this we pay today. In communicating his death to the Nation, President Jackson ordered that "the same honors be rendered him as were observed upon the decease of Washington." Jackson was moved by the tenderness of a personal friendship -- moved as he said, "by personal as by public considerations" to direct that every honor be paid "the last Major General of the Revolutionary Army."

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mite "to shake off the yoke of tyranny, and to build up the fabric of free government." And when La Fayette visited our shores again in 1824, Jackson wrote him a poem of welcome, in which he referred to the state of his "own youthful feelings" on the occasion of that first visit. His coming then, he said, "aroused every patriot from a state of despair to that of confidence in our bleeding cause, while the shout of victory or death was sung through the welkin. It inspired an enthusiasm becoming the people who had resolved to be free."

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DRAFT OF ADDRESS ON GENERAL LAFAYETTE.

We are met here today to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the death of Lafayette. In communicating the melancholy news of his decease to the Congress, General Jackson called it "afflicting intelligence."⁽¹⁾ And so it was. It made more than one Nation mourn, none more than our own. He was referred to in a General Order to the Army and Navy as "the distinguished friend of the United States";⁽²⁾ and the Congress, with rare felicity, added the phrases, "the friend of Washington, and the friend of liberty."⁽³⁾ In this three-fold role of friendship we the people of this Nation have enshrined him in our hearts, and today we cherish his memory above that of any citizen of a foreign country, [and above that of any American citizen, save only Washington and Jackson.] He always spoke of America as his adopted country, and the State of Maryland, by formal act of her General Assembly, conferred upon him the full rights of citizenship in that proud Commonwealth.⁽⁴⁾ It is as one of our Nation's peerless Heroes that we hail him,⁽⁵⁾ just as his beloved France enshrines him in the Pantheon of her immortal sons.

When our people, back in 1917, after the patience of Woodrow Wilson had broken down, were drawn into the world war, many of us felt that we were entering that conflict as much to repay the debt of gratitude we owed him, as to make the world safe for liberty and for that democracy to which he dedicated his whole life. The leader of our armies in France told off our sentiments when he visited his grave and gently said: "Lafayette, we are here!"

There is no higher tribute we can pay to his memory than we are paying here today. It has always been so. In communicating his death to the Nation, President Jackson ordered that "the same hon-

ors be rendered (him)...as were observed upon the decease of Washington." In his proclamation there is a tenderness that seems unusual in one who is so often represented to us as a rude backwoodsman. He was moved, he said, "by personal as (by) public considerations" to direct that every honor be paid "the last Major General of the Revolutionary army." (5)

What were those "personal considerations?" One soldier to another? One patriot to another? One statesman to another? They sank deeper than those relations. Lafayette's son said to the Hero of the Hermitage: "Sir, you were my father's friend." (6)

We are all familiar with the exquisite relationship which existed between Washington and Lafayette. It was like that of father and son. For the great Virginian the Frenchman had a veneration much resembling the legendary feelings of the ancient Roman and Greek peoples for their gods. On his visit to Washington's tomb in 1824, he was so awed by his proximity to the encoffined bones of his commander, that he entered the holy place alone; and ~~was~~ there a long time on his knees, in silent meditation, coming out in tears. (7)

With Jackson his friendship took on a more personal and intimate cast, something that we can understand; and of that I wish, for a few brief moments, to speak.

Lafayette first came to America on the 18th of June, 1777, and remained in Charleston, where he landed, until the 24th, before starting northward to meet Washington. Jackson, then a boy of twelve, was on a visit to the capital of his native State. The sight of the gallant young Frenchman was so deeply engraved on his heart that half a century later it was as vivid as on the day it was etched. He was himself, "even in boyhood", to contribute his mite "to shake off the yoke of tyranny, and to build up the fabric

of free government." And when Lafayette visited our shores again in 1824, Jackson wrote him a pean of welcome, in which he referred to the state of his "own youthful feelings" on the occasion of his first visit. His coming then, he said, "aroused every Patriot from a state of despair to that of confidence in our bleeding cause, while the shout of victory or death was sung thru the welkin. It inspired an enthusiasm...becoming the people who had resolved to be free." (9)

When they met for the first time, in a little Washington Inn, which is still standing, "the emotion of Revolutionary feeling was aroused in them both." They had much to say to each other. (11)

Jackson was not altogether a stranger to Lafayette. "Had you witnessed my anxiety, (Lafayette told him) when on a sudden all Europe was pacified, and the flower of the British Army were on their way to Louisiana, you would still better judge what I felt of relief, joy, and pride, on receiving the glorious account of your victory. I have long anticipated the pleasure to take you by the hand, and whatever be your future movements will not leave the United States before I have sought and found opportunity to express in person my high regard and sincere friendship." (12)

There are some men who are made for friendship with each other. Their love requires no planting or cultivation, no seedtime nor harvest. It springs naturally from the soil of their beings. And this rarely beautiful friendship was of that origin.

Their first meeting was as simple and genuine as their natures. Jackson had come on to Washington for the session of Congress, as Senator from Tennessee. He put up with his old friend, John Gadsby, at the Franklin House; and immediately learned that Lafayette was a guest in the same Inn. The Mayor of Washington had informed the President of the United States, that "the friend of the people"

must be the guest of the people, and could not stay at the White House. At their first formal meeting Monroe took his old friend aside and said: "They say that you are the guest of the Nation, and no one else has the right to put you up." (13)

Lafayette heard of Jackson's arrival as soon as Jackson heard that Lafayette was Gadsby's guest, and each had an impulse to visit the other first. They met on the entry of the stairs, Mrs. Jackson looking on, and finding it "truly interesting." (14)

It was a memorable Congress, the last to elect a President of the United States, with much partisan bitterness engendered. Jackson was in the center of the storm. The two old soldiers saw much of each other during that long winter, and politics did not enter into their daily talk. Jackson was determined, so far as he could control events, that Lafayette should have his ^{day} ~~hour~~, and as a member of the Senate he took part in all the ceremonies held to honor the French patriot. One of these was higher than any honor ever paid to Washington. It stands on the record that "Lafayette was the only man who ever was, in his personal capacity, publicly received by the Senate of the United States." When Washington came to the Senate, by appointment, he was, indeed, "received by them standing uncovered," but even he "was not attended and introduced, as Lafayette has been, by a committee of the most venerable members of the Senate." They received him "as a brother, rather than a stranger - as one of a loving family, come from a distant shore, after a long and weary absence, to revisit the friends of his youth." (15)

Mr. Barbour of Virginia presented him with these words: "We introduce Gen. Lafayette to the Senate of the United States." The President and the Senators rose from their seats, uncovered, and the General, advancing towards the Chair of the Senate, was invited to take a seat prepared for him on the right of the Chair. The Senate

then adjourned, the while the Senators flocked about their guest and gave him a warm-hearted welcome. ⁽¹⁶⁾

It was given to the House of Representatives to extend the welcome of the Nation. Exactly such an assembly as this now before me assembled in the Hall of Representatives, every branch of the Government fully in attendance. Henry Clay, the Speaker, in expressing what was in the hearts of the people, said that "the vain wish has been sometimes indulged that Providence would allow the patriot, after death, to return to his country, and to contemplate the immediate changes which had taken place..." To Lafayette had come "the realization of the consoling object of that wish." "General, ^(he said) you are in the midst of posterity."

"No, Mr. Speaker," replied Lafayette, "posterity has not begun for me - since, in the sons of my companions and friends, I find the same public feelings in my behalf, which I have had the happiness to experience in their fathers." ⁽¹⁷⁾

At the suggestion of Jefferson, Madison and Monroe, Congress, with practical unanimity, voted Lafayette a gift of \$200,000 (he had spent more than that in the cause of American independence, and was now poor); and had given his family a township from the Public Domain in Louisiana. ⁽¹⁸⁾ They ^{then gave} ~~honored~~ him ^{with} a Congressional dinner, at which Jackson was an honored guest. ⁽¹⁹⁾ This concluded the welcome of our National Legislature.

France was looking on with mingled feelings at the popular reception and the official welcome given her first citizen, whom her King and his Ministers had denied the populace of Havre the poor privilege of cheering him as he left for America. The court could not understand why the people of this country, in every part of it, should be seized with such a wild enthusiasm for an old soldier. They could not believe that "ten thousand persons visited his por-

trait " at a coffee house in Philadelphia;⁽²¹⁾ and that his path, from town to town, was crowded with excited people. It was different with the French people; they believed, and they understood. Many of them wished to send some token to America, to express their appreciation of the welcome given "the friend of the people." Among them was Ary Scheffer, an artist of national fame as a portrait painter. In his love of liberty, in his devotion to Lafayette, and in his admiration for our country, he had gone to La Grange to paint the portrait of the great patriot as a gift to America. It was completed while Lafayette was in the early stages of his triumphal tour of the Eastern States; and on January 20, 1825, it was presented to the Congress, which formally accepted it and ordered it hung in the rotunda of the Capitol.⁽²²⁾ Here it is, on my left, companion to the portrait of Washington, on my right; and I take it that it will hang there as long as it and this building last. From it may we ever draw inspiration, to believe in the lessons his noble life teach us. What were those lessons? Let General Jackson tell us:

"In his own country, and in ours, he was the zealous and uniform advocate of rational liberty. Consistent in his principles and conduct, he never, during a long life, committed an act which exposed him to just accusation, or which will expose his memory to reproach. Living at a period of great excitement and of moral and political revolutions, engaged in many of the important events which fixed the attention of the world, and invited to guide the destinies of France at two of the most momentous eras of her history, his political and personal disinterestedness have not been called in question." (23)

Before Congress adjourned, in 1825, Jackson delivered to Lafayette an invitation from the Governor and the General Assembly of Tennessee, to visit that State, which meant, of course, in those days,

Nashville.⁽²⁴⁾ It was the most considerable town in the Commonwealth, having four thousand inhabitants, and boasting, among other things, a college for women and a college for men, the latter known as Cumberland College, the predecessor of the University of Nashville. Its president was one of the most renowned scholars of his day, Dr. Philip Lindsay. He had for years been a professor at Princeton, and had refused the presidency of that celebrated seat of learning to accept the position in the newer institution in the West. Such,⁽²⁵⁾ my friends, was the wonderful influence of a backwoodsman on culture. This college and its president were to play a unique part in the National ceremony attendant upon the visit of "the friend of the people."

Lafayette came to Nashville, by steamboat from New Orleans. A steamer from Nashville went down the river to act as his escort to the city. When he landed, the people stood far back and let Jackson go forward alone to greet him and welcome him as his feet pressed the shore. The visit lasted a day and a half. Lafayette was too great to be the guest of Jackson; he was put up at the home of a quiet physician.⁽²⁶⁾

There were many incidents connected with this historic visit, which did not vary from those of his visits to other cities; but three of them had no counterparts, and of them I shall speak briefly.

After the Governor had given him the State's official welcome, on a stand erected on the Public Square, a group of Revolutionary soldiers, "some thirty or forty officers and men", stepped forward to greet the old Patriot. He saluted each of them with animation and golden affection. Suddenly his eye fell on one whom he had known in France, who had come with him to America, and had been at his side all during the Revolution. This worn and wearied old soldier had ridden one hundred miles to see his old General, and when they met they

fell into each other's arms, kissed each other as only Frenchmen can perform that act of devotion, and sobbed aloud. Even the stern Jackson was melted to tears at the scene. (27)

The next day Jackson entertained him and several hundred citizens with a dinner at the Hermitage. The people seemed to sense that history was being made, and left them much to themselves. (28) They talked about the French and American Revolutions, and much about Napoleon. Jackson took pride in showing him over the house he had built for his Rachel, then the finest mansion in the State. He produced a box of pistols, and opening it, asked Lafayette if he knew whose pistols they were. "Yes," said Lafayette, "they are the ones I gave to General Washington in 1778, And," he added, "I feel a real satisfaction in finding them in the hands of a man so worthy of such a heritage." Jackson's long, lean face "reddened to the roots of his brush of bristling hair," and his blue eyes flashed with pride. (29)

That afternoon they visited Cumberland College. The Trustees had established and the people had endowed two professorships, one named for Lafayette and the other for Jackson. To Lafayette Dr. Lind-
sley said: "In thus honoring the patriot soldier, the independent statesman, and the intrepid philanthropist, the trustees are conscious that the highest honor is reflected upon their institution. Nor will you disdain, or lightly esteem, the unostentatious rewards which science proffers to distinguished merit. The enlightened friend of liberty has ever been the zealous patron of learning. He knows that vice, poverty, oppression, misery are the consequences and ^{the} companions of ignorance. That virtue, happiness, and liberty are ever associated with knowledge. That tyranny, slavery and despotism dread the light of science. And, the greatest of all absurdities, and the most deplorable of all infatuation, is the opinion, that a free government can be maintained where knowledge is not largely and universally diffused

among the people. To the generous assertors of our liberties, therefore, do we confidently look for ~~the~~ continuance and support to our literary institutions." (30)

The schoolmaster was talking a language those men fully understood. When Jackson came to power as President, in a critical moment in our national history, and at a critical moment in his administration, he called to his side as his chief counsellor, the great juriconsult and scholar, Edward Livingston, of New York and Louisiana, who wrote the immortal document, the Nullification Proclamation, and some of the other great state papers of the great soldier President. Strong-willed and fierce-tempered though he was, Mr. Livingston has left the record that General Jackson never refused to follow his advice and always yielded to his wider knowledge. (31)

Lafayette's home, both in Paris and at LaGrange, was the haunt of scholars - professors, if you please. A learned young Virginian, Dr. Robert Greenhow, whom Edward Livingston brought to the State Department, where he stayed from 1831 to 1850, while studying at the Sorbonne, often visited those homes. He found there all the radicals in France, some of them disputing their peculiar philosophy with Benjamin Constant, with the famous Abbe de Pradt, ^{and} with the celebrated professors of the Sorbonne, Cousin, Guizot and Villemain. From the Academy of Science came Gay-Lussac, Legendre, Lacroix and Dumeril, to ^{instruct} enlighten the knowing old man, who had fought with Washington, ~~and~~ ~~Napoleon~~, had been imprisoned by tyrants and who limped about among his guests, listening to everyone and enlightening even the philosophes with his homely wisdom ^{but} drawn not from books, from the practical experiences of a varied life. (32) So the old patriot understood the young professor. ⁵ He nor Jackson had any fear of schoolmen, any more than they feared armed soldiers on the battle field or savages skulking in the brush.

What Jackson said to Dr. Lindsley is lost. He wisely withheld it from publication. It was Lafayette's hour, not his. "The friend of the people" expressed the hope that in this "college of the people" as Dr. Lindsley called it, "the young Tennesseans would be taught the achievements of their grandfathers on the shores of the Atlantic, and the glorious deeds of their fathers on the banks of the Mississippi." If that were done, he and Jackson, "the patriots of old times, are happy to anticipate what is to be expected from the rising generation, should the honor and safety of the United States once more require the exertions of American devotion and valor." (33)

This prophecy the citizens of the Volunteer State have lived to see fulfilled.

Jackson never saw Lafayette again. They corresponded to the end of their days, their letters taking on more intimacy and tenderness with the years. No man watched the outcome of the French Revolution of 1830, which the venerable Lafayette engineered, with keener eye than the stern and heartbroken old man in the White House, himself engineering one of the greatest social revolutions which has swept over America. After it had been accomplished, Jackson entrusted to Lafayette's hands the long - vexing question of the French claims, which but for the staying hand of Edward Livingston might have brought us into another war.

In a long personal letter Jackson invited Lafayette "to a vigorous prosecution of the work he had commenced under such favorable auspices," and assured him of "his liberal and indefatigable cooperation." The natural disposition of the American people towards France, he said, "is one of warmth and kindness, and it requires only the discharge of what all candid and just men must regard as a duty on his part, to call that disposition into active and vivid cooperation."

They expected Louis Philippe, who, tradition says, had been a refugee in Jackson's hometown, to remove "all causes of difference between the two countries." (34)

Louis Philippe was willing to pay the claims, but the French Chamber was not. An impasse occurred, which Edward Livingston, now Minister to France, could not remove. He threw up his credentials and retired from France. Where Livingston and Lafayette failed, Jackson and the French Minister in Washington succeeded. Lafayette had recommended M. Serrurier to Jackson as "an excellent man, most sincerely attached to America, and having in the negotiation of the claims been zealous and well intentioned." (35) The diplomat fell under the spell of the backwoodsman and the claims were paid in full.

In one bright particular Lafayette and Jackson were very much alike. They were chivalrous gentlemen. One of Jackson's consuls, while passing through Paris, had fallen ill and perhaps on evil days, for he accumulated a debt of two thousand dollars and his creditors were about to throw him into jail. This horrified Lafayette, to think of this disgrace to a public officer of the United States. So he naively wrote Jackson, asking him to advance out of the public treasury the sum necessary to quiet the debt, basing his plea on the ground that he "had known (the wife of the consul) a pretty little girl on my happy visit to the United States." (36) It is not necessary to dig into old Treasury records to learn the termination of that case.

Lafayette's last letter to Jackson was an appeal for help from Congress for the indigent family of Count Rochambeau, (37) which the Congress received in a special message from the President. His last thoughts were of Congress and of Jackson. He instructed his son to send to Jackson ^{for transmittal to Congress} a copper plate on which was inscribed the first engraved copy of the American Declaration of Independence...to be deposited in their Library as a last tribute of respect, patriotic

love, and affection for his adopted country." (38)

It is a singular coincidence that Jackson's mind turned to Lafayette in his last hours. When his will, signed with his palsied hand, was opened, it was found that he had bequeathed to George Washington Lafayette "the pistols of Gen. Lafayette which were presented by him to Gen. George Washington, and by Col. Wm. Robertson presented to me." These he desired sent to the son of his old friend " as a memento of the illustrious personages thro whose hands they have passed, his Father, and the Father of his country." (39)

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ANNOTATIONS.

1. Message to Congress, June 21, 1834.
2. Ibid.
3. Congressional Globe and National Intelligencer.
4. National Intelligencer, Jan. 27, 1825.
- 4a. Only Washington and Mount Vernon have more postoffices named for them, having 63. Lafayette and LaGrange, 60; Jefferson and Monticello, 58; and Jackson and the Hermitage, 32.
5. Message to Congress, June 21, 1834.
6. G. W. Lafayette to Jackson, Oct. 21, 1834. This letter Jackson sent to Congress with a special Message.
7. Lafayette by Brand Whitlock, vol.ii, p. 236.
8. History of Andrew Jackson, by A. C. Buell, vol.ii, p.173.
9. Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, vol. iii, p.278.
10. Ibid., p. 266.
11. History of Andrew Jackson by A. C. Buell, vol. ii, p.173.
12. Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, vol. iii, p. 268.
13. Lafayette, by Brand Whitlock, vol.ii, p.233.
14. History of Andrew Jackson by A. C. Buell, vol. ii, p.173;
15. National Intelligencer, Dec. 10, 1824.
16. Congressional Globe and National Intelligencer, Dec.10,1824.
- 17.Congressional Globe, Dec. 11, 1824.
18. Congressional Globe, Dec. 23, 1824.
19. National Intelligencer, Jan. 2, 1825.
20. Lafayette by Brand Whitlock, vol. ii, p.213. "The King's Government was convinced that the old revolutionist was launching forth on some new political adventure...and gendarmes ruthlessly broke up the cortege and would allow no demonstrations in his honor."
21. The True Lafayette by George Morgan, p. 430n.
22. National Intelligencer, Jan. 22, 1825.
23. Message to Congress, June 21, 1834.

24. Nashville Whig, March 5, 1825.
25. Ibid., April 16, 1825.
26. Ibid., May 7, 1825.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Lafayette by Brand Whitlock, vol. ii, p. 261.
30. Nashville Whig, May 14, 1825.
31. Edward Livingston by Hunt. Chapter on Livingston as Secretary of State.
32. The Tricolor, edited by Robert Greenhow, No. iv, pp.61-62.
33. Nashville Whig, May 14, 1825.
34. Jackson Papers, vol. 76, Jan. 19, 1831.
35. Ibid. Vol. 96. Dec. 28, 1830.
36. Ibid. Vol. 80, June 16, 1832. Lafayette asked Jackson to advance this sum from the consul's salary.
37. Ibid. Vol. 80. June 16, 1832.
38. Message to Congress, Dec. 4, 1834, transmitting letter of June 15, 1834.
39. Jackson's Will.

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 1934

FOR THE PRESS

Official stenographic report of the
Address of President Roosevelt at the Commemoration
Ceremony in honor of the One Hundredth Anniversary
of the
Death of Gilbert du Motier Marquis de La Fayette
At a Joint Session of Congress
May 20, 1934

Mr. President, Mr . Speaker, Mr. Ambassador, Members of the Congress, Gentlemen of the Supreme Court, my friends: A century ago President Andrew Jackson, in communicating the melancholy news of the death of Lafayette to the Congress of the United States, called it "afflicting intelligence." And so it was. It made more than one Nation mourn, none more than our own. The Marquis de Lafayette was referred to in a General Order to our Army and Navy as "the distinguished friend of the United States;" and the Congress, with rare felicity, added to this the phrase, "the friend of Washington, and the friend of liberty."

In this three-fold role of friendship we the people of this Nation have enshrined him in our hearts, and today we cherish his memory above that of any citizen of a foreign country. It is as one of our Nation's peerless heroes that we hail him, just as his beloved France enshrined him in the Pantheon of her immortal sons.

Many generations later, more than two million American boys, backed by the solidarity of a great Nation, went to France, Those

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soldiers and sailors were repaying the debt of gratitude we owe to LaFayette and at the same time they were seeking to preserve those fundamentals of liberty and democracy to which in a previous age he had dedicated his life.

There is no higher tribute we can pay to his memory than this we pay today. In communicating his death to the Nation, President Jackson ordered that "the same honors be rendered him as were observed upon the decease of Washington." Jackson was moved by the tenderness of a personal friendship -- moved as he said, "by personal as by public considerations" to direct that every honor be paid "the last Major General of the Revolutionary Army."

We know the exquisite relationship which existed between Washington and La Fayette, and I am indeed pleased that the Ambassador of the French Republic has referred to this friendship. It was that of father and son. For the great Virginian the Frenchman had a veneration and love which approached ~~homage~~ homage. To him Washington was an ideal -- almost more than human.

With Andrew Jackson, the friendship bore perhaps a more personal and intimate cast, because the two were more of an age. Both were mere youngsters at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. Jackson, a boy of ten in 1777, first saw La Fayette when he landed in Charleston and before he started northward to meet the Congress. The sight of the gallant young Frenchman was so deeply engraved in the heart of Andrew Jackson that half a century later it was as vivid as the day it was etched. Jackson himself, even in boyhood was to contribute his

mite " to shake off the yoke of tyranny, and to build up the fabric of free government." And when La Fayette visited our shores again in 1824, Jackson wrote him a pean of welcome, in which he referred to the state of his "own youthful feelings" on the occasion of that first visit. His coming then, he said, "aroused every patriot from a state of despair to that of confidence in our bleeding cause, while the shout of victory or death was sung through the welkin. It inspired an enthusiasm becoming the people who had resolved to be free."

When they met here in Washington La Fayette said this to the ^{the} Hero of New Orleans, "Had you witnessed my anxiety, when on a sudden all Europe was pacified, and the flower of the British Army were on their way to Louisiana, you ~~would~~ would still better judge what I felt of relief, joy and pride on receiving the glorious account of your victory. I have long anticipated the pleasure to take you by the hand, and whatever be your future movements I will not leave the United States before I have sought and found opportunity to express in person my high regard and sincere friendship." ²X

The first meeting was as simple and genuine as their natures. Jackson had come to Washington for the session of the Congress, as Senator from Tennessee. He put up with his old friend, John Gadsby, at the Franklin House; and immediately learned

that LaFayette was a guest in the same Inn. The Mayor of Washington had informed the President of the United States that "the friend of the people (LaFayette) must be the guest of the people, and could not stay at the White House."

It was a memorable Congress that year, the last to elect a President of the United States, and Andrew Jackson was in the thick of the storm. The two old soldiers saw much of each other during that long winter and as a member of the Senate Jackson took part in all the ceremonies hold in honor of the French patriot.

It stands on the record of the day that "LaFayette was the ^{ever} only man who was, in his personal capacity, publicly received by the Senate of the United States." The record shows that they received him "as a brother, rather than a stranger, as one of a loving family, come from a distant shore, after a long and weary absence, to revisit the friends of his youth."

Senator Barbour of Virginia presented him. The President and the Senators rose from their seats, uncovered, and the General, advancing toward the Chair of the Senate, was invited to take a seat prepared for him on the right of the Chair. The Senate then was adjourned, the while the Senators flocked about their guest and gave him a warm-hearted welcome.

It was given to the House of Representatives to extend the welcome of the Nation. Exactly such an assembly as this now before me met in the Hall of Representatives, every branch of the Government fully in attendance. Henry Clay, the Speaker, in expressing what was in the hearts of the people, said, "The vain wish has sometimes been indulged that Providence would allow the patriot, after death, to return to his country, and to contemplate the immediate changes which had taken place." To La Fayette had come, he said, "the realization of the consoling object of that wish."

"General, you are in the midst of posterity."

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Before the presentation could be made, Washington died and 133 years later, through the fine courtesy and feeling of the present Government of France, the sword was brought to America by a distinguished descendant of General LaFayette and presented to the present President of the United States. This sword rests and will rest for all time below the portrait of President Washington in the White House.

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Mr. Ambassador, I trust that you will inform our good friend, the President of the French Republic, the Government of France, and through them the people of France that on this Hundredth Anniversary of the death of Gilbert du Motier Marquis de La Fayette we, the representatives of the people of the United States, have assembled once more to do honor to the friend of America.

May 20, 1934

Address of President Roosevelt at the Commemoration 310
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