



Colonial Williamsburg



Bicentennial Commemoration of Lafayette's Farewell Tour Kicks Off in New York, Aug. 16, 2024

***Hundreds of events planned across the nation will trace the footsteps of
the Marquis de Lafayette's 1824-25 tour of the United States***

WILLIAMSBURG, VA (May 20, 2024) – On Aug. 16, 1824, a crowd of more than 80,000 lined the streets of Manhattan to welcome a French hero of the American Revolution back to the United States. Exactly two hundred years later, the city will welcome the Marquis de Lafayette to its shores again. A recreation of Lafayette's 13-month tour of the United States will begin as it did that celebratory day – in New York City on Aug. 16 – reminding the entire nation of the very principles on which it was founded as we look ahead to 2026 and the 250th anniversary of American Independence.

The [Lafayette200 Tour](#), organized by The American Friends of Lafayette in partnership with The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and cultural institutions across the nation, is intended to educate the public about the life and legacy of Lafayette who was a fierce advocate for freedom, equality and democracy.

“Lafayette strongly supported Enlightenment Principles: human rights for all, religious freedom, Native American rights, equality for women, freedom of the press, and penal reform. He was a leading abolitionist of his time and always fought for liberty, equality, and freedom,” said Alan Hoffman, president of American Friends of Lafayette. “In 2024, just like in 1824, Lafayette is the perfect person to remind Americans of their core, shared values.”

The kickoff of the Lafayette200 tour will include his arrival on a ship just like he did 200 years ago, a parade down Broadway, a public ceremony at City Hall, and a “Lafayette Fair” at South Street Seaport. From there, the tour will feature hundreds of planned events in the large cities and small towns Lafayette visited during his farewell tour. Highlights of the tour include:

- Aug. 16, 2024: New York City
- Sept. 28, 2024: Philadelphia
- Oct. 17, 2024: Mount Vernon, Va. (Washington's tomb)
- Oct. 19, 2024: Yorktown Victory Day
- Oct. 20, 2024: Williamsburg, Va.

- Nov. 15-17, 2024: Charlottesville, Va. (Monticello, Montpelier, and University of Virginia)
- March 4, 2025: Fayetteville, N.C. (the only city Lafayette ever visited that was named after him)
- April 11, 2025: New Orleans
- April 29, 2025: St. Louis
- Sept. 8, 2025: Washington D.C.

For a complete list of events, visit Lafayette200.org/events

Mark Schneider will portray Lafayette in New York and in many of the other tour locations. For the past 25 years, Schneider has brought Lafayette to life at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, the largest U.S. history museum in the world, where millions of visitors have had the opportunity to encounter the revolutionary hero live and in-person.

“Embodying Lafayette every day for Colonial Williamsburg’s visitors has shown me the power of living history,” Schneider said. “There’s nothing like experiencing historical figures in the flesh and blood to remind you how relevant history is today and what a key role we all play in it.”

The Lafayette200 Tour is one of many [anniversary events](#) leading up to the commemoration of America’s 250th anniversary in 2026, just as Lafayette’s 1824 tour was intended to celebrate the nation’s 50th anniversary. In 1824, with the nation in the throes of a contentious national presidential election, President James Monroe invited Lafayette to return to the United States for a short tour of popular cities to reignite the nation’s patriotism. The planned three-month tour turned into a 13-month celebration of the lived example set by the last surviving general of the American Revolution. Like Lafayette’s Farewell Tour, the Lafayette200 Tour invites Americans to celebrate the principles that united the nation in 1776 and can unite it again today.

Lafayette biography

Marquis de Lafayette (1757–1834) was born in France to a wealthy noble family. When he was 19 years old, Lafayette volunteered his services to the Continental Army. Though Congress was hesitant, his earnestness and assurance that he would serve at his own expense won him the rank of major general. He quickly fell into the company of George Washington, and the two formed a bond of will and philosophy so strong that Washington came to regard Lafayette as his son, a relationship reciprocated by the young Frenchman.

Lafayette’s tactical cunning and fearlessness in battle helped to save the Revolution on many occasions. In 1779, Lafayette returned to France and helped to win formal French support for the American cause. At Yorktown, Lafayette helped to corner Britain’s Lord Cornwallis, whose surrender after several days of siege was a fatal blow that ensured the American victory.

After the American Revolution, Lafayette returned to France where his popularity soared as he navigated the tenuous line between the angry subjects and the monarchy. Lafayette authored the celebrated *Declaration of the Rights of the Man and of the Citizen* and advocated religious toleration and the end of slavery. When most of Europe declared war against France in 1792, Lafayette commanded a French army in the north, but was taken prisoner by the Austrians and remained with them for nearly five years. Lafayette and his wife Adrienne de Noailles had four children, including a son named Georges Washington. The general died in 1834.

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The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia's 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers, lodging, culinary options from historic taverns to casual or elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 36 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones and his son Rees Jones, a full-service spa and fitness center, pools, retail stores and gardens. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.

The American Friends of Lafayette is a not-for-profit [501(c)(3)] patriotic and historical society dedicated to the memory of Major General Lafayette, to the study of his life and times, and to fostering and promoting the traditional friendship between the United States and France. Lafayette was a visionary and a leader. His ideals of equality and the rights of all are particularly relevant in today's America. The organization was founded in 1932 at Lafayette College, in Easton, Pennsylvania. Our current membership numbers over 1,000 active members located across the United States and in France, England, and Germany.

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