

## American Minute with Bill Federer

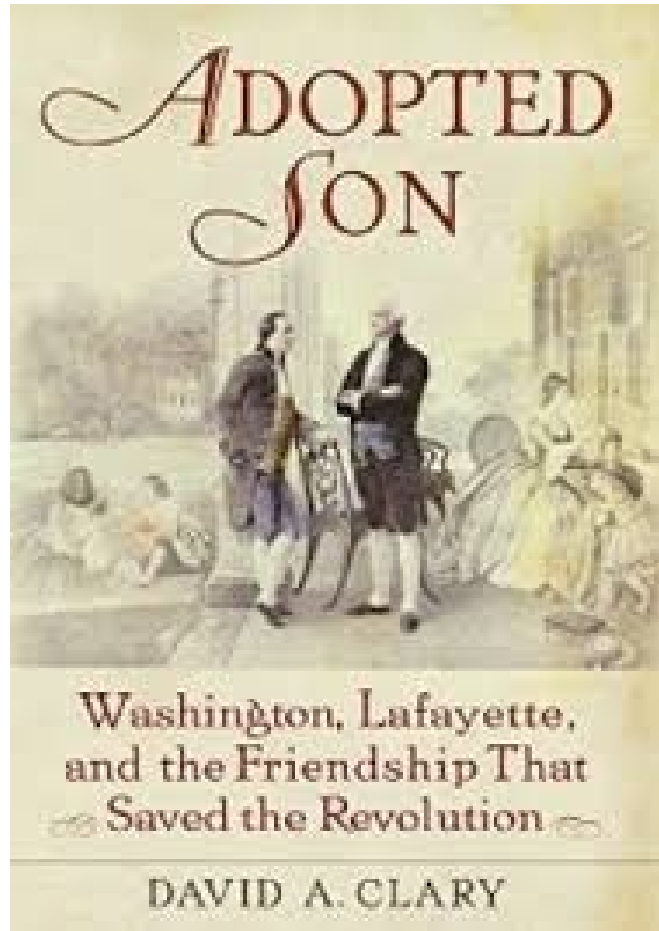
French Marquis de Lafayette, "adopted son" of Washington, & other foreigners, who fought to give Americans freedom

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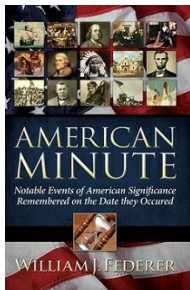
**Marquis de Lafayette** was born September 6, 1757.

**His father died before he was two-years-old and his mother died when he was twelve,** leaving him to inherit their fortune.

At 14-years-old, he joined the **French Military** and, at age 16, became a **captain** ... [continue reading American Minute here ...](#)



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He married **Marie Adrienne Francoise de Noailles**, whose family was related to **King Louis XVI**.

At age 19, against the King's wishes, **Lafayette** purchased a ship and persuaded several French officers to accompany him **to fight in the American Revolution**, arriving June 13, 1777.

Trained in the **French Military**, he was a descendant of one of the **oldest French families**, with ancestors who fought alongside of **Joan of Arc**, and previously fought in the **Crusades against Muslim occupiers of what had been the Christian Middle East**.

Commander-in-Chief **George Washington** appointed **Lafayette** as a **Major General** in the Continental Army.

He insisted on **serving without pay**, covering all his own expenses.

**Lafayette** was one of several European military leaders who courageously helped in the American Revolution:

- **Bernardo de Gálvez**, Spanish Governor of Louisiana, who drove British out of Gulf of Mexico, and helped supply Americans up the Mississippi;
- **Baron Von Steuben**, Prussian drill master and inspector general;





- **Bartholomew von Heer**, German captain, helped Baron Von Steuben discipline Continental Army;



- **Comte de Rochambeau**, commander of French Expeditionary Force;



- **Michael Kovats**, Hungarian co-founding father of U.S. cavalry, killed in the Siege of Charleston;





- **Casimir Pulaski**, Polish co-founding father of U.S. cavalry," killed in the Battle of Savannah;



- **Marquis de la Rouerie**, French cavalry officer;

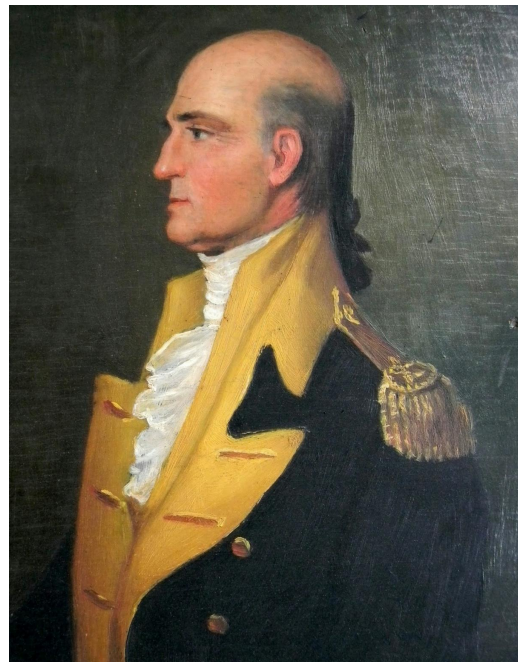


- **Johann de Kalb**, Bavarian-French major

general, killed in the Battle of Camden, South Carolina, shot three times and bayoneted repeatedly by the British, said while dying “I thank you sir for your generous sympathy, but I die the death I always prayed for: the death of a soldier fighting for the rights of man”;



- **Edward Hand**, Irish medical doctor and major general;



- **Frederick, Baron de Weissenfels**, German Prussian lieutenant colonel;





- **Baron de Woedtke**, Prussian German officer;



**TO GEORGE WASHINGTON FROM  
BARON DE WOEDTKE, 23 MARCH 1776**

**From Baron de Woedtke**

Sir  
Philada March 23d 1776  
The many marks of esteem and distinction with which your Excellency honoured me when I was at Cambridge, and the kind recommendation you favoured me with requires the most respectful and lively gratitude.

I now have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Honourable the Congress have appointed me to the rank of a brigadier General, and that my destination is for Canada, where I shall repair immediately, and I pray your Excellency, to continue me the honour of your Protection.<sup>1</sup> I am very Respectfully sir Your most humble & obedient servant

Baron de Woedtke

- **Gustave Rosenthal**, ethnic German from Estonia, officer;



- **Chevalier de Laumoy**, French engineer;



- **Louis Lebègue Duportail**, French chief engineer;



- **Tadeusz Kościuszko**, Polish-Lithuanian engineer who designed West Point;



- **La Radière**, French engineer, helped Tadeusz Kościuszko build West Point;



- **Jordi (George) Farragut**, Spanish, naval lieutenant;



- **John George Ryerson**, Dutch, light infantry, **Lafayette** used his farm as headquarters.



**Marquis de Lafayette** endured the freezing winter at **Valley Forge**, 1777-1778.

He was wounded at the **Battle of Brandywine** on September 11, 1777.

**Lafayette** served with a soldier who was wounded at the Battle of Trenton, **James Monroe**, the future 5th U.S. President.

**Lafayette** fought with distinction at the:

- **Battle of Gloucester,**
- **Battle of Barren Hill,**
- **Battle of Monmouth,**
- **Battle of Rhode Island, and**
- **Battle of Green Spring.**

Returning to France, **Lafayette** worked with **Ben Franklin** to persuade **King Louis XVI** to send **General Rochambeau** with ships and 6,000 French soldiers to America's aid.

**Lafayette** led troops against the **traitor Benedict Arnold**.

**He also commanded at Yorktown**, helping to pressure **Cornwallis** to surrender.

On October 19, 1781, **British General Cornwallis** **surrendered**.

Three years later, **Charles Willson Peale** painted a full-



length portrait of the event, depicting **Marquis de Lafayette with General George Washington**, together with Washington's trusted aide-de-camp **Lieutenant Colonel Tench Tilghman** of Maryland.

The portrait was placed in the Maryland State House by the approval of the Governor and Samuel Chase.

**Lafayette had never known his father, and as George Washington never had children of his own.**

**Washington**, in a sense, viewed **Lafayette** as an "adopted son."

After the war, **Washington** wrote a belatedly note to **Lafayette** from Mount Vernon, June 25, 1785:

**"My Dear Marquis ... I stand before you as a culprit: but to repent and be forgiven are the precepts of Heaven: I do the former, do you practice the latter, and it will be participation of a divine attribute.**

Yet I am not barren of excuses for this seeming inattention; frequent absences from home, a round of company when at it, and the pressure of many matters, might be urged as apologies for my long silence ...

... I now congratulate you, and my heart does it more effectually than my pen, **on your safe arrival in Paris**, from your voyage to this Country."

**Lafayette** named his son after George Washington - **"Georges Washington Louis Gilbert de La Fayette."**

**Lafayette** joined the **French abolitionist Society of the Friends of the Blacks**, which advocated the **end of the slave trade and equal rights for blacks.**

**Lafayette's** plan to **emancipate all slaves** was thought impossible by some. **Lafayette** replied:

"If it be a wild scheme, I had rather be mad in this way, than to be thought wise in the other task."

**Washington** encouraged **Lafayette**, April 5, 1783:

"The scheme ... which you propose as a precedent, to encourage **the emancipation of the black people of this Country from that state of Bondage** in which they are held, is a striking evidence of the benevolence of your Heart.

**I shall be happy to join you in so laudable a work;** but will defer going into a detail of the business, 'till I have the pleasure of seeing you."

In the last 6 years of his life, **Washington** attempted to take four of the farms on his plantation and make them into rental properties, **thus transitioning away from slavery.**

On May 10, 1786, **George Washington** wrote from to **Marquis de Lafayette:**

"Your late purchase of an estate in the **colony of Cayenne**, with a view of **emancipating the slaves** on it, is a generous and noble proof of your humanity ...

... Would to God a like spirit would diffuse itself generally into the minds of the people of this country."

On August 15, 1787, in a letter from Philadelphia to the **Marquis de Lafayette**, George Washington wrote:

"I am not less ardent in my wish that you may succeed in your plan of **toleration in religious matters.**

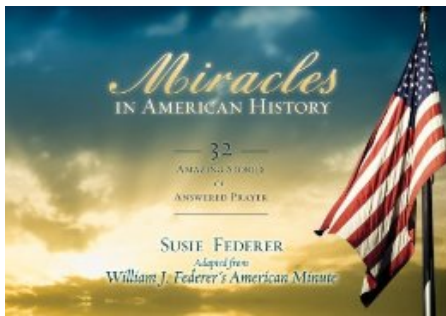
Being no bigot myself to any mode of worship, I am disposed to indulge **the professors of Christianity** in the church with **that road to Heaven** which to them shall

seem the most direct, plainest and easiest, and the least liable to exception."

On May 28, 1788, **George Washington** wrote to **Marquis de Lafayette** regarding the U.S. Constitution:

"A few short weeks will determine the political fate of America ...

I will confess to you sincerely, my dear **Marquis**; it will be so much beyond any thing we had a right to imagine or expect eighteen months ago, that it will demonstrate as visibly the **Finger of Providence**, as any possible event in the course of human affairs can ever designate it."



### [Miracles in American History](#)

When the **French Revolution** began, **President Washington** wrote to **Marquis de Lafayette**, July 28, 1791:

"I assure you I have often contemplated, with great anxiety, the danger to which you are personally exposed ...

... To a philanthropic mind the happiness of 24 millions of people cannot be indifferent; and by an American, whose country in the hour of distress received such liberal aid from the French, **the disorders and incertitude of that Nation are to be particularly lamented.**

We must, however, place a confidence in that **Providence** who rules great events, trusting that **out of confusion He will produce order**, and, notwithstanding the dark clouds which may threaten at present, that right will ultimately be established ...



... On the 6 of this month I returned from a tour through the southern States, which had employed me for more than three months.

In the course of this journey I have been highly gratified in observing the flourishing state of the Country, and the good dispositions of the people.

Industry and economy have become very fashionable in these parts, which were formerly noted for the opposite qualities, and the labors of man are assisted by **the Blessings of Providence."**

**The French Revolution** spiraled into a bloody **Reign of Terror**.

**King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette** were **beheaded** in 1793.

**Lafayette** tried to maintain order in France, but he fell out of favor. He and his wife were arrested.

During this time, **James Monroe** was U.S. Ambassador to France. His wife, **Elizabeth**, helped secure the release of **Madame Lafayette**, the wife of Marquis de Lafayette, who was threatened with **death by guillotine** like **Queen Marie Antoinette**.

**Lafayette** was **imprisoned for five years**, with his wife and two daughters choosing to be imprisoned with him.

**Napoleon** negotiated his release.

On June 10, 1792,  
from Philadelphia,  
**President**  
**Washington**  
wrote to **Marquis**  
**de Lafayette**:



"And to the **Care of that Providence**, whose interposition and protection we have so often experienced, do I

cheerfully commit you and your nation, **trusting that He will bring order out of confusion**, and finally place things upon the ground on which they ought to stand."

**Jefferson** asked **Lafayette** to be the **Governor of the Louisiana Territory**, but he declined.

Fifty years after the Revolution began, **Marquis de Lafayette** visited America.

He traveled over 6,000 miles to 24 States.

While on a six month tour of America, **Lafayette** praised:

"the grandeur and prosperity of those happy United States, who, at the same time they nobly secure the complete assertion of American independence, reflect, on every part of the world, **the light of a far superior political civilization.**"

He admired:

"The national **love of liberty** ... of a **virtuous resistance to oppression**, and institutions founded on the **rights of man**, and the **republican principle of self-government.**"



On June 17, 1825, **Lafayette** helped lay the cornerstone for the **Bunker Hill Monument**.

**Daniel Webster** spoke to a crowd of 20,000, which included **General Marquis de Lafayette**:

**"God** has granted you this sight of your country's happiness ere you slumber in the grave forever.

**He has allowed you to behold and to partake the reward of your patriotic toils;** and He has allowed to us, your sons and countrymen, to meet you here, and in the name of the present generation, in the name of your country, **in the name of liberty to thank you!"**

Beginning with **Fayetteville, North Carolina**, numerous cities, counties, streets, parks, and ships were named after him.





**Lafayette** died in Paris, May 20, 1834.

When word came to America that **Marquis de Lafayette had died**, **President Andrew Jackson** wrote to Congress, June 21, 1834:

"The afflicting intelligence of the death of the illustrious **Lafayette** has been received by me this morning.

I have issued the general order inclosed to cause appropriate honors to be paid by the Army and Navy to the memory of one so highly venerated and beloved by my countrymen, and whom **Providence** has been pleased to remove so unexpectedly from the agitating scenes of life."

Earlier, in 1824, **Lafayette** visited the **Brandywine battlefield** where he had fought alongside of **George Washington** in 1777.

While there, he filled a large trunk with **American soil**, stating that he wanted it put on his grave.

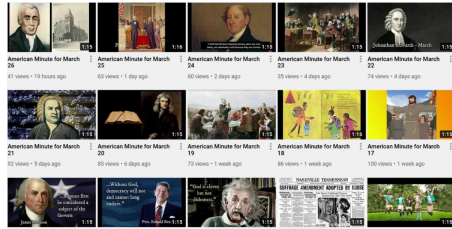
After his death, his son, "**Georges Washington Louis**

**Gilbert de La Fayette,"** fulfilled his father's wish.

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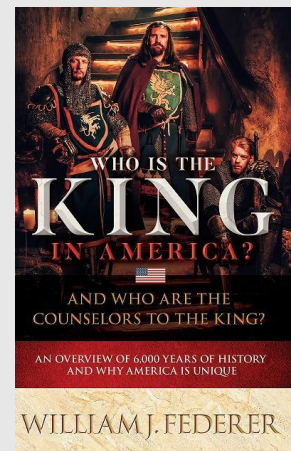
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