



## WHEN DID LAFAYETTE VISIT?

In the fall of 1824, the marquis de Lafayette, at the invitation of President James Monroe, embarked on a tour of the United States as the “Nation’s Guest” in honor of his service during the Revolutionary War. Throughout the states, cities hosted balls, parades, and banquets to celebrate his visit.

On October 16, 1824, Lafayette visited Alexandria after spending several days in Washington, D.C. visiting with the President and members of Congress. The Alexandria procession led by local militias commenced through a large decorative arch across Washington Street, then turned onto King Street before ending on Royal Street at the City Hotel.

The National Intelligencer from October 18 reports on the scene:

The windows on all the streets were filled with ladies in their best attire, who waved their handkerchiefs to the veteran as he passed, in token of their participation in the joy manifested by the multitude in the streets.

Upon arriving at the City Hotel, children dressed in white with blue and pink sashes and badges bearing the General’s image spread flower petals along his path into the hotel, where he was greeted by Alexandria’s Mayor and Common Council. After militias performed exercises for his review, Lafayette retired to 301 S. St. Asaph Street, a private residence, before returning to the hotel for a banquet in his honor.

The banquet at the hotel, run by tavern keeper Horatio Clagett, was the centerpiece of the Alexandria visit. Attendees included local elected officials, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, and George Washington Parke Custis, George Washington’s step-grandson. A series of toasts were given at the banquet and reprinted in the local newspapers. Lafayette toasted to the assembled company:

The City of Alexandria: May her prosperity and happiness, more and more realize the fondest wishes of our venerated Washington.