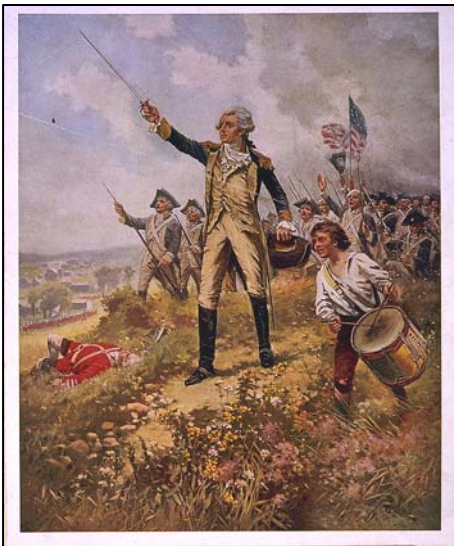

Before Lafayette Arrived Here

In 1825, the Marquis de Lafayette made a 13-day journey through Georgia. But nothing happens in isolation. The story of this journey is the confluence of other stories: the story of the Frenchman, the story of the early days of the State of Georgia and its people, and the story about new roads and the expansion of the United States. Before beginning the story of his journey through the State, it is necessary to delve into these different stories and to see how they come together at that moment. Then what is needed is to connect that stories in the past to today.

Story 1: A Brief Biography of Lafayette

There are libraries of books written about the Marquis de Lafayette. One cannot do full justice to his life story in just a few pages. But a brief overview is a necessary endeavor in order to understand why his visit was important in the first place.

Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, the future Marquis de Lafayette, was born to the aristocracy in southern France in 1757. He could have been just another nobleman's son but for certain events and facts. For the first thing, there was not much parental influence. His father died in a battle against the British-force in what is now Germany when he was only two. From that time until he was eleven, he was brought up apart from his mother; only as a pre-teen did she have him brought to her in Paris, to live with her and his great-grandfather, where he was enrolled in a future-Musketeers training program, giving welcome structure to his life. Yet, only two years later, she died, as did his great-grandfather in the same month, and an uncle, leaving the now-Marquis (he inherited the title from his late father) quite wealthy, but an orphan.



A stylized drawing by P. Moran of the young Lafayette in battle.
Courtesy the Library of Congress.

The second thing...in his upper teens, with a new wife, Adrienne, and on duty with the Army, Lafayette met other officers who would talk about this new revolt in the Americas, influencing him to have views about liberty for all men. At the same time, he apparently joined the Masons, who had similar liberty-seeking views. It didn't hurt his ideas of liberty to also desire to have some revenge on the British for being a fatherless son, or for knocking the British Empire down a peg or two for having defeated France and costing it its North American colonies. With some difficulties—family and royalty were against he and other French officers fighting in the Americas—the young aristocrat managed to sail across the Atlantic, landing in South Carolina in 1777.

The barely-English-speaking twenty-year-old shortly thereafter met and bonded with the rebellion leader George Washington. Lafayette's willingness to serve without pay, unlike many other foreign officers, made it possible for him to serve on Washington's staff. His first fighting took place in a retreat from the battle at Brandywine, in Pennsylvania. Despite taking a leg wound, he took

command and kept the retreat from becoming a rout, endearing him to the men and his superior officers. Soon given command of troops, he fought in other campaigns in New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island, and shared the hardships of Valley Forge. He treated his men well and respectfully and shared both the fighting and the privations.

Those aspects and exploits soon made him a popular hero, in the United States and in France. On a brief return to his homeland in 1779-80, Lafayette was assigned to helping the American envoys in fostering the needed alliance of the French military onto the side of the Americans. Successful, Lafayette then returned to the battles still taking place in the United States. General Lafayette patrolled in New York and New Jersey, and tried to turn the reluctant French naval forces into a cooperative partner. In 1781, he was sent south, becoming part of the forces that trapped General Cornwallis, taking an important redoubt—an earthen, outer defensive fort—along with Alexander Hamilton, his friend, at Yorktown that led to the final defeat of the British army.

Over the next few years, the French hero helped with treaty and trade negotiations between two nations, and even worked on the earliest efforts to end the slave trade and foster better relations with some tribes of Indians. His Paris home was a popular hangout for Americans. But other than one final voyage to the now-independent States, he remained in France, starting on a career that he hoped would change France into a democracy as well.

In the late 1780s, Lafayette became part of the French Revolution, as part of the earliest attempts at an Assembly for the people, yet also as a part of the Royal Guard. He was striving to stay in the middle between the royalty, whom he wanted to keep but shed of their powers much like today's British royalty, and the everyday citizens of France. It was a fine line, and Lafayette couldn't balance on it. Over time, due to various actions, his popularity waned as both sides felt he was a player for the other side. In 1791, after Dragoons of which he was in charge fired into a crowd, his reputation fell into tatters. Lafayette tried to flee in 1792, but was captured and held in prisons in Belgium, Luxembourg, Poland, Prussia, and what today is the Czech Republic. He remained a prisoner through 1797—his wife and daughters joining him in 1795--when a treaty between the Habsburgs and Napoleon finally freed him. By 1799 Napoleon allowed him to be repatriated, initially without French citizenship or most of his properties. He was impoverished, other than some support from Americans, and he was free only as long as he promised to stay out of politics, since he refused to support Napoleon.

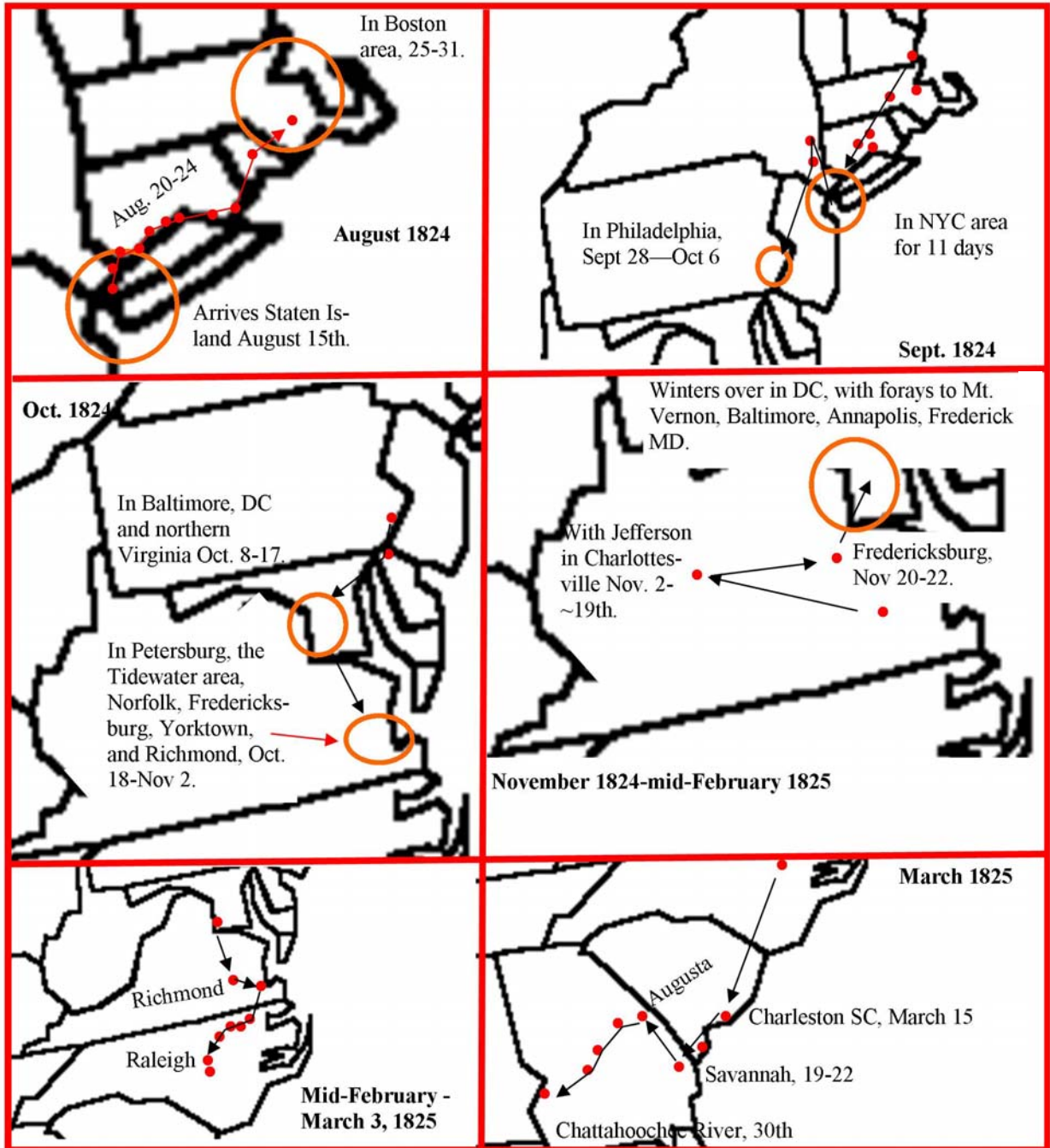
Lafayette, in fact, refused all honors and appointments by Napoleon. He made a few speeches, and his home was often visited by Americans and others who sought democracy in France and elsewhere. In 1807, his loyal wife Adrienne grew ill and died.

Napoleon lost his empire to Britain and its allies in 1814. Except for a brief Napoleonic restoration, a royal dynasty of Napoleonic emperors, the Bourbons, came to rule France once the victorious allies left France. Although Lafayette was elected to the Chamber of Representatives, then to the Chamber of Deputies, his dislike of the new royalty restored much of his reputation as a champion of liberty and an antagonist to the loyalists. That dislike involved him peripherally with various conspiracies and plots, though never enough to imprison him.

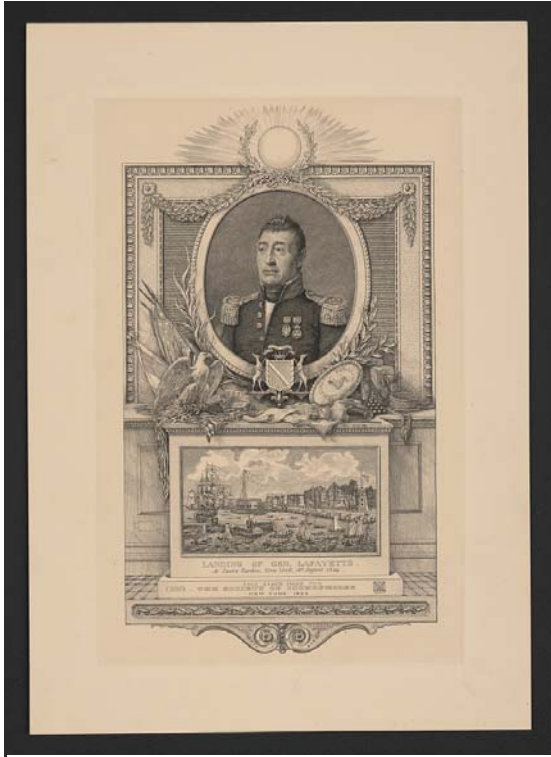
He lost his seat in the Chamber of Deputies in 1823. As a matter of great timing, at that same moment, Lafayette was invited by President James Monroe to come to America on a grand tour, to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the start of the Revolutionary War. Monroe also wanted Lafayette to visit because Lafayette was the last surviving Major General, and because it would help to remind the growing nation of its past and bind all the new states to the old ones. Despite opposition—again—to his traveling, this time by the Bourbons, the now

67-year-old once again managed to leave France for the United States.

Lafayette arrived in New York in August of 1824, and all of that year and the first three months of the next were engaged in events in the original 13 states, primarily from Virginia to Massachusetts. With him was his oldest son George Washington Motier (sometimes written as Georges and with Lafayette as the surname), and his secretary/manservant Auguste Levasseur, who would record the trip in a diary. While 'wintering over' in Washington City (today's District of Columbia), he received numerous invitations to visit cities and places in the United States, including from Governor Troup in Georgia. But Lafayette was reluctant to ac-



Lafayette's Grand Tour, up to and including time in Georgia, 1824-5.



Lafayette as he arrived in New York harbor in 1824. Courtesy, Library of Congress.

cept Troup's invite; he had no connection to Georgia, having never visited the state nor fought there. What changed his mind was an invitation from Alabama's Governor Israel Pickens to visit that six-year-old state, and 'see the new America west of the Appalachians.' Lafayette eagerly accepted, and spent the winter planning both his expected places to travel south of Virginia, and now that unexpected chance to go west of the Appalachians for the first time in his life. Along the way he had to pass through Georgia and could take part in events honoring old compatriots, Pulaski and Greene.

While in South Carolina, he took part in a variety of celebrations, then took a steamboat out of Charleston, making stops at Edisto Island and the city of Beaufort. On March 19, 1825 he entered Georgia territory by passing from the Atlantic Ocean into the North Channel of the Savannah River.

Story 2: Georgia, from Colony to Statehood

Georgia was the last of the original 13 British colonies, founded only in 1732 by the efforts of James Oglethorpe. But it wasn't the state we know today. The chartered colony only went from the Savannah River on the north-east, the Atlantic on the east side, to the Altamaha and Ocmulgee Rivers on its west. Georgia's purpose for the King of England was to act as a buffer between the other established colonies and the Spanish to the south, who had ruthlessly at times moved northward and destroyed settlements and forts of other nations in the territory. [The Spanish colonies of Florida and West Florida would become contentious neighbors to the future USA and states of Georgia and Alabama, requiring various treaties to set borderlines, and ultimately acquisition by the new nation.] Other territory, to the north, south, and west would be added onto the colony's area, and much of what is now Alabama and Mississippi would be Georgia territory, though not part of the eventual state.



Before Lafayette Arrived Here

Not all of Georgia had belonged to Georgia, though. The southwestern part from the Gulf Coast northward, between the Chattahoochee River that is its now-current western boundary, and the Flint River to the west of the Ocmulgee River that runs through Macon, belonged to the various Creek and Muscogee Indians.

It was only 40-some years after its founding that the Revolutionary War began. At that time, for all practical purposes, Georgia consisted of the cities (and forts) along the coast plus Savannah and Augusta. The latter was positioned where falls prevented further travel inland by boats, and where some trading routes between the colonies and the Creeks crossed the Savannah River. While there was travel and trade further away from the Savannah River, there were few settlements of any size far from that waterway. Georgia cities interior to the Savannah River didn't begin to be formed in the original and enlarged parts of the new state until after the Revolution.

During the War both large cities were attacked and taken by British forces and used as bases for their Southern strategy to defeat the colonies from 'underneath' while the War up north became almost a stalemate. Savannah was under British occupation 1778-1782. Several forts were built, or repurposed after conquering them, and fortifications were built around and south of the city. There were also multiple battles all around Savannah to try and free it, with Continentals, French, even Haitian troops, though it wasn't free until the War ended.

But once the War ended and the British surrendered in Georgia, it became the 10th colony to sign on to the Articles of Confederation, the first 'constitution' of the new nation, and later the Fourth state to join after the real Constitution was created.

Savannah was the capital of the colony and at first the entire state. The War kept the government in motion, its meetings were in other cities when Savannah was under British control. From 1785 into the mid-1790's, Augusta took the reins but it was contentious between Northern and Southern Georgians. A third capital, Louisville, was established in 1796 but that only lasted ten years. The central city of Milledgeville became the capital by consensus in 1807, which lasted until 1868, when Atlanta became the fifth and current capital.

By treaty with their new neighbor the United States, the Creek Nation owned the land as far east as the Flint River near Macon, Georgia and most of the western side of that state, plus much of Alabama east of today's Montgomery. Over time that area would be diminished by other treaties, war losses, and just plain theft. The long-time American Indian Agent Col. Benjamin Hawkins was one of the rare officers who treated the Creeks honestly, and they respected him, but even he could not stop the relentless hunger for land by white settlers. The Creek Nation did take its territorial integrity seriously, even if the American nation did not, and traveling through or settling within the Nation, without sponsorship of another Creek or marriage to a Creek woman, was a definite danger, and an effective block to settlers.

That Creek nation was shrunk following the Creek War of 1813-14, which was an outgrowth of the continual battle between Indians and White settlers ignoring treaties. After losing to General Andrew Jackson at the battle of Horseshoe Bend in Alabama, most of the Creek Nation in Georgia evaporated and some of the Nation in Alabama as well. It didn't matter to anti-Indian Jackson that some of the land ceded was owned by Creek and Cherokee allies, which didn't help create future peace.

Hawkins died in 1806, and the Indian Agency limped onward on his farm, until the official Agency was moved to Fort Mitchell, Alabama a few years later. When Lafayette toured the State, the Creek Nation still had some of the territory, but a new war, in the 1830s, would end that, with the Indians (not yet Native Americans) being forced to move west to the



Oklahoma Territory during the so-called Trail of Tears. During the time of Lafayette's Tour, there were still tensions between the Creeks and the settlers and their governments, but for the brief time of his stay, the two co-existed well.

Story 3: The Federal Road

When 1803 was over, the size of the U.S. had doubled with the purchase by President Thomas Jefferson of the Louisiana Territory, and its major port city New Orleans. For Washington, the nation's capital, to communicate by mail with officials in New Orleans required major time commitments by sea vessels, which also had to navigate between the Spanish territories of East and West Florida, and Cuba. Alternatively, mail could go via horse over the mountains of Kentucky or Tennessee to the Natchez Trace, a trail from Nashville to Natchez, Mississippi, and then by boat or further horsemen down the Mississippi River.

It would take weeks to send mail and then get a response back. A faster route was desired. An experimental trip on an extant Indian trail from the East Coast demonstrated that a real postal road that way would cut significant time from mail service. But such a route had to go through both Creek and Spanish lands, neither of which were safe, nor considered desirable by those governments.

Nevertheless, an 1806 treaty with the Creeks was successfully negotiated to allow the United States to build such a postal road, from Milledgeville, Georgia through Alabama. From there, with reluctant Spanish permission, riders took other trails to New Orleans. Other American trails connected with it, to Augusta, Athens, GA and northward.

This was the start of the Federal Road, essentially one of the, if not *the*, first government-sponsored and paid-for interstate routes. By 'road' it is not meant to mean any kind of paved thoroughfare. This was a path through woods and fields at first no wider than could accommodate a couple of horses side by side. It followed ridges as much as possible, and over logs with packed earth bridging swamps and creeks.

The Georgia section went from Milledgeville to Macon and then through the Creek Nation starting at the Indian Agency on the Flint River. The Creeks even complied with their part of the treaty, building 'places of entertainment' under Indian control which became the various stands, taverns and inns for travelers, but most would not rate a one-star rating today. Both nefarious Indian and Whites made the road no walk in the park.

Unlike today's interstate highways, this 'interstate' was not laid down permanently in place. It tended to wander, creating various, sometimes simultaneous, sometimes crisscrossing, paths that would make a real map of it look like lines of overlapping soft noodles. Flooding, fallen trees and other reasons caused its path to change, sometimes in just small inconsequential parts, sometimes with large changes.

By 1811, when the ongoing frictions between some Creeks and the increasingly more numerous white settlers who took advantage of the route to emigrate to other parts of the Old

Southwest became too unbearable for the Creeks, the postal Road became a military Road, made wider to accommodate marching troops and wagons, and with the beginnings of forts and depots, largely without Creek approval. Only the area in east central Alabama that Lafayette would afterwards travel remained Creek, though just barely.

Many of the Federal Road travelers stayed, becoming the ancestors of large numbers of today's Georgians. Despite the thousands who took the trek, a rate that peaked in the 1820s, the most famous traveler on the Road would be the Marquis.

As an aside, before Lafayette could travel the Federal Road, he had to get there. It was not the only pathway in Georgia. While boats did much of the trade between the world and nation to Georgia through Savannah and Augusta, there was a road between the two large cities, the Old River Road. Stagecoaches for those who could afford it (and didn't mind the horrible travel conditions like mud, potholes, few amenities and uncomfortable coaches) and simply horse rides with or without carriages or wagons to pull, or just plain walkers could take that road. But it wasn't very profit-making and eventually it became disused.

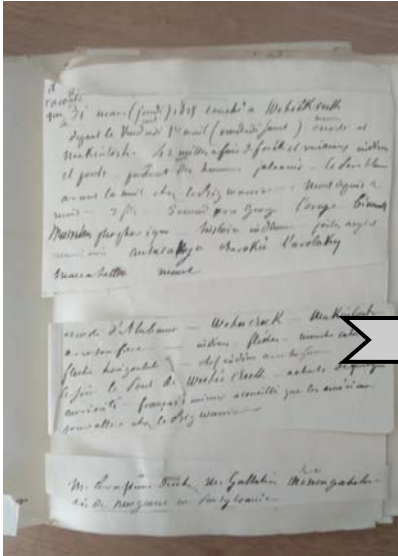
From Augusta, travelers could head west on the Milledgeville Stage Road (among other names). It would ultimately terminate in Milledgeville. This city came to be in 1803, as a deliberately planned city to be the state capital. As the main route west it connected with the Federal Road in Milledgeville and all the small cities between the two big ones. In a sense, it still exists, but mostly as modern, straightened and paved highways, local main streets, but also numerous fragments of the original road nearby to the modern ones.

Tying the Stories Together, 1825 + Today

In 1824, these stories come together. Lafayette is in hero heaven, away from the intrigues of France. As stated earlier, he had received that invitation to cross the mountains to a new, not-original-13th state on the other side of the Appalachians, and this opens the door to him seeing the vast interior of the new nation, places he had not ever imagined visiting. Along the way he would go through the historic parts of Georgia—the Revolutionary War zone of Augusta and Savannah—the new settlements west of them as far as the original colony boundary of the Ocmulgee River, what we'll call the Fourth State zone—and the lands of the Creek Nation. Inadvertently, Lafayette becomes not only a patriotic hero but an explorer, probably a major cause of future American immigration. It would send him touring out of the 'civilized' areas of the country, to the lands of the Indians, to the mighty Mississippi River, and the new younger states of the United States. A road to get there, now well established (if uncomfortable), was his to use. Lafayette's only constraint was that he had made a commitment to be at Bunker Hill in Massachusetts in June for its monument dedication. Could he swing this long trip and still make the dedication? In any case, the stories come together—Lafayette's life, the state of Georgia, and the new roads carved out of the forests and lands.

To tie this moment, the next 13 days of Lafayette's life with today, two hundred years later, it is necessary to ask, and answer, the following five questions:

- 1. If Lafayette were to do the journey today, where would he go?**
- 2. How would he get there?**
- 3. What would he see today?**



EN AMÉRIQUE. 171

eux la civilisation ne s'est point souillée de crimes comme celle de la Grande-Bretagne dans les Indes-Orientales; mais, tout en leur rendant cette justice, on ne peut s'empêcher de prendre intérêt au sort des Indiens expropriés. Ainsi, en rencontrant à chaque pas la case d'écorce du chasseur moscovite encore habitée par la sécurité et les simples vertus de l'ignorance, nous n'avons pu songer, sans tristesse, que bientôt elle serait renversée et remplacée par la ferme du cultivateur américain.

Ce fut sur les bords de la rivière Chatahouchee que nous vîmes pour la première fois les Indiens réunis en troupe pour recevoir le général. Grand nombre de femmes et de jeunes garçons couvraient le feuillage sur la rive opposée, et nous aperçûmes, en nous avançant, des cris de joie. Des guerriers descendaient la pente d'une colline peu éloignée, et accouraient au point du rivage où devait toucher un bac sur lequel nous étions descendus. La variété et la singulière richesse de leurs costumes offraient le coup d'œil le plus pittoresque. M. Georges Lafayette sauta le premier à terre, et en un moment fut entouré d'hommes, de femmes, d'enfants qui s'agitaient, sautaient, dansaient autour de lui, touchaient ses mains, ses habits avec un air de surprise et de ravissement qui lui causait presque autant d'embarras que d'émotion. Tout

One original source of first-hand information is Auguste Levasseur's original hand-written notes (Courtesy, the Lafayette Fondation Chambrun); Center, a scan of a page from Levasseur's book of 1829.

4. What would be different? What would be the same? 5. And how would we follow along?

Our constraint is how to get enough information after two centuries to know where he went and how he got there. Up north his visits were well documented. But beyond the New England and Middle Atlantic states, the population was smaller, there were fewer newspapers and writers, and the states and most cities were far less developed. Today there are few sources of first-hand information on his visit to Georgia.


The first primary—indeed, *very* primary—resource material comes from Lafayette's secretary and manservant Auguste Levasseur, who did a daily diary, often filled with fascinating details but not always inclusive of accurate location information. Addresses (speeches) mattered more than addresses (locations). This author is grateful to have received photographic copies, and typed versions of same, of Levasseur's original notes in French for the Alabama section of his book. His book, *Lafayette in America in 1824 and 1825, Journal of a Voyage to the United States*, in both French and English, made from his notes, is available online even in as far back a form as the 1829 version. Levasseur's future book on this tour would give him fame and undoubtedly contributed to interest in Europe to emigrating to America.

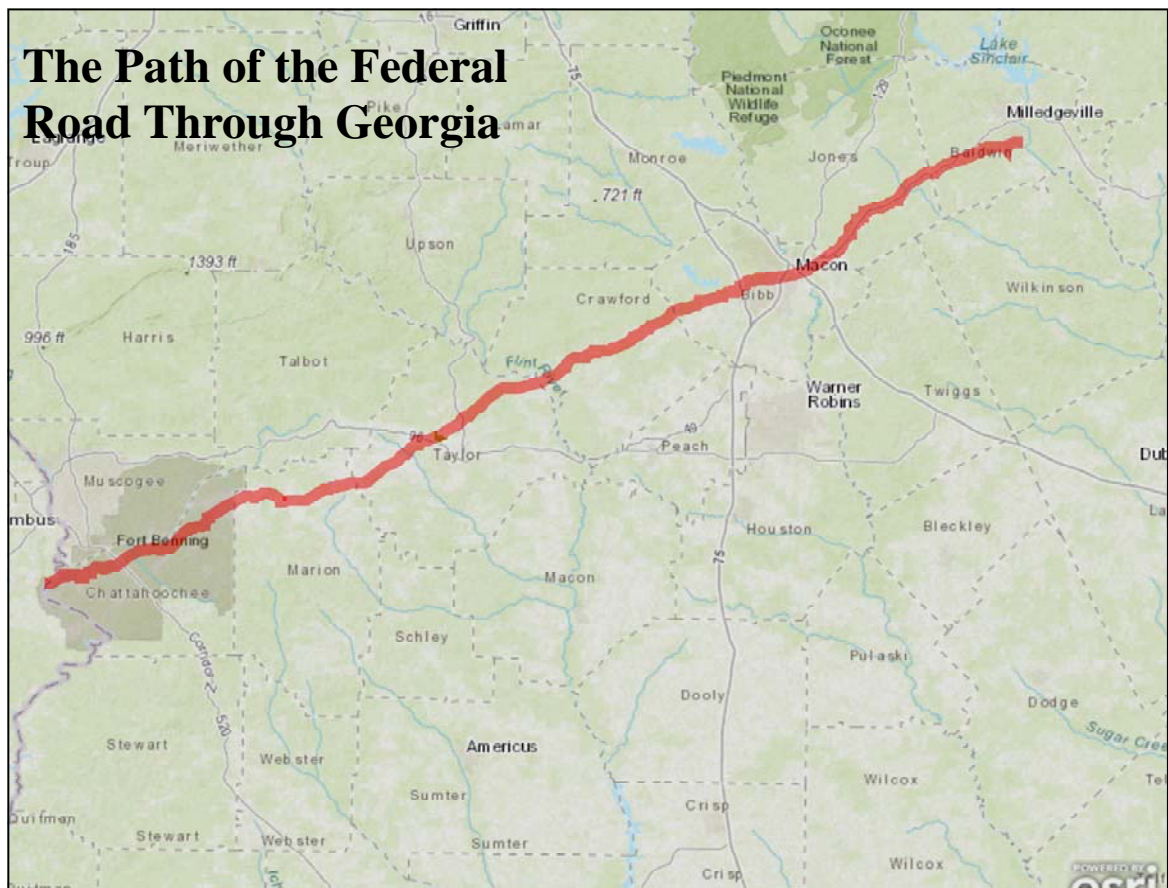
Other sources were newspapers, notably those of Savannah, Augusta and Milledgeville. Archives of them exist to search. One source using those newspaper articles is a book that quotes them generously, by Edgar E. Brandon, *A Pilgrimage of Liberty*, a 1940's-era somewhat iffy recap of Lafayette's visit. Generally accurate, there are occasions when he makes errors that need correcting by other sources. For other materials found useful, see the Selected Sources section of this book. Finally, occasionally, journals and diaries of the people who met Lafayette are available for consulting, but frequently they are lower in accuracy than objective observers.

As for determining Lafayette's route...that's also challenging. Early Federal Road maps were few, and almost all done from hearsay and travelers' tales, with little surveying. They are more anecdotal than accurate in depth, though that doesn't make them completely useless. But there is, in fact, no known printed map of the Road in Georgia.

More useful and interesting was an 1827 state effort to survey every district and township in the state. It shows the Federal Road (and some others) through most of its length from the site of the Indian Agency to the Chattahoochee River. Taking these maps, hand-drawn as they are, and overlaying them on modern maps gives some indications of where it crossed streams, passed known forts and residences, and in some cases, roads that still exist today. But over 200 years the landscape has had many changes and the streams and roads aren't always in existence today or in the same shape. In times near this book's writing, there have been various studies that generated digital maps of the Road, including one online map produced by an unknown-to-this-author University of Georgia student in times past on a page at ar-cgis.net. But site research at places where it crossed roads and streams sometimes found it to be not in line with visible fragments of the Road, and Forts and its pathways are in the wrong place, notably on the west side of the state near Fort Perry. Nevertheless, the District Plat maps, and also County maps made right after the Civil War are enormously helpful in finding the locations of the Federal, Milledgeville Stage, and Old River Roads

One route he didn't take was the so-called Upper Federal Road, which went from around Macon to Eastern Alabama. But it didn't exist until the 1830s, long after Lafayette went home. Plus there are records of stops he made in his fast-as-he-could dash across the state that clearly indicate he stuck to the well-worn original Federal Road.

Lafayette took the winter months of 1824-25 to plan his journey circumnavigating the United States' 24 existing States. He left his temporary residence in Northern Virginia in February. For us to follow along on his March journey through Georgia we, too, must make some preparations. That takes place in the next section. 



Before Lafayette Arrived Here

Let's Go! But Wait...Before You Go...

The goal of this book is to follow Lafayette and his party across Georgia as closely as possible to his actual route to answer the questions posed earlier. For points east of Milledgeville that means following the Milledgeville Stage Road; for points westward, the Federal Road. As just mentioned, neither exists in its original state but modern roads do seem to follow its route, either as a state highway or roads parallel to it. In Augusta and Savannah, that means following local city streets that haven't really changed (except in name, often). Between Augusta and Savannah, he went by steamboat but we'll trace out the Old River Road. But other travelers may not have been able to afford the rates—like we have with plane flights. They followed on foot, by horse, in a stagecoach, along a path known as the River Route, made up of one road started from Savannah heading northwest, a similar road starting from Augusta and heading south east, and part made much earlier by James Oglethorpe, the founder of Georgia, called the Oglethorpe Trail. Lafayette obviously did not take it but that doesn't mean we can not. Part of the historical fun here is to see these 200-year-old Road fragments. But sometimes it is not possible to follow the Road exactly because it may no longer exist, or it may be on private property and inaccessible. In fact, a lot of the Federal Road has been paved over or erased from the landscape. Site research at nearly every place that Federal Road maps indicate crossed or was parallel to modern roads show....nothing. There were traces known to exist on private property, but this book won't point them out.






Obviously, this is an auto tour. In fact, the roads in parts of several counties are often true rural roads, on dirt, even grass. Cell phone reception in parts of Georgia still can be weak and sporadic at best. If you need to download a map to work with your GPS through the cell network, you probably won't be able to do so there. In terms of speed and stops for food and sleep, today you will be going faster than his horse-drawn carriage, but there are some parts with considerable miles with no gas stations, no eateries or no grocery stores for supplies. No Lafayette-visited or few other colonial-era inns survive along the routes, nor sometimes not even modern ones. Bring your own food and drink and have a full tank of gas when you start.

There are areas where a bike might be serviceable, but for much of the tour from the Savannah River to the Chattahoochee River this is not bike-able mostly because the roads are high-speed state highways with no bike lanes or sidewalks. It just cannot be recommended that this be tried as a bicycle tour. To do so is risky, not recommended, and is at the reader's risk.




Similarly, hiking is only viable in small doses, and walking tours are really only good in the cities, and frankly, only in Savannah, Augusta, Milledgeville, and perhaps Macon is walking even worth the effort. Other places are either all things in one place (or very close by) or nothing there to see.

Many of the locations of where Lafayette stopped are on private property. On a tour like this, there are many things visible if you stop and look them over from the road, a sidewalk, or the public right of way of the road. Rights of way can range from just a few feet on either side of the actual road to as much as 20-30 feet. Enjoy the views but stay off the private property beyond the right of way border. Often the right of way is pretty obvious, by the shoulders of the roads and the lines of fencing. Respect them.

The symbols on the provided maps include:

-  A numbered or lettered red (or, rarely, blue) circle symbolizing a point mentioned on the map, standing for a turn, a mile-point. They are labeled on each route in numerical order.
-  On the other hand, the location of an historical feature is shown as an alphabetically-lettered red star symbolizing such as a point mentioned on the text that was a Lafayette tour corner, or a structure, existent or not. In the text this is written as “asterisk B” (*B) as in order in the chapter.
-  A numbered/lettered Fleur de Lis in a circle stands for a location of a particular Lafayette-related site, such as a place he slept at, talked at, watched something, or even rode on, or a key interesting point of historical importance he passed by. They are numbered in order of occurrence through the book, through his journey.
-  Those Lafayette historic sites that are completely inaccessible for the public are generally not numbered; they are, however, indicated with an open asterisk symbol.
 -  Other sites of either geographical, descriptive or non-Lafayettean historical interest are marked with a red dot.

Mileage amounts should be taken with an accuracy value of +/- 0.1 mile. The flip of an odometer digit really signifies a zone, not an exact point. So a distance measure of 3.4 miles could encompass a location being at the start of the zone after 3.3 miles, or within feet of a zone beginning at 3.5 miles. Five hundred feet can be a considerable distance to seek a site within. In fact, as modern measurers know, it can be plus or minus that tenth of a mile on both ends of the zone, or 0.2 miles that something can be off. Look not for the exact moment your odometer flips to a particular amount; the site one seeks may be likely not *at* that point, but certainly *near* it.

-  A dotted red line on the map is the *approximate* route of the River Route, Federal Road, or Milledgeville Stage Road, when it is not on an actual road you can travel.
-  A solid red line indicates a visible section of the original path of those roads, if on the non-drivable part of its path, OR the road we CAN drive to follow it. NOTE: Vegetation can EASILY hide a “visible” stretch of Road!
-  A blue solid line indicates a road we have to take in order to progress because the actual path of the ancient roadway is not available.

Other symbols as needed are explained on each map’s legend area beneath the chart.

The notation **RN** in the text refers to the more extensive discussion of the point, or the particular site, in question to be found in the **Research Notes** section of this work. There, for things that may not be obvious or clearly mentioned in the sources, a more extensive analysis of the source materials or our field research, and arguments on the

research for those more interested in how decisions were determined...for something... is given.

The term `Federal Road' is used to refer to the highway as it was 200 years ago, and as a generality.

The base maps upon which these symbols are placed were used by permission of either OpenStreetMap (OSM) or the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), for which the publisher is immensely grateful.

Almost all photos were taken by and copyrighted to the author; those from other persons or sources are noted in the photo's caption, and are used with permission.

Finally, the text here is entirely the responsibility of the author.

Now let's go!...from where Lafayette began his morning entering the state of Georgia.



A 180-degree panoramic view of the North Channel from the north side of Cockspur Island. The Atlantic is center-right, South Carolina center-left, and the river coming from upstream on the far left.



Let's Go! But Wait...Before You Go...

Savannah River, the First River

Visiting the Revolutionary War Zone

Day 1, March 19, 1825—Entering Georgia on the River, Arriving in Savannah



The Mouth of the Savannah River, from Cockspur Island's north shore. The Atlantic is to the right, South Carolina, left background.

Before we can begin to follow Lafayette *through* Georgia, he first has to get here. Lafayette had visited the coastal city of Beaufort, SC, at midnight between March 18-19th, after the ship had left a requested, non-scheduled stop at Edisto Island south of Charleston. The ship, the *Henry Shultz*, left Beaufort accompanied by South Carolina's governor. Traveling down the coast during the rest of the night, they reached the mouth of the Savannah River at sunrise.

But the river has two entrances, the North Channel which is larger and more traveled, and the South Channel, separated by Cockspur Island which now houses the remains of Fort Pulaski, a fort not yet built in Lafayette's time.

When Cockspur Island's west end is reached, the ship needs to pass Elba Island on a large bend in the river. Shortly afterwards, the two Channels merge into one for a few miles, allowing the ship to switch to the South Channel and pass below Hutchinson Island. Fort Jackson, now a museum is passed on the southern river bank near a water treatment plant, to reach the city.

The coastline is as marshy today as it was then and there are few coastal roads to follow. For us to get to the start of Lafayette's entrance into the River, yet remain in Georgia, one must drive out of the city of Savannah....(Map 1)

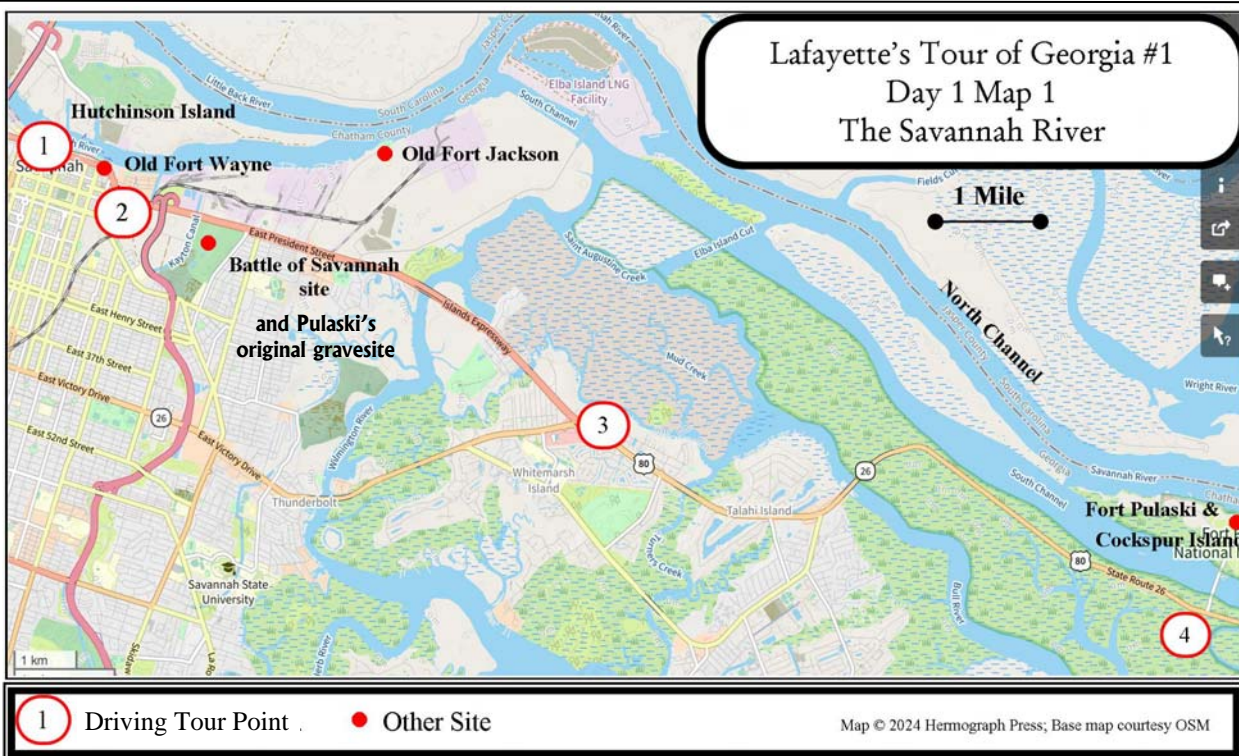
- 1 From downtown Savannah's City Hall, on Bay Street at the intersection of Bull Street, head eastward 0.8 miles until Bay Street curves to the right and ends at E. President Street.
- 2 Turn left and head east on E. President. This becomes Island Expressway, a faster route to the recreational areas of Tybee Island and the Atlantic beaches.
- 3 In 5.5 miles Island Expressway ends when it merges with US-80.

Route 80 eventually heads past beach houses and through the marshes to ride alongside the South Channel.

- 4 Turn left after 7.1 miles onto Fort Pulaski Road (well marked) and pay your entrance fee to go over the Channel to the parking lot next to Fort Pulaski.

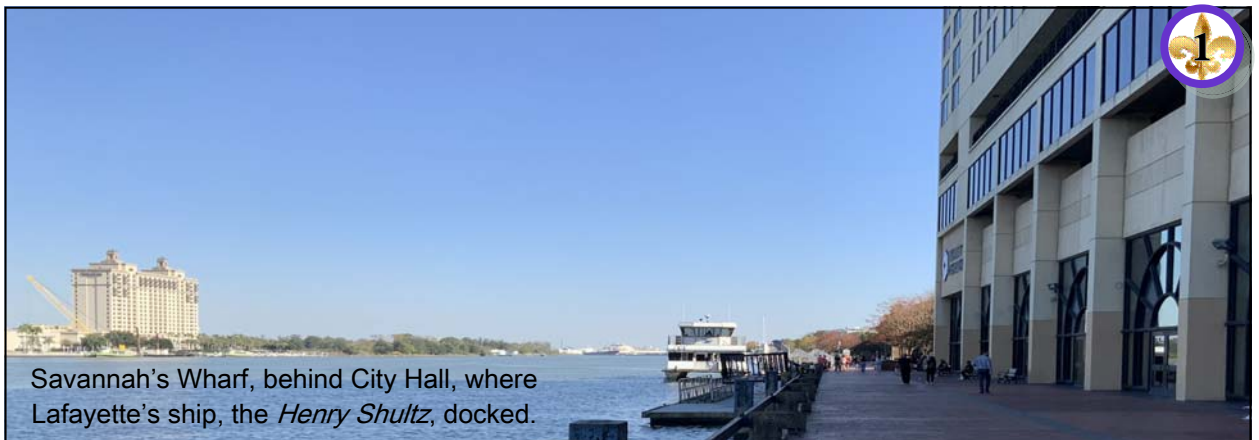
A hiking trail off the lot of a mere 1/4th mile takes you to Cockspar Island's north edge, where you can see the North Channel, South Carolina across it, and the mouth of the Savannah River at the Atlantic far off to the right.

Lafayette's ship is late; it was expected early in the morning. The citizens and politicians, bands and militia are all lined up to meet him. Except there was no 'him.' Many slowly wandered off. In the morning, a signal rider from Fort Jackson brings a message that the ship has



Side Trip: Fort Pulaski

Fort Pulaski was not in existence when Lafayette passed by; it wasn't started until 1829. In 1833 it was named for Casimir Pulaski, a Polish cavalryman and commander who trained soldiers during Revolutionary War. Completed in 1847, it had walls 11-foot thick. But it was poorly staffed and little used so it was an easy target for Confederates during the early days of the Civil War. Their control didn't last long; falling in 1862 to Union forces, using new rifled-bore cannon that could go miles farther with more accuracy than smooth-bore Rebel cannon. After two days, the fort surrendered. It became both a Union fort that blocked Savannah's port too well, and a prison for Confederate soldiers later. It briefly became a national monument in 1924, reverted back to Navy during World War II, then back to being a park, adding a museum.



Savannah's Wharf, behind City Hall, where Lafayette's ship, the *Henry Shultz*, docked.

been sighted passing the Fort. Around 3 PM, the *Henry Schultz* finally gets past Fort Wayne on the eastern end of the city. The official ship, the Revenue Cutter *Gallatin* and a collection of boats met the steamboat mid-channel near Fort Jackson, and in town Lafayette and some others (but not the South Carolina governor who was forbidden by law from crossing state lines!) were taken off the boat onto barges in advance of docking and brought to the **wharf** directly behind **Yamacraw Bluff**, the site of Oglethorpe's 1733 landing and today's City Hall.

The latter, for a reference point, is at the intersection of Bay Street—parallel to the River—and Bull Street, perpendicular to it. Bull Street is the 'Greenwich Meridian' of Savannah.

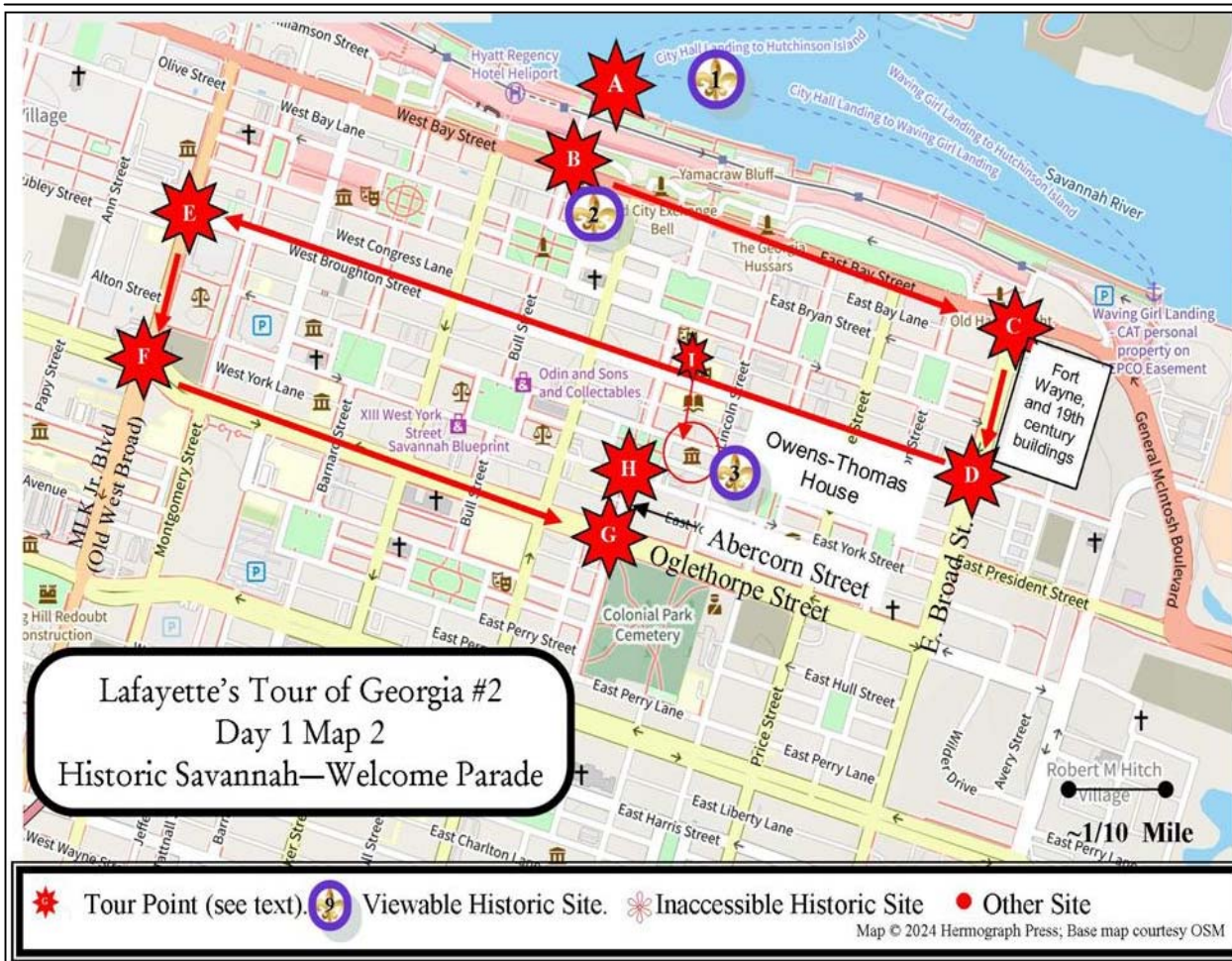


City Hall, site of the City Exchange, high up on Yamacraw Bluff.

All streets that run parallel to the River are today divided into East and West portions here at Bull Street. And, one of Savannah’s greatest charms, streets in the historic district are arranged as a grid, with major streets making large square Ward outlines with smaller park-and-monument plots in almost all *their* centers, *the* Squares of Savannah.

The Bluff is rather high and the entire modern downtown is well above the river level. Along the Savannah River today is River Street, and above that, for part of the way, Factor’s Walk. The former is crammed with restaurants, souvenir shops and other stores and is a fun place to visit. It is also fun watching the river traffic that often includes very large ocean-going container ships that float high over the water’s surface. There are numerous stairs that lead up from the River to Bay Street. The steps are steep and worn from many years of exposure to the elements and foot traffic. But on top of the Bluff was the then-government center, **City Exchange** (which lasted until 1904), now City Hall. Tour boats use where Lafayette’s ship eventually docked, behind and slightly downriver from being directly behind City Hall.

After Lafayette being welcomed at the River by the mayor William Daniell and he giving a short speech in return, he climbs the Bluff and meets a former acquaintance from Philadelphia, Captain Rees, and Governor George Troup, to the accompiament of four booming cannons, one that came from Yorktown, VA. They, along with another former officer from the War, Col. Francis Huger, are taken on a welcoming parade of about a couple of miles length, with politicians, militia and throngs of cheering citizens. To follow along, begin in front of the site of the City Exchange (i.e. the City Hall at Bull and Bay Street, *A), and....(Map 2).





***B ...Head East on E. Bay Street, past the upper levels of the River entertainment area. At some point, cross the street to avoid closed sidewalks due to construction and to also avoid traffic that either goes down the ramps to River Street, or onto Bluff parking... anywhere they can find it. You will go seven streets, to East Broad Street (photo left), Turn right here.**

***C Heading south of E. Broad Street, you will see, especially on the East (left) side (in the photo above, behind the truck), the site of old Fort Wayne. During the War, it was Fort Prevost, renamed for General `Mad Anthony` Wayne, and lasted through several wars, decommissioned in the 1840s for a gas works; those are the buildings you mostly see. Then there is a string of buildings, mostly commercial enterprises but some residences, too, which Lafayette would have seen since they date back to the 1700s!**

***D Head south for six intersections to wide and busy E. Broughton Street and turn right to head back into historic downtown.**



***E The parade goes the whole way west on Broughton Street to where it ends in a T-intersection with today's Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (we'll abbreviate it as MLK), but was then and for most of history, West Broad Street (photo left).**

There are still concrete corner markers showing the old name (photo right).



***F Turn left and head south, away again from the River. It is just a short walk to West Oglethorpe Avenue, an extremely busy and wide road with a grassy median beginning just east of the intersection with MLK. Turn left.**

West Oglethorpe Avenue is far more residential than places passed up to now, but still an active area with lots of traffic. SCAD, the Savannah College of Art and Design, and the Civic Center, take up much of the territory on West Oglethorpe. After crossing Bull Street, this street becomes East Oglethorpe Avenue.



***G** Two intersections later (counting on the left side, or three on the right), you reach Abercorn Street, with a Savannah Fire Department station and the Colonial Cemetery on the right. Turn left onto Abercorn Street (photo, above left).

***H** In two streets you reach E. York Street and Oglethorpe Square. Turn right (photo, above right; the Owens-Thomas House, white arrowed, in background).

***I** Go one short stretch right to an offset Abercorn. Turn left here.

***J** Stop in one block, at E. President Street. At that corner is what is today known as the Owens-Thomas House and Slave Quarters (photo right).



Owens-Thomas House from the right, south side, with its famous balcony in white.



What Lafayette would see today if he stood on the Owens-Thomas House balcony. To the right is Oglethorpe Square.

Back then, the **Owens-Thomas House** was one of several boarding houses operated by a Mrs. Mary Maxwell. This house was first owned by merchant Richard Richardson, in 1819, after building over the foundation of an earlier home; the depression of 1820 drove him to forfeit it to a bank. In 1830 it was bought by a George Owens and it stayed in the family until 1951 when his granddaughter, Margaret Owens Thomas, sold it to become a museum.

It was here at about 5:30 PM that Lafayette's welcome parade ended, followed by another short speech by the mayor. It is said that Lafayette responded to him, and lore says it was on the balcony on the south side, but it is not recorded for certain that it was, or exactly where. And then Lafayette was done, officially, for the day. He had dinner, with 300 citizens, around 7 PM at the city council chambers.

Local lore also says he gave a speech—sometime in this or the next two days—at the City Hotel, just down the street from the City Exchange, but nobody else recorded that. Today, the building at 21 W. Bay still exists, and after many evolutions, it is once again a place of food and drink....the Moon River Brewing Company. 

A Brief History of James Oglethorpe and the Mismatched Squares

The founder of the cities of Augusta, Savannah, and the Province of Georgia was General James Oglethorpe, 1696-1785. What became Oglethorpe Square across from the Owens-Thomas House was originally called Upper New Square. Like several other persons and Squares, he has a statue, just not in the square named for him! His statue is in Chippewa Square, in place of Pulaski's proposed monument. Why so?

Oglethorpe convinced the British King to establish the Province. He wanted it as a place for the perpetually unemployed but able-bodied. That didn't quite go over as well as having the 13th colony formed as a buffer between the 12 other colonies and Spanish territory to the south. But the 36-year-old took what he could get, gathered the 'worthy poor' and shipped with them over the Atlantic to found, first, Savannah. He was, in an official—or not—manner, de facto head of the colony from 1732-1738. He was considered fair but often strong-willed and not eager to accept what the local officials selected by the colonists wanted to do. Oglethorpe added military commander of a regiment to his job list. In 1739-40 he fought a war with Spanish Florida and even briefly conquered St. Augustine, the oldest city in the Americas. Two years later, Spain took out its revenge and attacked Georgia. In 1743, Oglethorpe made a trip back to England, where he remained.

Oglethorpe, despite his strong will, was almost as egalitarian as Lafayette. He had good relations with the Indians and with Jews. When the Revolution broke out, he was publicly for the King but privately a sympathizer with the Georgia rebels.

Lafayette will lay the ceremonial cornerstones, with all sorts of artifacts of the time in them, in Johnson and Chippewa Squares. But it took five years for funds to come together, but only for one monument, not two. So when Pulaski's memorial temporarily joined Nathaniel Greene's from 1830 to 1853, that left Chippewa Square, like most Squares, without a monument. In 1910, a fountain later built there was replaced with Oglethorpe's statue; and Pulaski would be moved (with his cornerstone) to Monterey Square, though there is a Pulaski Square, too!

Oh, yes....there is a Greene Square, but he isn't buried there. He's in Johnson Square. That's named for SC Governor Johnson, an early friend of the colony.