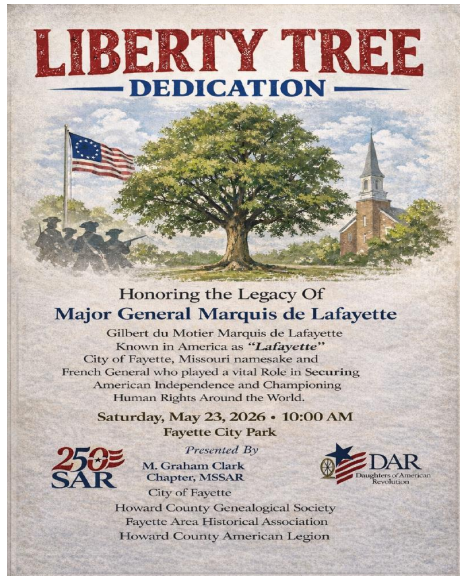


Lafayette Liberty Tree in Fayette, Missouri

On Saturday, May 23 2026, the M. Graham Clark Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution dedicated a Liberty Tree Memorial in the Fayette, MO City park.



The SAR was aided by the city of Fayette, the DAR and other agencies.

The tree was planted as a 20 feet tall disease resistant American Elm. An engraved granite marker, placed beside it, tells the story of the Liberty Tree.

The Liberty Tree project was a national project to honor the 250th birthday of our country and specifically to honor the Marquis De Lafayette. His full name is Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier de Lafayette.

Our patriot ancestors were assisted in their revolution by leaders from Poland, Germany, and Spain. But, perhaps the greatest contribution came from France in the person of the Marquis de Lafayette.



The Lafayette family was one of the wealthiest in France. They lived on a large estate where young Lafayette was born.

Lafayette was truly a man of two worlds. He was a member of the French aristocracy and very early became immensely wealthy. He could have lived a leisurely comfortable life supporting the status quo of royal rule. Instead, he committed to a life of service. He was made an officer of the French army at age 14. He came to our country to offer his services to overthrow royalty at age 19 and was made a general in the continental army. By the way, he was 16 when he married and his bride was 14.

Lafayette fought in the Battle of Brandywine, the Battle of Barren Hill, and the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse. Lafayette was wounded in the Battle of Brandywine. Lafayette carried these pistols in battle.



In 1781, Lafayette pursued the traitor, Benedict Arnold, in Virginia and helped trap the British Army at Yorktown, where he fought and witnessed the surrender of General Charles Cornwallis.

Lafayette's father, at 27, served as a grenadier colonel during the Seven Years' War, where he was killed by a British cannonade at the Battle of Minden in 1759. The elder Lafayette's death left his son with the title of marquis, at the age of two. It also left him very wealthy. The young Lafayette grew up with a hatred for the British.

Lafayette—going against the wishes of the French king, purchased his own ship to sail to the new world. The ship landed on June 13, 1777, after fifty-six days at sea. Lafayette and the other French officers on board then rode to Philadelphia to volunteer for the Continental Army. Lafayette accepted no pay for his service in the Revolution and spent much of his own money for salaries, uniforms, and supplies for his staff.

George Washington is known as the father of our country, but he had no biological children of his own. Washington and the young Lafayette considered themselves to be like a father and son. When Lafayette had his own first child, he named him George Washington Lafayette. His daughter was named Virginia.

After our revolution, Lafayette was a force in the French Revolution, fighting for liberty in his own country. He wrote the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen with Thomas Jefferson's assistance. This document was inspired by the United States Declaration of Independence. He and Jefferson were lifelong friends.

He also visited America in 1824 and toured the entire country including a visit to St. Louis, MO where he was the guest at a formal banquet.

On one of those visits, Lafayette and his son took dirt from Bunker Hill back to France.



When Lafayette died in 1834 at age 76, he was buried in France, but his grave was in that soil from Bunker Hill.

On July 4, 1917, General John Pershing - a native of Laclede, Missouri; stood at that grave to commemorate our army coming to the aid of France during World War One. Colonel Stanton, one of his staff officers, announced "Lafayette, we are here!"

Years later, in 1911, Congress named him an honorary citizen of the United States.





There are literally hundreds of cities, counties, and streets in this country that are named for Lafayette. Those places; including Fayette, Missouri and the Liberty Tre are a fitting memorial to General Lafayette. A statue is a cold unchanging thing of stone. The city of Fayette and the Liberty Tree are living memorials that will grow and prosper. The leaves of the elm tree will provide the comfort of cool shade just as our country provides the comfort of liberty to our citizens.

In 1917, Colonel Stanton and General Pershing Stood at Lafayette's grave and said "Lafayette, we are here". In 2026, we stood at the Fayette Liberty Tree and said; " Lafayette, Nous nous souvenous". in English, "Lafayette, we remember."