

Lewiston
History
Mysteries

In 1824, President James Monroe invited General Lafayette to the United States as the "nation's guest." He visited more than 70 communities in all 24 states between July 1824 and September 1825.

Historian Clarence Lewis reported that "no man, save George Washington himself, was so beloved by the American people as Gen. Lafayette." Lewistonians were "agog" with excitement when they found out Lafayette would be visiting our town.

The Kelsey Tavern at 625 Center Street was chosen as the most desirable place to hold a reception. It was reported, "The General was escorted into the [Kelsey] parlor and Col. William King, a prominent veteran of the War of 1812, introduced villagers as they filed past and shook hands with him. Martha Kelsey, the 8



Marquis de Lafayette

year old daughter of owner Catharine Kelsey, was picked up by the General and kissed on both cheeks. He made a short address of thanks and then retired to his room where supper was served. It was his third reception of the day and he was getting fatigued. A group of late comers assembled in front of the tavern and asked to see him. He opened the window of his front bedroom and spoke a few gracious words to them."

After their departure, Mrs. Kelsey discovered the General had left behind a lunch basket containing a small white plate which little Miss Kelsey demanded as a souvenir. Also left behind was a small mahogany medicine chest. The basket, the plate and medicine chest have all been lost to history.

Lafayette subsequently visited Lockport and continued to Rochester via the newly opened Erie Canal.

A bronze plaque mounted on a stone at the Kelsey Tavern commemorates Lafayette's visit to Lewiston. He died in 1834 and is buried in Picpus Cemetery in Paris, under soil brought from Bunker Hill in Massachusetts.

Lewiston's Most Famous Visitor: Lafayette in 1825

French General who helped America Win Independence Spends Night Here.

"The Hero of Two Worlds" Receives Rock Star Welcome Across the Country.

Lafayette's Lewiston Time Line

Sunday, June 25, 1825

2pm: Arrives in Niagara Falls and gets a tour from Judge Augustus Porter (whom the Town of Porter is named after).

3:30pm: Lafayette and his party cross the bridge to Goat Island and remain there for 2 hours. The General was mesmerized by the Falls and spent 30 minutes alone in quiet contemplation. Judge Porter offered to sell him Goat Island for \$10,000, but he declined because it was too far away from France.

8pm: Lafayette arrives in Lewiston and goes directly to a reception at Kelsey's Tavern.



An early photograph of Kelsey's Tavern at 625 Center St. where Lafayette stayed.

Monday, June 26, 1825

6am: Lafayette's party leaves Lewiston to have breakfast at Fort Niagara where he is greeted with a 24 gun salute. After visiting the troops, he returns to Lewiston.

10am: Lafayette leaves Lewiston and heads east on Ridge Road to Lockport. He stops at the Tuscarora Reservation where a large crowd had gathered to greet him. Lafayette called out and asked if his long time friend, Chief Nicholas Cusick, was there. Cusick yells, "I'm here, General" and the two embraced. Lafayette presented the Chief with a "handsome belt" as a token of his long time friendship with Cusick and invited him to join him in his carriage ride to Lockport.



Illustration by Lew-Port student, Geri Posa

Tuscarora Chief Nicholas Cusick and General Lafayette greet each other during Lafayette's visit to Lewiston in 1825. They were old friends and served together in the American Revolutionary War.

Lafayette Reunites with Tuscarora Friend Who Reportedly Saved His Life

When General Lafayette was in Lewiston he did not forget to look up an old friend and ally, Nicholas Cusick (1756-1840). It was an emotional reunion and both men were reported to have tears in their eyes when they met.

Cusick was a Tuscarora chief who served on the American side in the Revolutionary War as an interpreter and leader of the Indian Rangers. As an expert in Indian affairs, he often consulted George Washington and fought in the Battle of Saratoga. He was later assigned to be the bodyguard of Gen. Lafayette and is credited with saving his life. Four Cusicks (Nicholas' sons and relatives) were "Tuscarora Heroes" in the War of 1812.

Ann Marie Linnabery of the Niagara County History Center provided much of this information.

Welcome to Historic Lewiston, NY

Ranked "Top Ten Best Small Towns in America" -- Rand McNally

The Historical Association of Lewiston hopes you enjoy your visit to our historic and quaint village. Mark your calendar for our next spectacular Lewiston Tour of Homes on Dec. 6 & 7, 2014.

Get our free email newsletters by sending an email to: join@HistoricLewiston.org. You can also see and download our past placemats at our website, HistoricLewiston.org.

Historic Lewiston placemats written and designed by volunteer, Lee Simonson.

HistoricLewiston.org 716-754-4214



Tuscarora Heroes Book

The amazing and true story of how the Tuscaroras saved Lewiston citizens from the brutal British attack during the War of 1812. The book is now available at DiCamillo Bakery and the Lewiston Museum for \$10.



Tuscarora Heroes Coin

This beautiful new commemorative coin represents the "good luck" the Tuscaroras brought to Lewiston citizens. Available at Apple Granny and the Lewiston Museum for \$10. (All proceeds go to the monument fund.)

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