



## LAFAYETTE: A HERO'S RETURN

In 1824, in preparation of the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Revolutionary War, President James Monroe extended Congress's invitation to General Lafayette to come to the United States.

The General's visit took the nation by storm. During 13 months in 1824 and 1825, Lafayette toured all 24 states of the still new country. He was greeted by large and enthusiastic crowds. His arrival in New York City was reported to have drawn more than 45,000 people.

Who was this man? Why was he so admired and revered? Why was Lafayette's tour, 200 years ago, so important then? And what resonance does it hold today?

Historian Julien Icher, founder of "Follow the Frenchman," a YouTube series, narrates this half-hour film featuring AI-driven historical re-enactments that allow viewers to experience the portion of the tour that took Lafayette from Buffalo and Niagara Falls to Rochester, Auburn, Syracuse and Albany, NY, on his way to Boston to lay the cornerstone at the Bunker Hill Monument.

This film – made possible by the William G. Pomeroy Foundation -- looks at Lafayette's place in New York and American history, his commitments to freedom, self-governance, and commerce, and why his tour was important to a country divided by a turbulent 1824 presidential election. The Pomeroy Foundation funded historical 171 historical markers along the Lafayette Trail, and you can go to <https://www.wgpfoundation.org/> to learn more.

### **Suggested discussion questions for classes after watching the film include:**

- Why do you think General Lafayette was treated like a rock star on his tour?
- What led to the respect between Lafayette and Red Jacket, leader of the Seneca nation?
- Has the U.S. fulfilled its promise to enable life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?
- Are the divisions the country that Lafayette sought to heal 200 years ago similar or different to how the country is currently divided on many key issues?

Bring history to life in your classroom with a grant-funded historical marker project from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation. The Foundation's National Education Program helps students explore their community's past through hands-on research, enriching learning with meaningful connections to local history. Learn more here: <https://www.wgpfoundation.org/history/education/>

"Lafayette: A Hero's Return" is provided in partnership with the NYS Education Department