

Acadian Museum Exhibit
2007 Marquis de La Fayette Commemoration:
“The Overlooked Legacy of La Fayette:
The Louisiana Purchase”
January 13 - December 31, 2007

- I. Honorary Exhibition Committee
 - A. Chair: Lynn Breaux, Sons of the American Revolution, Ambassador to France, (2000-2002)
 - B. Pascale Richard, historian/writer, New York
 - C. Professeur Hervé Cassan, Ambassadeur, Représentant permanent à l'ONU Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
 - D. Pierre Lebovics, Consulat Général de France
 - E. Michel Roux, France, President Falaise-Acadie-Québec
 - F. Gerard-Marc Breaud, historian/author, France
 - G. Claude Teboul, Président of France-Louisiane franco-Américanie
 - H. Gerald Breaux, Executive Director, Lafayette Convention Commission
 - I. Jacques Villard, historian/writer, Versailles, France

- II. Overview

- A. Historical background: On the occasion of the 250th birthday of the Marquis de La Fayette it is an excellent opportunity to re-examine the role that he played in bringing about the Louisiana Purchase which more than doubled the size of the United States. While the exact borders of the Louisiana Territory have never been entirely certain, approximately 827,987 changed hands when France sold the land to the United States for the sum of fifteen million dollars. The Purchase encompassed roughly the land stretching west from the Mississippi River to the Rockies. New Orleans was included, but not the land that became Texas, southwest Louisiana or the “Floridas” to the east.

The men who were responsible for this outsized land deal, Thomas Jefferson and Napoleon Bonaparte, were themselves larger-than-life personalities. However, often overlooked and unappreciated is the important role that the Marquis de La Fayette played in bringing about this memorable event. This exhibition will endeavor to show how La Fayette’s close, lifelong friend, Thomas Jefferson, encouraged him to set sail to the aid of the American revolutionaries. This involvement, undoubtedly, made the revolution successful and ensured the enactment of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, a time when France and the United States, sister Republics, had survived the agony and triumph of revolution.

- B. Contents: The objects in this exhibition were chosen because they represent the pulse of these historic times. Jefferson counted heavily on his friendship with La Fayette, and, after the Louisiana Purchase, he even tried to persuade him to become Governor of Louisiana, declaring him to be the only man whom both the French-speaking populace of New Orleans and its new American owners could trust. The photographs, artifacts, documents and illustrations will interweave the Franco-American nexus with that of the Louisiana Purchase.
- C. Sources: *La Fayette - Hero of Two Worlds* by Olivier Bernier (E. P. Dutton, Inc, New York, New York, 1983), *Jefferson’s America & Napoleon’s France* by Gail Feigenbaum (New Orleans Museum of Art in Association With University of Washington Press, 2003), and *Lafayette: Freedom Fighter* (Chelsea House Publishers, Philadelphia, 2001), *The Shaping of America* by Page Smith (McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1980), *Jefferson and His Time* by Dumas Malone (Little Brown, Boston, 1962), *Benjamin Franklin - A Biography* by Ronald W. Clark (Random House, New York, 1983).

- III. Contents:

- A. Photographs - 6 from the Bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase;
- B. Artifacts - 20 from the Bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase;
- C. Documents - 6, including the Napoleonic Code adopted in 1808 and Declaration of Human Rights by La Fayette;
- D. Books - 6, including those dealing with the Lewis & Clark Expedition;
- E. Maps: 2, including an original map painted by Parisian Bouchon showing the territories sold to Louisiana;
- F. Illustrations - 12, including La Fayette in 1830; the landing of General La Fayette in New York, August 16, 1824; a view of La Fayette's chateau; *La Grange* where he lived from 1802 until his death; the fall of the Bastille, July 14, 1789; and the Comte de Rochambeau, who lead the French forces in the United States; La Fayette in 1782 when he had returned from the United States as a new hero;
- G. Reproductions of paintings of La Fayette - 3
- H. Photograph of the bust of La Fayette's grandson, Oscar de La Fayette, who served in the French Senate;
- I. Copy of the Declaration of Human Rights written by La Fayette;

IV. Exhibition Committees:

- A. Curator - Warren A. Perrin;
- B. Honorary Curator - Pascale Richard;
- C. Curatorial Team
 - 1. Carlin Trahan - Chairman;
 - 2. Mary Perrin, Artistic director;
 - 3. Members: Kermit Bouillion, Ramona Babineaux, Norman and Shirley Broussard, Lidie "Dee" Butler, Vergie Delcambre, Juliet Langlinais, Belva LeBlanc, Gloria Sonnier, Richard Suire, Roland Suire, Inez Vincent, Richard and Margie Vincent, Rayford Hardy, Sr. and Danielle Hidalgo.
- D. Staff
 - 1. Ron Miguez, Head of Operations
 - 2. Rayford Hardy, Sr.
 - 3. Eugene Faulk
 - 4. Gloria Faulk