



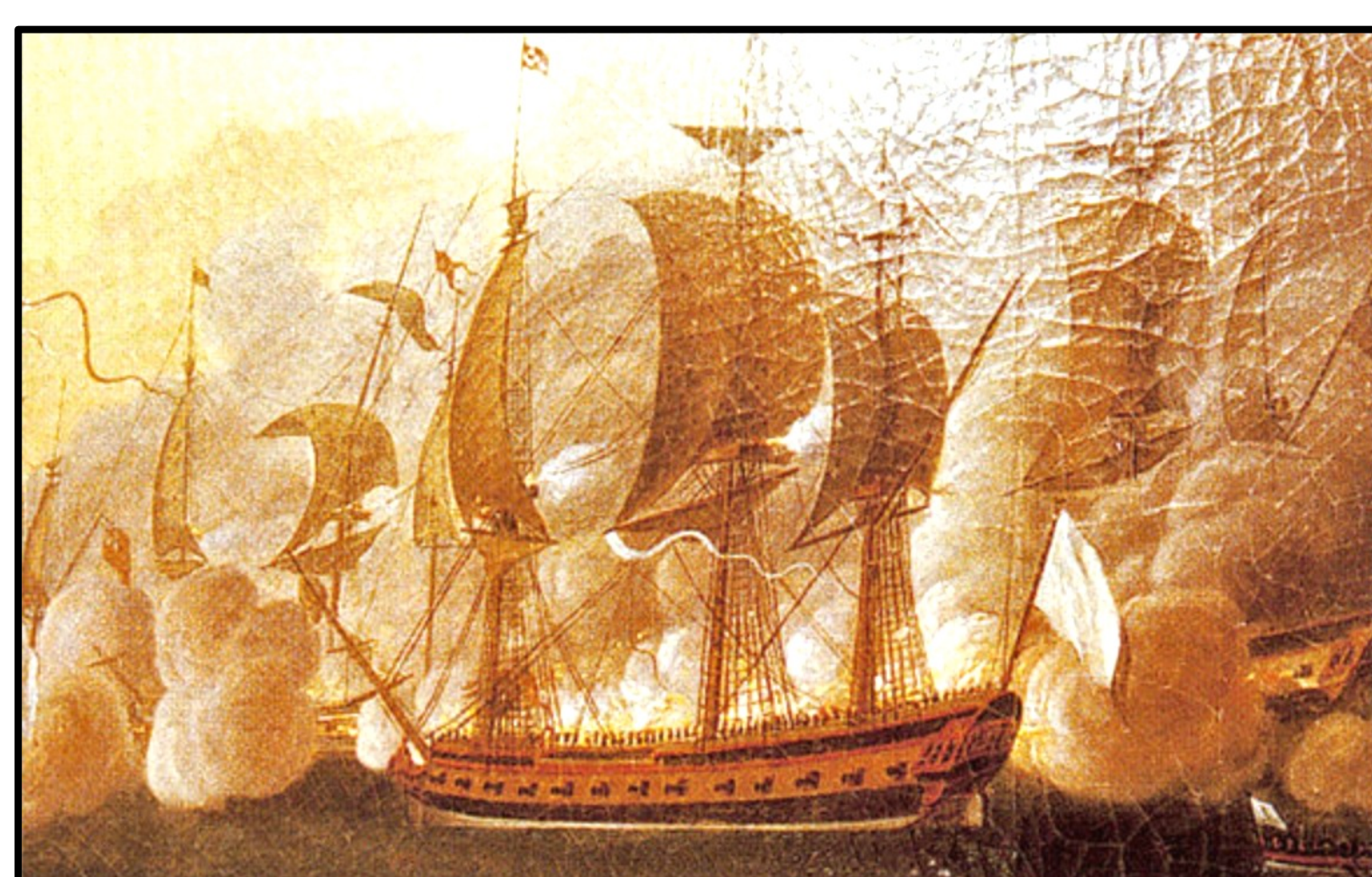
General Lafayette Arrives in Boston



Washington-Rochambeau
Revolutionary Route
National Historic Trail

Lafayette's Arrival Here Changed the Course of History

In March, 1780, General Lafayette sailed to America on his second voyage aboard a new Frigate, the *Hermione*, with important news to impart to General George Washington. From aboard the *Hermione* "at the entrance to the Boston Harbor," (actually Marblehead), he wrote Washington on Thursday, April 27, 1780: "I have affairs of the utmost importance that I should communicate to you alone." On Friday, April 28, 1780, the *Hermione* docked at Hancock's Wharf, the site of present-day Lewis Wharf, and Lafayette disembarked and was feted for several days by the citizens of Boston.



Hermione, Combat de Louisbourg, 1781
(detail), Auguste Rossel de Cergy, 1788

He left Boston on May 2, 1780 and traveled by land to Morristown, New Jersey where Washington and his Army were encamped. On Wednesday, May 10, 1780, Lt. Colonel Alexander Hamilton wrote Baron Steuben: "We have heard from the Marquis. He will be here at dinner. Will you dine with us. The General requests it." Upon his arrival, Lafayette told Washington that a Naval Squadron would soon bring a French Expeditionary Force to America to support the cause of the United States. The news electrified patriotic Americans throughout the country.

On July 10, 1780, the French Expeditionary Force under General Rochambeau arrived off Newport, Rhode Island aboard a small flotilla of French warships and transports and sailed into the Harbor on July 11.

During the Spring and Summer of 1781, Lafayette successfully conducted the "Virginia Campaign" and entrapped Lord Cornwallis and 7,000 British regulars at Yorktown. In August of 1781, the French West Indian Fleet, under Admiral De Grasse, arrived in Chesapeake Bay and landed 3,000 troops commanded by the Marquis de St. Simon who was instructed to cooperate with Lafayette. The Fleet was soon joined by the Newport Squadron. Meanwhile, the French Expeditionary Force and the Continental Army under Washington and General Benjamin Lincoln of Hingham joined Lafayette's Continentals and militia and St. Simon's French troops in the vicinity of Yorktown.



The reconstructed *Hermione* returns to Boston in July 2015

The ensuing French blockade and allied siege ended with the British surrender on October 19, 1781. Yorktown was the last major engagement of the American Revolution and led to the Treaty of Paris in 1783 which guaranteed the independence of the United States.

Lafayette Place Names

On June 30, 1780, the Virginia legislature passed a bill dividing the Kentucky territory into three counties, one of which it named "Fayette." This was the first of over 80 counties, cities, towns and townships named for Lafayette.

Bostonians Celebrate Lafayette's Return

Abigail Adams to John Adams
May 1, 1780

My Dearest Friend,
Last week arrived at Boston the Marquis de la Fayette to the universal joy of all who know the Merit and Worth of that Nobleman. He was received with the ringing of Bells, firing of cannon, bon fires, etc.

* * * * *

Lafayette described his reception when he wrote his wife from Waterbury, Connecticut, on May 6, 1780

I disembarked after noon in the midst of an immense crowd. They welcomed me with the roar of guns, the ringing of all the city's bells, the music of a band that marched ahead of us, and the huzzas of all the people that surrounded us. In this way I was led to the house that the council and the assembly of representatives of Boston had prepared for me.

There was a deputation from these bodies to welcome me... In the evening the people gathered in front of my door and built a great bonfire with much cheering, which lasted until after midnight.

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THOMAS'S Massachusetts Spy or, AMERICAN ORACLE of LIBERTY, 11 May, 1780, Volume X, Issue 470, Page 1

BOSTON, May 4

Last Friday arrived in this port the frigate *Le Hermoine*, His Excellency the Right Honorable the Marquis de la Fayette, Major General in the service of his Most Christian Majesty, and in the line of the United States: His arrival being made known by one of his aids, the joy, of the people at his revisiting the State, was fully demonstrated by his reception; he was congratulated on his safe arrival, by the supreme executive and legislative bodies, of the state then sitting, and was requested to denote the time and place of his landing, that he might be received agreeable to the exalted character of a Nobleman, who had suffered and bled in the cause of virtue and mankind, and

particularly for the independence of the United States; He politely returned his Civilities, and begged to be landed in a private manner. Notwithstanding, a large number of respectable gentlemen of the town, with a number of officers of the army, attended with the band of musick, assembled on the grand pier impatiently expecting him, but to their disappointment he landed on Gen. Hancock's wharfe.



Lafayette, Charles Wilson Peale, c. 1779

The gentlemen of the sword determined to pay their devoirs to their commander and friend, repaired thither with the band, and escorted him to genteel lodgings prepared for him in State Street, amidst the salutations of cannon, the ringing of bells, the flying of colours, and the acclamations of the populace; where he was personally and publically received by a committee of both Houses; the features of gratefulness were conspicuous in every countenance; and a vast and respectable concourse of people seemed to acknowledge their obligations to this great and disinterested Commander. ----Soon after he had a conference with the General Assembly; when the present state of Europe respecting America was enquired into, and the Marquis's accounts received with applause. ----In the evening a bonfire was made before his House, attended with a large display of fireworks from the balcony of the Exchange Tavern, where a respectable number of young gentlemen of the town convened, to denote their joy at his arrival, and their respect for his character...