

GENERAL LAFAYETTE IN INDIANA.

[From Paper by Capt. L. C. Baird, prepared for the Clark County Historical Society.]

[Lafayette's visit to America in 1824-'25 was a series of ovations in which the cities of the nation along the route of his tour vied with each other in doing honor to the patriot. His trip westward by the Ohio river brought the southern border of Indiana within his circuit. Some months before this western trip the Indiana legislature, in anticipation, passed elaborate resolutions expressive of cordiality and hospitality, and on his arrival at Louisville, in May, 1825, a committee waited upon him with official congratulations and an invitation to Indiana soil. The distinguished visitor accepted the proffered hospitality and the next day, May 11, he was a guest at Jeffersonville. Captain Baird's paper in its entirety is too long for our limited space, but so much of it as deals directly with the reception we here print.—*Editor.*]

AT 11 o'clock A. M. on Thursday the committee (Messrs. Farnham, Gwathmey, Merriwether, Beach and Burnett) waited upon General Lafayette on board the steamboat General Pike, to which he was escorted by the Committee of Arrangements and Marshals of Louisville and Jefferson county. The General was greeted on the Indiana shore by a salute of thrice twenty-four guns, discharged from three pieces of artillery, stationed on the river bank beside three flagstaffs, each seventy feet in height, bearing flags with appropriate mottos. He was received by General Marston G. Clark, of Jeffersonville, and General John Carr, of Charlestown, Marshal of the Day, and escorted by a detachment of three artillery companies, commanded by Captains Lemon, Melford and Booth, to the pleasant mansion house of the late Governor Posey on the west corner of Front and Fort streets overlooking the river and the city of Louisville beyond. His progress down Front street from the place of debarkation near the present Ferry landing was a spectacle the like of which the city had never seen before. Officials, both State and local, together with many other men of State and national renown from our sister commonwealths, vied with the vast concourse of the "common people" to add to the generous expression of gratitude and esteem for the guest of honor.

Besides the many visitors from throughout the State, the people from the surrounding country had made this a holiday that all might be given an opportunity to participate in the reception. In addition to the three artillery companies and Captain Parker's infantry company from Charlestown, there were other military organizations present, but the absence of any records concerning the Indiana militia at this period of our history, and in fact for many years afterward, makes it impossible to discover who they were or whence they came.

The guest was met at the Posey mansion by his excellency, Governor James B. Ray, who delivered an address of welcome, and to this he made a brief and fitting response. These speeches were exchanged out of doors, and while the General was still speaking the long-threatened rain began to fall, and his remarks had to be finished while standing under the shelter of an umbrella proudly held by Mr. Charles Applegate, one of the older citizens present.

The General was then conducted to chambers, provided with refreshments, and presented to a numerous company of ladies assembled to welcome him and to several hundreds of citizens, including a few venerable relics of the "times that tried men's souls."

Among the old residents of the city who were presented at the reception was Solomon Burritt. He lived and died in the small brick house on lower Market street about opposite the end of Clark street. During the war of the Revolution he served under Lafayette, and when it came Burritt's time to be presented to his old commanding officer, they fell into each other's arms and kissed and shed tears of joy and comradeship.

One incident occurred during the reception that served to relieve the proceedings of any stiffness which might have appeared. Captain John C. Parker, of Charlestown, had brought his militia company down to Jeffersonville to form part of the large military escort. During the presentation he took several of his men up to be introduced. One strapping young militiaman stepped forward to shake the General's hand and politely raised his hat, when out fell several large crackers which he had thoughtfully provided for a lunch. The General adroitly relieved him of his

embarrassment and mortification by congratulating him as a good soldier who carried his rations with him.

At three o'clock in the afternoon Lafayette was conducted to dinner under a military escort accompanied by a band of music. The table was handsomely prepared under an arbor, about 220 feet in length, well covered and ornamented throughout with the verdure and foliage of the forests, among which roses and other flowers were tastefully interwoven by the ladies of Jeffersonville. This table was set in the woods just above the Governor's house, about 100 feet above Fort street, and in constructing the arbor or covering, as was usual at that day on such occasions, the branches of the surrounding beech trees were used. Mr. Burdette C. Pile, later Mayor of Jeffersonville, then a young man and the owner of a fine yoke of oxen, used his ox rig in transporting the brush from the near woodlands to the scene of festivity, an incident which he was proud of relating to the day of his death.

At the head of the table was hung a transparent painting on which was inscribed, "Indiana welcomes Lafayette, the champion of liberty in both hemispheres," over which was a flag bearing the arms of the United States. At the foot of the table was a similar painting with the following inscription: "Indiana—in 1776 a wilderness; in 1825 a civilized community. Thanks to Lafayette and the soldiers of the Revolution." The company was honored by the presence of many distinguished gentlemen from Kentucky, Tennessee, and other States, among whom were, Governor Carroll and suite, Hon. C. A. Wickliffe, Judges Barry and Bledsoe, Attorney General Sharp, Colonel Anderson, the Honorable John Rowan, with the Committee of Arrangements of Louisville and Jefferson county, Major Wash, Mr. Neilson, etc.

The dinner was followed by a long list of toasts which continued until six o'clock, at which hour Lafayette left the table and was re-escorted to the General Pike. Here the committee of arrangements from Kentucky resumed the honor of their special attendance, in which they were joined by the Governor of Indiana and suite, the Marshals, and the Indiana committee of arrangements, who accompanied the guest to Louisville.