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# Birthplace of Lafayette



Chateau de Chavagnac.

**B**ROUPE daylight on the morning of September 6, 1918, there was an unusual amount of bustle and stir in the little town of Aubiere, a suburb of Clermont-Ferrand, the capital of the department of Puy-de-Dome, in one of the most historic regions of France—the ancient province of Auvergne, says the Christian Science Monitor. What was the occasion which produced all this early morning excitement? Surely no call to battle or no signal to go over the top, because the actual horrors of the world war never extended into this sleepy corner of south-central France; and the American regiment quartered hereabouts was merely passing through the last stages of its preliminary training prior to its triumphant moment of action upon the heights of the Meuse, which occurred during the first days of the war.

It was the one hundred and sixtieth anniversary of the birth of the great Lafayette, and the regimental band of Col. Arthur S. Conklin's Three Hundred and Third heavy field artillery regiment had been invited to share with a few American army officers the honor of representing the American expeditionary forces—yes, the United States of America—at the birthplace and the early home of the great hero who aided so much in the work of winning its independence as a nation. The last bandman had returned from the early breakfast served in the village square of Aubiere, and with his instrument had joined the crowd already climbing into the huge array motor trucks drawn up before the land's biller.

As the first rays of the dawn appeared, and the procession of Aubiere's peasants commenced from the crooked alleys of the town to the surrounding fields and vineyards, the trucks moved out of the village and over the hill toward Clermont.

After the brief ride through the thoroughfares of the city of Clermont-Ferrand, which was just awakening to the day's activities, the bandmen arrived at the conspicuous railway station where specially reserved cars on the morning train south pulled them. After the sun was in the train pulled out of Clermont and was soon making its way leisurely through the colorful Auvergne country.

**The Setting Supreme.**

The day proved to be perfect, warm, and clear; the view from the car windows were entrancing, and the "magnificence" leading the gates at each crossing waved their greetings to the groups of young Yankee soldiers which filled the windows of such compartments in the train. The landscape was dotted here and there with the picturesque red-roofed villages, from the center of which rose the gray stone church towers; the country seemed to be an immense vineyard filled with endless acres of grapevines; and the mountain peaks, now against clearness, stood out in bold relief against the clear blue sky like sentinels. Occasionally an old castle ruin fringed upon the travelers from some overhanging cliff or neighboring hillside.

After a ride of three hours, the train passed into the department of Haute Loire and made a short stop at Branda, where many well-dressed country folk with their lunch baskets loitered the cars. A few moments later, the train reached the little village of Chavagnac, where the order sounded in detail. After much hurrying and waiting about at the little way-station, many vehicles of every sort and description were pressed into service for the transportation of the men to their destination. Some rode in motor cars in villages and a bus came along with its lumbering momentum was obliged to ride on the four-wheeled and unimproved roads by the side of the highway. The train was not halted, and the first passenger reached the Chateau de Lafayette nearly an hour later than the other passengers, who had reached the great hall of his home here during the war's first, shortly making its way up the mountain road several miles below.

**Fine Ride to Old Castle.**

And what a ride it was! what superb scenery and glorious country, picturesque mountains! It seemed difficult to believe that a land of such overwhelming beauty in summer could in winter be transformed into a wild, bleak region known as the Siberia of France. It was a great day for the young Americans; a most delightful diversion from the daily routine in Aubiere, marching drills and drills in the uncomfortable gas masks, band rehearsals, parades, and reviews, and evening band concerts in the town square.

The Chateau de Chavagnac Lafayette stands upon the crest of a lofty eminence commanding a magnificent view of the beautiful Auvergne country; miles and miles of verdant fields and woods stretched far away to a distant horizon flanked with long ranges of majestic hills and mountains. The grounds of the chateau are spacious and attractive, and the little village of Chavagnac adjoins the estate on one side, while the other three sides are open to the distant view. The old castle itself, flanked on two sides with large round towers, presents a strikingly medieval appearance; long rows of French windows are built across the upper portion of the front of the building, and large porches are seen on each side of the small main doorway.

The castle was built in the fourteenth century, burned in 1701 and rebuilt, as nearly like the original as possible, before Lafayette's birth, on September 6, 1757. The family records date back to the year 1000, when "a certain man by the name of Motier acquired an estate called Villa Fays, and thereafter he became known as Motier de la Fayette," according to Martha Foote Crow in her biography of Lafayette.

The great hero is a direct descendant of Pons Motier and the noble Alix Brun de Champetiere who were married in 1290, and according to the old parish register in Chavagnac Lafayette's full name was Monsieur Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert Dumourier de Lafayette. Here, in this grim old castle, the Marquis de Lafayette spent the first 31 years of his life; and in later years the hero returned to his birthplace after his triumphant career in America and lived here for a time with his family. He instituted various kinds of reforms on his estate and in the villages adjoining; and all of the work for the people of his native town was for their betterment, their enlightenment, and emancipation. The peasants were greatly attached to him.

The later years of Lafayette were spent at his wife's estate, La Grange 40 miles east of Paris.

The latter part of the forenoon of this anniversary day in 1918 was spent in looking over the estate and neighboring villages. The bandmen were conducted through the chateau saw Lafayette's work room and what few relics are to be seen, including a peculiar looking article of furniture designated as his bath tub. Many of the American boys wandered through the quaint, picturesque village, visited the venerable parish church and purchased beautiful lace work made by the women of the town to send home to their friends.

Crowds of French people arrived on the scene with their families, making the affair an out-of-door picnic as in their usual custom. At least a champagne dinner was served to the bandmen in the chateau itself, and in the afternoon the congratulatory talk place on the beautiful-sounding lawn in front.

It was a brilliant scene. The band rendered a splendid concert, and its leader, Arthur Shepherd, was presented with a banquet. In reply to the presentation speech Mr. Shepherd thanked the donors and expressed the honor which he and his men felt at being present at such an event. Many distinguished people, including French and American army officers, were there. Later in the day the bandmen were conveyed back to Branda, where they boarded the train as the sun was setting over the hills, and reached Aubiere late in the evening with the beautiful day a never-to-be-forgotten memory.

**Keep Guessing.**

"When you see a man doing some odd stunt on the street nowadays," remarked the Observer of Events and Things, "you can never tell whether he's doing it on a bet or is working for some moving picture camera."

PROF. FRITZ HABER



Prof. Fritz Haber, director of the Wilhelm Institute of Berlin, who has received the Nobel prize for his work in chemical research. He is an authority on chemistry and chemical engineering and his works are standard throughout the world.

FRANK DUFFY



Origin of "The Fourth Estate." Burke, British statesman, gave to the press the designation "the fourth estate."

One of the leaders of organized labor in this country is Frank Duffy, third vice president of the American Federation of Labor.

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