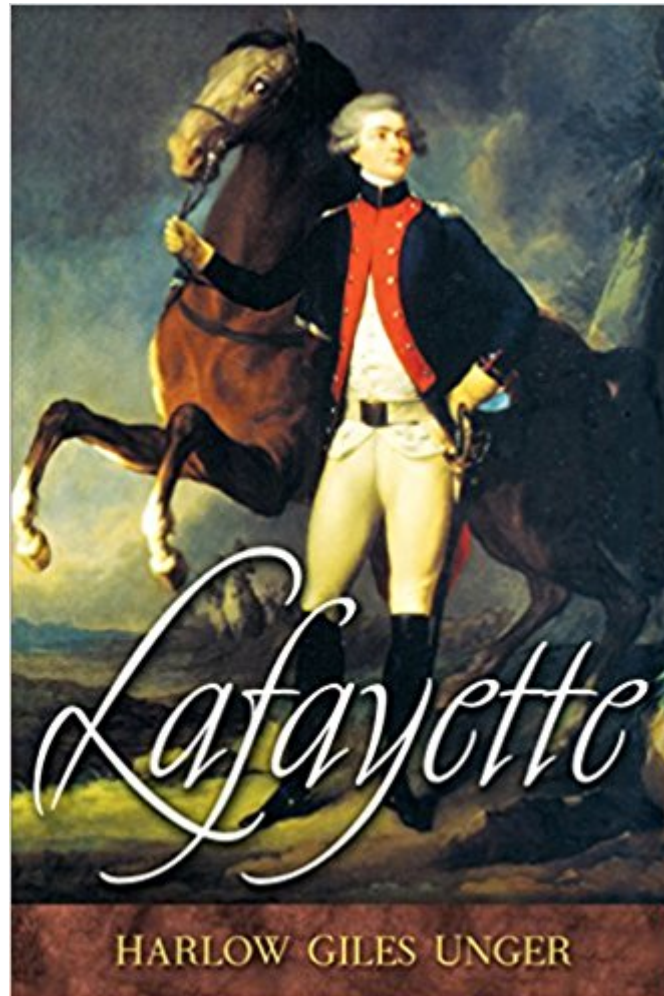




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Lafayette



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Synopsis

Acclaim for Lafayette""I found Mr. Unger's book exceptionally well done. It's an admirable account of the marquis's two revolutions-one might even say his two lives-the French and the American. It also captures the private Lafayette and his remarkable wife, Adrienne, in often moving detail.""

-Thomas Fleming, author, *Liberty!: The American Revolution*""Harlow Unger's Lafayette is a remarkable and dramatic account of a life as fully lived as it is possible to imagine, that of Gilbert de Motier, marquis de Lafayette. To American readers Unger's biography will provide a stark reminder of just how near run a thing was our War of Independence and the degree to which our forefathers' victory hinged on the help of our French allies, marshalled for George Washington by his 'adopted' son, Lafayette. But even more absorbing and much less well known to the general reader will be Unger's account of Lafayette's idealistic but naive efforts to plant the fruits of the American democracy he so admired in the unreceptive soil of his homeland. His inspired oratory produced not the constitutional democracy he sought but the bloody Jacobin excesses of the French Revolution.""-Larry Collins, coauthor, *Is Paris Burning?* and *O Jerusalem!*""A lively and entertaining portrait of one of the most important supporting actors in the two revolutions that transformed the modern world.""-Susan Dunn, author, *Sister Revolutions: French Lightning, American Light*""Harlow Unger has cornered the market on muses to emerge as America's most readable historian. His new biography of the marquis de Lafayette combines a thoroughgoing account of the age of revolution, a probing psychological study of a complex man, and a literary style that goes down like cream. A worthy successor to his splendid biography of Noah Webster.""-Florence King, Contributing Editor, *National Review*""Enlightening! The picture of Lafayette's life is a window to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century history.""-Michel Aubert La Fayette

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Customer Reviews

Appearing at a time when there is a new wave of interest in America's Founding Fathers, this well-written and well-researched biography should appeal to traditional political historians and informed lay readers alike. The author, a journalist and biographer, makes no secret of his great admiration for Lafayette, whom he presents as a "gallant knight" and true believer in American republican and constitutional ideals. Critical of historiographical interpretations that have painted Lafayette in either a romanticized or a cynical way, Unger aims to recount objectively the Frenchman's contributions to the great events of his age the American War of Independence and the French Revolutions of 1789 and 1830. The first biography of Lafayette to appear in almost 20 years, this text is noteworthy for the attention it gives to Lafayette's personal friendship with George Washington and for its careful reconstruction of the role Lafayette played in diplomatic and economic issues of importance to the fledgling American nation. Unger implies that Lafayette's "distaste for political leadership" and his consistent rejection of both political and military power may have played a role in allowing "madmen and fanatics" like Robespierre to rise to power. Although his biases against the French radical republicans are clear, Unger has succeeded in his goal of restoring Lafayette to his rightful place in Western political history. For all libraries. Marie Marmo Mullaney, Caldwell Coll., NJ Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

* ""...Here is an admirable account of his life and extraordinary career on both sides of the Atlantic...."" (Sunday Telegraph, 11 January 2004)

I absolutely loved reading this book! The action and adventure is as thrilling as any blockbuster Hollywood movie! The bittersweet love shared by Lafayette and his wife pulls at your heart as much as the best hit "chick flick!" The copious amount of letters to and from all of America's founding fathers and other famous people from the time period is very impressive! So much more than just a story about one remarkable man! It tells the story of the American and French revolutions with intimate details from Lafayette's perspective and gives us candid and insightful looks into the lives and endeavors of other remarkable figures from the historic time period during Lafayette's lifetime. I think this book will captivate anyone who reads it and leave them with a new favorite real life action

hero!

This book is such a powerful read! The book describes LaFayette's life. It starts from when he first gets married to going to America, meeting George Washington, serving under Washington, his return to Napoleonic France, his problems in his native country and the need to hide out. It then goes on to clear up to his death. I had always thought LaFayette was interesting, but I didn't know how intelligent he really is. Some of the things that he did in order to overpower the British during the American Revolution are quite unique. Washington was intelligent, as well, and together with LaFayette they brought a new country into being and out from under the ravages of the parent country's ways. Each and every thing he did was to honor George Washington, a man whom he highly admired; Washington in turn admired LaFayette and adopted an attitude of being LaFayette's 'father' in order to utilize his skills and teach him military acumen. I have recommended this book to several different people and they have all enjoyed it as well.

This was a great book about a truly amazing man. My history classes hardly touched on the major contributions that Lafayette, starting at age 19, made to our independence. My nephew, who took French language classes all through high school and college, never had French history. A void in both our educations. Most interesting were the reasons that Lafayette's idealism would not work in France, in spite of Lafayette's best efforts and to his great detriment. I am left to wonder if Lafayette wouldn't have been better off with more studied and more subtle approaches in trying to bring reform to France - starting with basic education of the masses and the responsibilities that accompany freedom of oppression. (Maybe there are some lessons for our foreign policies today?) But that is hindsight without the benefit of immersion in France of the day. I was amazed at how Lafayette and his wife, Adrienne, both from extremely wealthy families, empathized so completely with the poor/serfs that they used their fortunes to feed the commoners during times of crop failure and famine. An absolutely amazing couple.

It started with my father years ago quoting General Black Jack Pershing's statement as he brought the AEF to France in 1917- "Lafayette -we are here". Why was that so appropriate? Vague history ideas that Lafayette helped America against the British in our revolution. Then I moved to Fayetteville Ga and resided in a housing area named Lafayette Park. I drove frequently through La Grange Ga to Alabama then by the town of Lafayette. A recent media comment said over 600 towns, villages etc were named Lafayette. It was too much. I had to learn why and this book more than

satisfies. A wonderful captivating read, it tells the story. A young very rich and idealistic young man he comes to help George Washington and our revolution. He is given the immediate rank of Major General and then lives up to it by his bravery and brilliance. Washington considers him as a favorite son. He plays a real role in combat and is hailed as a hero. His return to France in time for its revolution is sad and the source of great story telling in this book. Lafayette returns to America several times and is hailed each time much as Lindberg was after flying the Atlantic. The author's extensive research is reflected throughout the book. Highly recommend it. As a post script I wonder how many people living in all the towns named after Lafayette know much about him.

Excellent, excellent read on one of Revolutionary America's favorite sons. It's a well balanced review of the Marquis' early life and upbringing which heavily influenced his path and idealistic vision as a "chivalrous knight" seeking to fight for the cause of liberty. The book is well paced and moves the reader seamlessly into the journey to America and the barriers Lafayette faced in leaving France. Unger pays attention to the evolution of his married life and the importance of the role his wife plays after his return to France. The writing is very good, on par with Chernow's "Hamilton", Fischer's "Washington's Crossing" and Ellis' "Washington" and despite the research and scope of the story, it remains a well paced story. In particular, and in contrast to, Lafayette's love of his wife, is the very deeply rooted relationship he developed with Washington that lasted until his death. The source letters here give the reader a window into the world of Revolutionary America and are wonderful on their own. Lafayette's lifelong relationships with America's other sons and founders are chronicled; Hamilton, Jefferson, Knox, Madison, Monroe etc. seen across their lifespans which gives the book a depth reflective of the closeness and intimacy of those bonds. Finally, the ill fated attempts and crusading to bring liberty to France as well as the consequences and costs to Lafayette and his family bookend this fantastic story. Just an outstanding work, one of my favorites.

I haven't finished the book yet but am working on it, so far it's very good and I'm glad I bought it. Thanks to the writer for all the research that was done and the making of the book. I think it should be read by all in our school systems.

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