Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, was known in America simply as “Lafayette”. A member of French royalty and from a distinguished and wealthy military family, Lafayette enthusiastically supported the American Revolution and sailed from France to America in 1777 (aged 19) to join the American Continental Army.

Lafayette had letters of introduction from Benjamin Franklin, among others, and met George Washington soon after his arrival in America. He was commissioned a Major General and distinguished himself in several battles, including the Battle of Brandywine Creek in Pennsylvania where he was wounded. In 1781 he commanded troops in the Siege of Yorktown and helped to contain British forces under Lord Cornwallis, preventing their retreat and escape. Additional American forces under Washington and French Navy ship arrived and Cornwallis was forced to surrender.

This effectively ended the land war of the American Revolution. Lafayette returned to France.

In 1824 Lafayette was the last surviving Major General from the Revolutionary War, but had not fared well in France during and after the French Revolution. Family lands were largely confiscated as well as most of his fortune. His political enemies threatened to imprison or execute him.

He still had many friends in America and he was popular throughout the country. President James Monroe and the U.S. Congress invited Lafayette to be the guest of the United States, all expenses paid, and tour the entire nation (24 states in 1824). The tour had two major goals: To help Lafayette out of his financial woes and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the nation.

Lafayette sailed from France to America on July 13, 1824 and returned in early October, 1825. He traveled more than 6,000 miles and visited every state. He was feted and honored in large cities and small towns. There were countless parades and banquets. He was accompanied by his son, George Washington Lafayette, his personal secretary, and a valet. He met again many friends and comrades from the Revolutionary War era and made new friendships with many prominent Americans.

**WHAT IS “TRANSFERWARE” AND HOW IS IT MADE?**

“Lafayette’s Tour of America: Interpreted in Historic Staffordshire” is an exhibition of historic Staffordshire “transferware” commemorating Lafayette’s famous 1824-1825 tour of America. The production of transferware is a complex process. Imagine making a teapot with these steps:

- A flat copper plate is engraved with an image from source print.
- The plate is inked with a mix of special pigments that can stand up to firing. Historical Staffordshire transferware circa 1825 usually used a cobalt blue pigment that was favored by customers.
- The inked plate is used to print the image on a thin sheet of tissue paper.
- The tissue paper is then placed pigment-side down on the earthenware object so that the sticky ink is transferred to the ceramic surface.
- Usually several engraved copper plates with different images are required to decorate an object (e.g., the interior and exterior surfaces of a bowl).
- After the ink dries, the tissue can be either soaked off in water or left on to burn off during firing.
- Earthenware is fired at a low temperature (range of 900 – 1000 degrees Celsius) to fix the image.
- Before firing, the object is glazed so that the image is protected from wear and damage.
- Despite these many steps, the resulting blue decorated earthenware was attractive and much less expensive than comparable porcelain tableware.

Source Print for Copper Plate Engraving used for exhibit Item 22: "Bank of the United States, Philadelphia", 10 ¾” plate

Original Painting by William Russell Birch. Engraved by Birch and Published in The City of Philadelphia in the State of Pennsylvania, North America, as it appeared in the Year 1800. An unknown engraver at Joseph Stubbs Pottery in Burslem, Staffordshire, copied (with some modifications) this print in the copper plate engraving used in the circa 1825 manufacture of the dark blue earthenware plate displayed in this exhibit.