

**The New Jersey Connection:
Joseph Bloomfield, Lafayette's American Farewell Tour, and
an Overlooked Lafayette Letter**

Mark Edward Lender and Iris De Rode

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Abstract: This article offers an intriguing glimpse into the origins of Lafayette's famous Farewell Tour of America in 1824–1825, revealing a previously overlooked New Jersey connection. The authors, Mark Edward Lender and Iris De Rode, present evidence that a letter from Joseph Bloomfield, former governor of New Jersey, played a crucial role in prompting Lafayette to propose his visit to the United States.

The essay highlights how Bloomfield's letter, informing Lafayette of the passing of Revolutionary War veterans, deeply moved the Marquis and led him to write to President James Monroe expressing his desire to return to America. This challenges the conventional narrative that the tour originated solely from an invitation by Monroe. The authors analyze Lafayette's letter to Monroe, which references Bloomfield's communication and expresses the Marquis's emotional connection to his "adoptive homeland." They also explore the political context in France that may have motivated Lafayette's desire to visit America. The essay emphasizes the significance of this overlooked detail in understanding the origins of the Farewell Tour and its connection to the passing of the Revolutionary generation. It presents a nuanced view of the tour's inception, highlighting the interplay between personal relationships, nostalgia, and political circumstances in shaping this significant historical event.

On August 15, 1824, Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier de La Fayette, marquis Lafayette, arrived in New York City to a tumultuous welcome. Wined and dined and honored in speeches, his reception was the first of many joyous welcomes he received as he visited each state in the Union. Among other events, his journey included an invitation to address a joint session of Congress as well as visits with former presidents John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison and Presidents James Monroe and (in 1825) John Quincy Adams. Congress voted him a gift of \$250,000—worth well over \$3,000,000 today—to which Monroe added 25,000 acres of public land, which the marquis subsequently sold. Lafayette’s personal finances had been parlous before his American tour—the marquis was no money manager—but he returned to France a wealthy man. At the conclusion of his triumphal pilgrimage in September 1825, President Adams sent the Frenchman home aboard the USS *Brandywine*, a Navy frigate chosen in salute to Lafayette’s first major action in the War for Independence, the Battle of Brandywine, where he had suffered a leg wound. Lafayette was genuinely touched by the adulation of a country whose founding he had done so much to foster. And Americans were delighted with him. As far as public ceremonial events went, the young republic had never seen the like of Lafayette’s grand Farewell Tour.¹

¹The historiography of the tour has varied. American biographers of Lafayette have featured his visit prominently. Virtually without exception, they have portrayed his visit in a positive light, a moment of sentimental remembrance of the Revolution and American unity on the nation’s fiftieth anniversary. E.g., Oliver Bernier, *Lafayette: Hero of Two Worlds* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1983), 292, 295; Harlow Giles Unger, *Lafayette* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2002); Laura Auricchio, *The Marquis: Lafayette Reconsidered* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014); Donald Miller, *Lafayette: His Extraordinary Life and Legacy* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2015); Peter Buckman, *Lafayette: A Biography* (New York: Paddington Press, 1977); Mike Duncan, *Hero of Two Worlds: The Marquis de Lafayette in the Age of Revolution* (New York: Public Affairs, Hachette Book Group, 2021), 379; and Sarah Vowel’s often hilarious but bittersweet *Lafayette in the Somewhat United States* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2015), 3.

French historians have been more restrained in their evaluations of Lafayette. After a promising start as an early hero of the French Revolution, the marquis failed to navigate the rapidly changing revolutionary political landscape, especially as it became increasingly radical. His popular luster dimmed considerably. His biographers have placed the American tour in the context of contemporary French politics, noting that the reactionary regime of Charles X did not hold Lafayette in high regard, and that even many French liberals no longer saw him as a particularly important figure. The French government frowned on the Farewell Tour. E.g., Laurent Zecchini, *Lafayette: Héraut*

The actual origins of the “Farewell Tour,” as historians have come to term it, have garnered little attention compared to the pageantry and national euphoria that accompanied the tour itself. If anything, accounts have treated the matter as a simple detail of communications between Lafayette and President James Monroe. Two examples may stand for scholarship on the subject. Anne C. Loveland’s graceful essay, “Lafayette’s Farewell Tour,” sees the tour stemming from an invitation from Monroe. “In January 1824,” she writes, “at the request of President James Monroe, Congress had unanimously passed a resolution inviting Lafayette to visit and offering to send a ship of war to bring him to the United States.” Mike Duncan’s recent (2021) and comprehensive Lafayette biography also sees Monroe as the prime mover, the president happy to welcome an old comrade in arms back to the republic on its fiftieth anniversary. No historian has differed appreciably.² Yet it now seems there has been an important but overlooked facet in the narrative of how the tour came about. Indeed, it appears that Lafayette’s lengthy American sojourn had its origins rooted firmly in New Jersey.

I

The Farewell Tour’s New Jersey connection lies in two letters, one extant, the other lost or still buried and overlooked in some archive or private collection. The missing letter is our first concern. Sometime in the late summer or early autumn of 1823 the marquis received a communication from Joseph Bloomfield, the former governor of New Jersey and a Continental Army veteran. Bloomfield was a significant figure in American politics. An early Federalist, he

de la Liberté (Paris: Fayard, 2019). See also Adam Gopnik, “Why Don’t the French Celebrate Lafayette,” *The New Yorker*, Aug. 16, 2021, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/08/23/why-dont-the-french-celebrate-lafayette>

²Anna C. Loveland, “Lafayette’s Farewell Tour,” in Stanley J. Idzerda, Anna C. Loveland, and Marc H. Miller, *Lafayette, Hero of Two Worlds: The Art and Pageantry of His Farewell Tour of America, 1824–1825* (Hanover, NH: The Queen’s Museum and University Press of New England, 1989), 63. Duncan, *Hero of Two Worlds*, 379. For similar views of the tour’s origins, see Sylvia Neely, “The Politics of Liberty in the Old World and the New: Lafayette’s Return to America in 1824,” *Journal of the Early Republic* VI (1986):163–65; and Harry Ammon, *James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 541–42.

was a convert to Jefferson's Democratic-Republicans; along with New York's Aaron Burr, he was a cornerstone of Jeffersonian political fortunes in the North. As a two-term governor (1801–1802, 1803–1812),³ a general in the War of 1812, and a longtime member of the House of Representatives (1817–1821), he had come a long way from his early days as a young Burlington County lawyer and junior officer in the revolutionary military.⁴

According to Lafayette, however, Bloomfield's letter had little to do with politics. Rather, it was a somber missive relating the passing of old soldiers, comrades in arms of the New Jersey Continental Line, at least some of whom the marquis may have met during the revolutionary war. Lafayette did not mention any names, and we do not know if Bloomfield had done so in his note—although it would be curious if he had not. Nevertheless, the aging Frenchman, himself a veteran of the same revolutionary army, found the letter from New Jersey deeply moving—the more so when soon after he learned of Bloomfield's death on October 3, 1823, at 69 years old.⁵ (He succumbed to injuries sustained in a carriage accident.) There is no question that the Bloomfield letter and the subsequent news of the Jerseyman's passing had Lafayette pondering his own mortality.

³In 1802, the New Jersey legislature deadlocked and failed to elect a governor, and an acting governor (John Lambert) filled in for a session. Thereafter Bloomfield easily won re-election annually through 1812, when he resigned to accept a brigadier general's commission from President James Madison. Carl Prince, "Joseph Bloomfield," in Paul A. Stellhorn and Michael J. Birkner, eds., *The Governors of New Jersey, 1664–1974: Biographical Essays* (Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1982), 87.

⁴Given his prominence as a military and political figure (he was instrumental in securing the Jeffersonian cause in the North), it is curious that Bloomfield has no major biography. If not a "Founding Father," he certainly was a prime example of the political leadership that emerged from the Revolution. But see Mark Edward Lender and James Kirby Martin, "Gentleman-Republican," in Lender and Martin, eds., *Citizen Soldier: The Revolutionary War Journal of Joseph Bloomfield*, 2nd ed. (Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2018), 1–33; Prince, "Joseph Bloomfield," 85–88; and Harvey Strum, "Bloomfield, Joseph," in *Encyclopedia of New Jersey*, Maxine N. Lurie and Marc Mappen, eds. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 81.

⁵We don't know precisely when this news reached France, but probably it was in early November 1823.

All this leads to our second letter. In November 1823, Lafayette wrote to President James Monroe informing him of Bloomfield's communication and his reaction to Bloomfield's demise. Given Bloomfield's political prominence, the marquis could have safely assumed Monroe was aware of the former governor's death, and perhaps further assumed Monroe felt the loss as well. Like Lafayette and Bloomfield, Monroe also was a Continental veteran. In noting Bloomfield's death, the marquis sadly observed that "a great man is no more" and lamented that, as he learned from Bloomfield's letter, only "a few others" remained among the New Jersey veterans of the War for Independence. Lafayette's reaction was emotional—the man did have a sentimental streak—and he did not try to hide the fact.

But the two letters leave unanswered questions: What was Lafayette's relationship with Bloomfield—did the men even know each other? And why did Bloomfield write in the first place? Here we can only speculate. During the War for Independence, Bloomfield kept a detailed journal; in fact, it is one of the most interesting compiled by any revolutionary soldier. The journal is full of observations on the revolution and many of its leading personalities; but nowhere does it give any indication that the young New Jersey officer (he was only 22 when he enlisted in 1775) ever had met or remotely interacted with Lafayette.⁶ Bloomfield left few papers in his later career, and they are scattered in various collections. None of these papers, which deal mainly with his legal career, personal affairs, and some military matters from the War of 1812, make any mention of Lafayette.⁷ Conversely, Lafayette's published wartime papers—at least

⁶Lender and Martin, eds., *Citizen Soldier*. Bloomfield mentioned Lafayette only twice and even then only peripherally, noting the marquis's march toward Barren Hill (May 18, 1778) and his position near Monmouth Courthouse (June 25, 1778) prior to the Battle of Monmouth. Bloomfield cited no contact or acquaintance with Lafayette. See pp. 135-36.

⁷E.g., Fourteen Bloomfield MSS are in Autograph Manuscripts and Manuscripts Signed, 1789–1819, MC 1004, Special Collections, Alexander Library, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. Various Bloomfield letters and notes appear in the following: Ebenezer Elmer Papers, 1774-1814, MC 754, in *ibid.*; and the John Lambert Papers, 1783–1812, MC 350, in *ibid.* Single letters are found in the Manuscripts and Archives Division of the New York Public Library, and in the Sol Feinstone Collection of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. Similar

those translated into English—make no reference to Bloomfield.⁸ Unless some undiscovered documentation emerges, which seems unlikely, we have to assume that the men formed no connection during the Revolution.

It seems more likely that an aging Bloomfield took the initiative in contacting the Frenchman. His letter to the marquis was, in a certain respect, unusual. Bloomfield may have been the only old Continental from the junior officer corps to write to Lafayette. If any other veterans did, their letters have not survived or have escaped notice. In any event, as far as we know, Bloomfield's letter was the first time Lafayette had any meaningful contact with the Jerseyman—although because of Bloomfield's political visibility the marquis may well have known *of* him. Moreover, Bloomfield's Jeffersonian attachment would have appealed to Lafayette, who had a close relationship with the Sage of Monticello.⁹ Bloomfield, like Lafayette, also was a member of the Society of the Cincinnati, the organization of former Continental officers; and it is entirely possible that the former governor felt no reticence whatever in writing to a brother Cincinnati. They were, after all, veterans of the same war and naturally felt the loss of old comrades in arms, which may have been enough for Bloomfield to put pen to paper.

We do not know the full contents of Bloomfield's letter, and probably we never will. But its impact on Lafayette indicates that the origin of the marquis's tour was *not* just the invitation from Monroe. *Rather, it appears that Lafayette's reaction to Bloomfield's letter prompted the*

Bloomfield materials are in: Joseph Bloomfield Papers, Manuscript Group 377, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, NJ; Bloomfield-Pike Letterbook, 1812–1813, University of Michigan William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, MI. Founders Online has some sixty-five letters between Bloomfield and various political and military figures. Again, none of these documents makes any mention of Lafayette, and we can safely assume the same is true of any other scattered Bloomfield manuscripts.

⁸Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier de La Fayette, marquis de La Fayette, *Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution: Selected Letters and Papers, 1776–1790*, ed. by Stanley J. Idzerda et al., 5 vols. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977–1983).

⁹On the relationship between Lafayette and Jefferson, see Tom Chaffin, *Revolutionary Brothers: Thomas Jefferson, the Marquis de Lafayette, and the Friendship That Helped Forge Two Nations* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2019).

Frenchman virtually to invite himself to America. “Judge if all the motives,” he implored the president, “[and] all the feelings come together to urge me to go and join the friends with whom I could still enjoy the sweetest memories, and visit the happy shores of an adoptive homeland which has well fulfilled my first and most presumptuous hopes, because I will find there, I know, in the third generation [after American independence], the benevolent dispositions which penetrate my heart with the most affectionate and devoted gratitude.” And later: “I often think of the day when I will be able, without remorse, to enjoy the happiness of finding myself on American soil.”¹⁰ Could the marquis have been any more explicit?

There is little question that the chief thrust of the marquis’s letter was his interest in returning to America. Lafayette’s desire to rekindle ties with old revolutionary friends and his longings to recall the “sweetest memories” of his youth were no doubt sincere. But there were other motives in play as well. As his letter to Monroe (that follows in translation below) clearly indicates, his political fortunes in France were at a low ebb. With few exceptions, the regimes that followed the Napoleonic Wars (in which Lafayette had played no significant role, although Napoleon had offered him a general’s commission) were conservative, if not reactionary. Lafayette was out of step with these political currents—just as he had fallen out of step with the radical Jacobins during the French Revolution—and he lamented to Monroe the fate of liberal reformers in Europe. The marquis certainly was no radical or even a republican, but his preference for constitutional monarchy was too much for French royalists. Indeed, the government of King Charles X had no use for Lafayette. However earnest his calls for “liberty,” the marquis saw little prospect of seeing his often-inchoate ideals taking concrete form, a reality

¹⁰Lafayette to James Monroe, Nov. 25, 1823, in Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier de La Fayette, marquis de La Fayette, *Mémoires, Correspondance et Manuscrits du Général Lafayette, Publiés par Sa Famille*, 6 vols. (Paris: H. Fournier Aîné, 1837–8), 6:160.

that left him profoundly disillusioned. He had good reason to believe he would be more welcome in the United States than in most of Europe, which actually was the case.¹¹

In all likelihood Lafayette counted on a favorable response from Monroe. The men were friends. While the Frenchman and the president were Continental veterans, there is no evidence the men had become acquainted during the War for Independence. Like Bloomfield, Monroe had been a junior officer; and while he had served on the staff of a Continental general (New Jersey's Major General William Alexander, "Lord Stirling"), during most of the conflict he was not involved in the senior circles Lafayette had inhabited as a general officer and as a member of Washington's "military family." But their post-war relationship was warm. Monroe had served as the American ambassador to France during Lafayette's political fall from grace and the fraught years of his exile and imprisonment in Austria. The Monroes—James and his wife Elizabeth—also had interceded on behalf of Lafayette's imprisoned wife, Marie Adrienne Françoise de Noailles, marquise de La Fayette.¹² Over time, either in direct correspondence or through the American ambassador to France, Albert Gallatin, Lafayette had remained in touch with Monroe during his presidency.¹³

Lafayette got the response from Monroe he obviously wanted. On February 7, 1824, Monroe extended a formal invitation to come to America. The Frenchman, of course, quickly and gratefully accepted, although he took a commercial transport rather than the proffered Navy frigate.

II

¹¹Unger, *Lafayette*, 320–80.

¹²Ammon, *James Monroe*, 137-38.

¹³E.g., Lafayette, *Mémoires, Correspondance et Manuscrits*, entry of 5 July 1820, 6:91; Lafayette to James Monroe, 20 July 1820, *ibid.*, 6:93.

In the late 1830s, Lafayette's family compiled and published the marquis's papers in a six-volume collection: *Mémoires, Correspondance et Manuscrits du Général Lafayette, Publiés par Sa Famille* (1837–1838). His letters to and from Monroe are found in Volume 6, including Lafayette's reference to Joseph Bloomfield.¹⁴ Curiously, scholarship on the origins of the Farewell Tour have overlooked the letter. None of the sources we have cited here—none of the Lafayette biographies, none of the works dealing directly with the tour—have mentioned it. Again, we can only speculate as to why. Perhaps Bloomfield's name failed to register with historians unfamiliar with revolutionary New Jersey or with the Garden State's significant political role in the young republic. Have previous scholars considered the Bloomfield connection merely an unimportant detail? We just don't know. To date there has been no English translation of the complete letter—ours is the first—which may account for some of the obscurity of Lafayette's communication from Bloomfield. If the lack of an English translation has been an issue, however, we can address it—for our annotated translation of the letter to Monroe of November 25, 1823, follows:¹⁵

We have to regret the loss of a brother in arms, General Bloomfield; I had recently received a letter from him full of affection where he gave me details about several of our comrades in the Jersey line.¹⁶ A great man is no more; a few others still remain; judge if all

¹⁴Lafayette to James Monroe, 25 Nov. 1823, *ibid.*, 6: 160–161. The letter is available online as well: <https://archive.org/details/mmoirescorrespo08unkngoog/page/160/mode/2up>.

¹⁵Lafayette to James Monroe, Nov. 25, 1823, *Mémoires, Correspondance et Manuscrits*, 6:160–161. The only other known citation to Lafayette's letter to Monroe is a brief quote from the letter in the second edition of Lender and Martin, eds., *Citizen Soldier*, ix. The letter is available online in: <https://archive.org/details/mmoirescorrespo08unkngoog/page/160/mode/2up>

¹⁶Absent Bloomfield's letter, we can only speculate on the names of New Jersey officers he may have mentioned. The senior New Jersey Continental officers Lafayette would have known had all died before 1823, as had many of Bloomfield's fellow junior officers in the New Jersey Brigade: Maj. Gen. William Alexander (or Lord Stirling, as he preferred), died in 1783 before the war ended; Brig. Gen. William Maxwell (commander of the New Jersey Brigade), d. 1796; Col. Matthias Ogden (1st NJ Regt.), d. 1791; Col. Israel Shreve (2nd NJ), d. 1799; Col., later Brig. Gen., Elias Dayton (3rd NJ, and Bloomfield's commanding officer through 1778), d. 1807; Maj. Francis Barber (3rd NJ, also col. 2nd NJ), d. 1783; Maj. Richard Howell (2nd NJ, and third governor of NJ), d. 1802; Lt. Col. David Brearly (1st NJ, later NJ Supreme Court), d. 1790; Capt. Richard Cox (3rd NJ, later maj. 2nd NJ), d.

the motives, [and] all the feelings come together to urge me to go and join the friends with whom I could still enjoy the sweetest memories, and visit the happy shores of an adoptive homeland which has well fulfilled my first and most presumptuous hopes, because I will find there, I know, in the third generation [of American independence], the benevolent dispositions which penetrate my heart with the most affectionate and devoted gratitude; but you must judge that it is a duty imposed on this side of the Atlantic on all those who are committed to the cause of European freedom, and more particularly imposed on one of its most ancient promoters. These obligations are all the greater since a voluntary absence from the political battlefield could, as long as the struggle lasts, be seen as a mark of discouragement, and authorize submission to arbitrary power; However, I often think of the day when I will be able, without remorse, to enjoy the happiness of finding myself on American soil . . .

Among the victims of partisanship are the historian of the American war, Mr. Botta; he was at the head of the college of Rouen, and has just been dismissed.¹⁷ It appears that the dissolution of the Chamber was decidedly [clearly] decided with a view to obtaining the benefit of the *septennial* elections . . . (1); it is a new infringement of the Charter, which,

1811; Ens. Ebenezer Elmer (3rd NJ, later surgeon 2nd NJ), d. 1802. This list could go on, citing other junior officers. It is clear, however, that Bloomfield, who probably knew all these men, had outlived most of them. It was a point he likely conveyed to Lafayette, or one that would have been obvious to the marquis. The records of all of these men are found in Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army During the War of the Revolution, April 1775, to December, 1783* (Washington, DC, Rare Book Shop Publishing Company, 1914); and William S. Stryker, *Official Register of the Officers and Men in the Revolutionary War* (Trenton, NJ: Wm. T. Nicholson & Co., Printers 1872).

¹⁷Carlo Giuseppe Guglielmo Botta (1766-1837) led a peripatetic life between his native Italy and his adopted France. He was an early enthusiast of the French Revolution, liberal political activist, physician, French office-holder, advocate of Italian unity, and accomplished author. His outspokenness frequently made him the target of political authorities. In 1809 he published, in Italian, a major history of the American War for Independence, a project for which Lafayette provided encouragement and source materials. An English translation appeared in 1837: *History of the War of the Independence of the United States of America*, trans. by George Alexander Otis, 2 vols. (New Haven, CT: Nathan Whiting, 1837). Some historians have been skeptical of Botta's work, but it remains a valuable source. Named rector of the University of Rouen in 1817, to Lafayette's disgust Botta lost his post in 1822, forced out during the reactionary rein of Charles X. Botta died in Paris in 1837. See Jordan D. Fiore, "Carlo Botta: An Italian Historian of the American Revolution," *Italica* 28, no. 3 (1951):155-171.

being itself a usurpation of the rights of the people, exposes all speakers to a strange confusion of words and things, unless we return from the beginning to the basis of national power and common sense.

You must know what the events in Spain make me feel: I will only say one word about it to express my indignation at the fate reserved for Riégo, and to refute this base accusation of weakness, in his last moments, that you will have been able to find in the newspapers (2).¹⁸ If you thought, my good friends, that in these affairs of the Peninsula Great Britain played a more honest role than the other anti-liberal cabinets, that would be a great error.

[These editorial notes accompanied the letter to Monroe in *Mémoires, Correspondance et Manuscrits*.]

(1) The law which established the complete renewal of the Chamber of Deputies, every seven years, was presented on April 5, 1814, to the Chamber of Peers and promulgated on June 9. — The 37th article of the Charter read: “The deputies are elected for five years, and in such a way that the chamber is renewed each year by a fifth.”

¹⁸Rafael del Riego y Flórez (1784–1823) was a Spanish general of considerable military reputation and great popularity among Spanish liberals. After fighting in the Napoleonic Wars, he advocated a liberal Spanish constitution under the restored Spanish monarchy. Opposed by the reactionary Fernando VII, Riego subsequently became involved in a number of army plots against the absolutist regime. Arrested after French intervention in Spain on behalf of Fernando, Riego was tried and executed. Lafayette lamented Riego’s fate as an example of the reactionary temper of European affairs, and he resented absolutist allegations that Riego had recanted in an effort to save his life. Riego’s widow sent Lafayette a lock of the general’s hair and a piece of his tie as mementos. See Raúl Pérez López-Portillo, *La España de Riego* (Madrid: Sílex Ediciones, 2005); Charles Wentz Fehrenbach, “Moderados and Exaltados: The Liberal Opposition to Ferdinand VII, 1814–1823,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 50, no. 1 (1970): 52–69.

(2) General Riégo, before dying, untied his tie and sent it with a lock of his hair to Madame Riégo, who, after having divided these tokens of a painful memory in half, kept one for herself and had Taulre handed over to the General Lafayette.

III

Anxious as he was to return to America, and happy as most Americans were to host him, it would be too much to assume that the Bloomfield letter—and news of Bloomfield's death—were the chief precipitating factors leading to the Farewell Tour. Lafayette had connections in America, not the least of which was President Monroe, and no doubt the marquis would have found another opportunity to raise the possibility of an American visit. The fact remains, however, that Joseph Bloomfield, in what likely was one of the last important letters he ever composed, *did* write to the marquis; and undoubtably Bloomfield's letter *did* hit a nerve. And it was in response to the message from Bloomfield, and the news about Bloomfield's death, that prompted Lafayette to contact Monroe and to unambiguously suggest a return to the United States. Perhaps all this seems a mere detail in the wider narrative of the tour and its undeniable impact on the young republic on its fiftieth anniversary. But if so, it is an important detail. Barring the discovery of any new evidence on the origins of the Farewell Tour, Bloomfield's unwitting role in the matter appears unmistakably critical. And even if historians have overlooked it, the Bloomfield-Lafayette connection also was a matter of considerable poignancy, for it highlighted the passing of the generation—and especially of those old Continentals—who served through the war that made the nation's fiftieth anniversary and the Farewell Tour possible in the first place.

Mark Edward Lender is Professor Emeritus of History at Kean University, and he is the author or co-author of thirteen books and many publications in early American social, military, and institutional history. His Fatal Sunday: George Washington, the Monmouth Campaign, and the Politics of Battle (2017, with Garry Wheeler Stone) won a “Best Book of the Year” award from the Society for Military History and a Distinguished Writing Award from the Army Historical Foundation. Fatal Sunday also was a finalist for the George Washington Literary Prize at Mount Vernon. His latest book, Fort Ticonderoga, the Last Campaigns: The War in the North, 1777–1783, is a finalist for the Army Historical Foundation’s Distinguished Writing Award. Lender also is a recipient of the New Jersey Historical Commission’s Richard J. Hughes Award.

Iris de Rode is a Dutch historian who specializes in the French participation in the American Revolution. She received her doctorate from the Université de Paris VIII in November 2019. Among other publications, she is the author of François-Jean de Chastellux (1734–1788): un soldat-philosophe dans le monde Atlantique à l’époque des Lumières (Paris: Éditions Honoré Champion, 2022), which won the Prix Guizot of the Académie Française for “best history book of the year.” The recipient of many fellowships in support of her scholarship, de Rode is currently working on a new book (in English) titled En route to Revolution that was published by the University of Virginia Press in 2024. She is now a postdoctoral fellow at the Karsh Institute of Democracy at the University of Virginia.