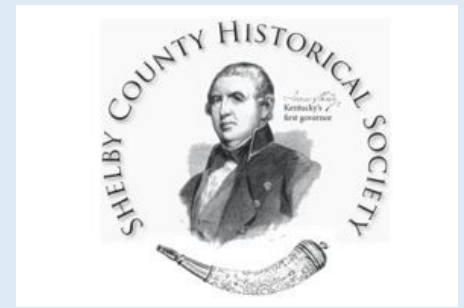


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
(May 2025)



## *A Hero's Welcome: Lafayette Returns*

*May 13, 2025 at 6 pm Shelby County Historical Society Museum and Stargazer Plaza*

SHELBY COUNTY, KY - Julien Icher, President of The Lafayette Trail, Inc., will be the featured speaker on **May 13th at 6 pm** for the second program in a special series focusing on America's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2026. *With Liberty & Justice For All!* is a series of four programs created by the **Shelby County Historical Society** & the **Countdown to USA 250!** Committee. Each program will highlight an aspect surrounding the Revolutionary War era and highlight America's 250 birthday on July 4, 2026.

The occasion marks the Bicentennial of Lafayette's visit to Shelby County in 1825. This celebration will be "the culmination of years of collaboration between The Lafayette Trail, Inc. and the Shelby County Historical Society," said Icher. He will also share some exciting news with those in attendance - details surrounding a document he has discovered from Shelbyville leaders "dated May 7th, 1825, just a week before Lafayette's reception. It gives more color about Lafayette's visit to Shelbyville, even identifying the name of the tavern where he stayed, and the language used and preparations made by local leaders, which remained largely unknown until now." Such information is a rare find.

Julien Icher is a French historian, geographer, founder and president of The Lafayette Trail, Inc., a nonprofit organization which promotes a greater understanding of Lafayette's influence in the United States and France. Icher also serves as host and director of *Follow The Frenchmen*, a YouTube-based documentary series produced by The Lafayette Trail, Inc. which explores the legacy of Lafayette.

The Marquis de Lafayette was a military hero of the American Revolution. He was a major general in the Continental Army at age 19 and a close friend of George Washington. A visionary of democratic ideals, freedom, and human rights, he helped secure France's alliance and turned the tide of the war. He returned to the United States as "The Nation's Guest" some 40 years after the war for a "Farewell Tour" in 1824 and 1825, traveling across 6,000 miles during 13 months, covering 24 states and Washington City. On May 13, 1825 he attended a ball in his honor in Shelbyville, KY.

This program begins at the Shelby County Historical Society Museum (front lawn) with church bells ringing at 6 pm 13 times to honor the original 13 American Colonies. This will be followed by a short presentation from Lafayette himself (Michael Halbert, whose appearance is funded by the American Friends of Lafayette), rededication of the Lafayette historical sign, and a 24-gun salute to mark Lafayette's importance. Program will move across Main St. to Stargazer Plaza for speaker portion. This program follows Lafayette Bicentennials the preceding days in Louisville, KY and Jeffersonville, IN.

The SAR (Sons of the American Revolution, Gov. Isaac Shelby Chapter), DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution, Isaac Shelby Chapter), Painted Stone Settlers, Inc., and The Lafayette Trail, Inc. are partnering with the **Shelby County Historical Society** to present this program. Program is free and open to the public.

The ***With Liberty & Justice For All!*** speaker lineup will include two more programs:

**July 15th** – *Into the Bluegrass* - Mel Hankla, Owner/CEO American Historic Services, Educator, Writer, and authority on the history surrounding the Kentucky Longrifle.

**August 19th** – *Pulling up Roots: Moving to the Kentucky Frontier in the Midst of War* - Nancy O'Malley, Author and Archeologist responsible for surveying and unearthing artifacts from the original Painted Stone Station site in Shelby County, KY. Programs are free and will be held at 6 pm at the Carnegie Library Center, 731 College St., Shelbyville, in collaboration with the Shelby County Public Library.

The Shelby County Historical Society is a 501©3 organization whose mission is to *preserve and promote the knowledge and appreciation of Shelby County and Kentucky history*. To become a member, to be a part of the Countdown to USA 250! Committee, or for more information, contact the Shelby County Historical Society at (502) 513-5555, [www.shelbykyhistory.org](http://www.shelbykyhistory.org), or email [director@shelbykyhistory.org](mailto:director@shelbykyhistory.org).

Sponsors:



**Countdown to USA 250!**

**Celebrating 250 years of American History**

**July 4, 1776 – July 4, 2026**

Logo created by Shelby County student Esther Van Zee

