

*JOE PUGH stands in front of an easel, on which is a large tablet of paper. The recording starts after his presentation has begun.*

JP, *addressing an off-camera audience*: . . . to our current [inaudible word]. But a hundred days [*Turns back to audience as he writes "1767" on the tablet.*] in 1767, 1767, the man that we know as Baron DeKalb had been in France for about twenty years and was sent on a mission by the--he came to France to the colonies. He was sent as a spy. He was Agent 007, James Bond [*audience laughter*]. But he came here in 1767. But to try to help us understand the timeframe, it took him one hundred days to sail from Holland to Philadelphia. One hundred days to cross the ocean.

One of the problems that the European colonial powers had in trying to control what was happening in what we now know as America--it was then as the new colonies--was the distance. It was like, we get to the moon faster than they were getting here. A hundred days. If you got a message from your general in the field that said, "We just lost a battle," it's been over for a hundred days; and that's when it took a hundred days to get a message. A hundred days! You know, in our life and time we see what's happening in four days. I mean, it's over in four days.

So, we've got to back before electricity, we've got to go back to the day of natural childbirth--that normally rings a bell with some of the group, go back before anesthesia, go back before petroleum, and what we're really talking about is that the men who grew to become well-known, many, many, many, many of them have one characteristic in common, and that is they are fighters. And what was a fighter in the 1700s is certainly not a fighter today. In the 1700s you absolutely laid your life on the line. If somebody walked up to you and handed you--the new model well, in 1770, was seven feet long--a battleax and said, "OK, we're going to line up fifty yards from those guys, and you charge, and you try to chop each other to bits." That's what war was about. And so, you say, "Well, what about gunpowder?" Well, during the two wars we're going to talk about, there was gunpowder. But the standard operating procedure and request of all the troops was, "Keep those cannons on the outside of the battlefield." Because those [inaudible] blow up. We--you know, "Don't hurt our side with those cannons." And the reason was that gunpowder was so unreliable, and metallurgy was so unreliable, the cannons were actually put way on the outside so that if they blew up, they wouldn't hurt you. It was fierce-to-fierce personal combat. It didn't change for another hundred years.

But let's go back to 1721, 1721, and I held a Bible in my hand, and that Bible says, "Born to [inaudible--sounds like battle?]"--it was Lutheran; he was Lutheran, and that's very important to the overall story. Anybody in here Lutheran? He is one of your most famous co-denominationalists. Because he went to France, and France was Roman Catholic, if he had changed his religion, his career would have been better. He refused. He stayed Lutheran till the day he died, even though--Is there a Presbyterian here? Presbyterian? He's buried on the front lawn of a Presbyterian church, the only general buried on the front lawn of any church that I'm aware of, and it's a Presbyterian church. But there's a reason for that.

In 1721, you've got to think in terms of rural West Virginia, because the part of what we now know as Germany, where this young man by the name of Johann was just born. Johann, meaning John, Kalb, K-A-L-B, was born of a peasant family. They were farmers, and I visited that farm. It is still in the hands of his direct heirs; and they're very proud of that. There's a plaque on the building, if you ever go to [inaudible], "Baron DeKalb was born here." Not true. [Inaudible sentence] It's gorgeous, and imagine this peasant being born into a--well, they built it in the 1800s, and that, to them, it's the new house. But to the Americans, "Maybe he was born here." No, it's not the original house.

So, in 1721, at a rural farm out in hillbilly Germany, this young man was born. But by the time he was seventeen, he had a curse, an absolute curse. Has anybody here been to Trenton, New Jersey? Did you go to the old barracks? They're called the Old Mission Barracks in downtown Trenton. They're been preserved from the Revolutionary War.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I've [inaudible] Washington crossing the [rest inaudible].

JP: Oh, you went beyond where Washington crossed on January 1<sup>st</sup>?"

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Inaudible comment

JP: I did, too. We'll talk about it. [*Audience laughter*]

JP: But in Trenton--in downtown, bustling, metropolitan Trenton--there is this old building that's been preserved. And it's where the Hessian soldiers were during the Revolution that General Washington sneaked up on and caught [rest inaudible]. You know that battle. Well, the most interesting thing to me about the building was you walk in, and there's a place for the commandant, and it's huge; and then the assistant commandant, and it's huge; and then there are these tiny beds--they're about that long

[*Demonstrates with a gesture.*] Do you understand that in the 1700s the average male was about five-foot-two or shorter? Another way that you may have seen this is going to museums. Have you seen these armor plates that they wore, and you walk up to them, and you say, "What? That was William the Conqueror?" [*audience laughter*] Because men were much, much shorter.

At age seventeen or eighteen what happened to DeKalb was he got to be six feet tall, and that one fact determined that he would not die a farmer in that little farm village he was born in. It did. The reason is that three different rulers of European powers sent out recruiters, and you've heard of them going out and, "Hey, he looks like he'd be a good private?" Hit him in the head or get him drunk or promise him women and money and get him into the army? That's the way it was done. Well, they paid a bonus. Do any of you know a personnel recruiter in town? You know there's this this-and-this personnel recruiters? Well, the personnel recruiters in those days for the army were paid a bonus for every inch over five feet tall [*audience laughter*]. And here was a guy who was six-foot or six-foot-one, so there was no question in the mind of this young farm boy, John Kalb, what he was going to end up being. I mean, the question was, where was he going to serve and how was he going to serve?

Well, he got involved at age nineteen with some guerrilla warfare that was going on in his neighborhood, and he worked with a French officer when he was doing that. That French officer went back to France, and I can't prove this--and you'll understand why in a second--not only to do research on this man, you've got to speak ancient, academic French from the 1700s plus ancient, academic Germany. Those two provide real challenges when you're trying to do research on this guy. And not only that, but you'll find out.

So, at age twenty he left the equivalent of back-hollow West Virginia and walked up to Wall Street. It happened to be Paris. Paris was the capital of the artistic and intellectual world. Anything that was anything happened in Paris under Louis XIII, Louis XIV. Versailles was the capital. Any of you been to Paris? Well, it's when Paris was the capital of the whole world--writers, artists, musicians--everything was there. And up comes from West Virginia hills this six-foot-one guy, and he walks up to a French army barracks, and he says, "How, do you do? I'm Baron de Kalb" [*audience laughter*]. [*Walks up to audience member and speaks to him*] [*Inaudible name*], stand up. [*Audience member rises.*] What do you think the guy replied? [*Audience member says nothing as*

*JP shakes his hand and speaks.*] “Welcome, Baron” [*audience laughter*]. [Inaudible sentence; skip in tape] He was huge! Who was going to argue with him?

His physical presence--and by the way, if there was ever a man who believed in physical exercise, this guy was a physical exercise nut. He enjoyed thirty-mile hikes through open territory, even in his fifties. Well, he walked from Charleston to Philadelphia, to give you some idea of--I mean, he was a muscular, strong attitude, self-confident individual. He also developed on his way or somewhere before--perhaps through the Lutheran Church in Germany--he developed a language skill that was to serve him for the rest of his life. He apparently was already fluent in French before he got to Paris. Now, since there were not a whole lot of schools available, I can't prove where he learned that; but he was fluent in French when he arrived at age twenty-one.

And he was made a major in a German regiment controlled by French officers. You see, in those days about a third of the French army came from Switzerland, Germany, Italy--primarily Switzerland, and then all of the German colonies. You bought your army; there was no standing army, there was no draft. And the king of France always liked to have people that he was paying out of his billfold. Why? Loyalty to him, not to the other royalty in town. They were directly loyal to him. The Royal Guard is where they--it was much more extensive than that. Every king did it. No king wanted all of their army from among all their country, because the leader of that army might turn against him, and he'd lose them. So, they sort of divided the army up, and DeKalb--now known as Baron DeKalb from age twenty-one--became a part of the French army.

And a number of awards--there were seven major awards that we just don't know about, because our history starts with [inaudible] the Atlantic Ocean. There were seven major awards in the European theater, huge and horrible, bloody battles. Who's been to England? Anybody been to England? Did you happen to go to Blenheim Castle? [*Audience member answers no.*] Anybody? Does the word--from your reading, does anybody know what Blenheim Castle is?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Yeah, that's Churchill's family's home.

JP: That's right, Lord Marlborough built a castle and named it Blenheim. But Blenheim's the name of a little tiny community in Bavaria. Why is it named Blenheim? Because Lord Marlborough said to the first queen--she became queen of England, and nobody on the continent paid her any attention--and he said, “I'm going to make you famous. You give me an army, and I'll attack all the way into central Germany and make you famous everywhere I go.” He went all the way as far as Blenheim and won a

huge battle; lost 58,000 people, but still considered a win. And when he came home, the queen said, “The country is--we just love you to death because you have made me--England--famous. We are now no longer considered those ignorant islands floating out in the Atlantic; we’re now a power.” The government gave the money for building the castle, and she named it the Blenheim Castle. That one took place very near DeKalb’s home, before he was born, obviously; but he knew about it. The way to riches was the military.

So, we have this young twenty-one-year-old walking around--he’s twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five--he’s in a couple of different wars. What kind of skills does he show within this German part of the French army? He knows how to get horses and wagons loaded and fed from Point A to Point B. He’s a logistical genius. He is really gifted when it comes to logistics. No one ever looked at him and said, “John, go out and kill those hundred people.” Nobody ever said that. He was not a battlefield, rush-in-the-thrust-of-things leader. He was a thinker; he stood back, he planned, he organized. They lost the war, this particular war; but at the Battle of Wilhelmsthal, his organization helped the French army to the degree that something unusual happened. So, at age forty-one, after having been in the French army for twenty years, he was knighted. But that’s an English word. Do you know what the French equivalent word is? Chevalier. Knighthood is the lowest rank of royalty. It’s the first step into the royal world. Chevalier, in France, is that first step into being royal.

Now, when he got there at age twenty--and I told you that he was tall, he was impressive, he was a physically oriented man. Question: why didn’t he get married? How many mother-in-laws do you know that if they--“Mom, I’d like for you to meet John. We’re going to get married,” and she sends a courier to Germany to check on what?

AUDIENCE, *off-camera*: His parentage

JP: His parentage. So, he remained single, because he couldn’t risk a mother-in-law’s curiosity. But at age forty-one, when he became a chevalier [*Writes on tablet*]--that spelling may be wrong, I’m a horrible speller--the chevalier--within two years he did two things. First of all, what did he do?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: He got married.

JP: He got married. Now, he’s forty-one years old. How old’s his wife?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Nineteen?

JP: Younger

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Sixteen

JP: One year older. She's seventeen. Is she rich or poor?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Rich

JP: Very rich, very rich [*Audience laughter*] So at age forty-one, he has now become--as a matter of fact, one of the things I really wanted to do the first eight years, and it just couldn't happen--I wanted to sue DeKalb County to take the "De" off their name, because "De" is the French word that means "of royalty." And once I had proved that this man was not royalty, I thought it would just be a fun historical thing to stir up, you know, and make it become "Kalb" County instead of DeKalb County [*audience laughter*]. I like history, and that's one way to get it on the front pages. But since at age forty-one, he was made a chevalier, the "De"Kalb is legitimate, but he ain't baron. The sign should--we should go back and take those brass markers and mark though "Baron" and put above it "Chevalier," and then they're true. So, he became a chevalier, and he got married.

He married a very, very wealthy girl whose parents were from Holland, and she had one major characteristic other than being wealthy. She was Protestant. At the time they got married in the only Protestant chapel in France. Do you understand that in the 1700s France was the Roman Catholic Church? It had shifted from Rome to France, because it was a political government that was growing, and it was taking the glory of Catholicism with it. He still, at this age, refused to--and a lot of the other people did--change his religion. So less than one percent of the people in France were Protestant. He stayed Protestant, and it probably hurt him.

So, after he gets married, he gets no more charters from the bosses, from the military bosses. They don't say, "Go do this. And here's so much money [*inaudible*]." And so, he went out near Versailles--and if you ever go to France, you really need to go to Versailles, and then take a cab ride--it's about a twenty-dollar ride over the hill--gosh, it's just beautiful countryside! And you will see the home that he built with whose money? Hers, obviously. Now, I can't tell you, after having planned this for twelve years, to be in the cab and go over the hill, and I'm going to see DeKalb's house, the one that he lived in for almost thirty years of his life. And I got there, and I was in Druid Hills! It's a French Colonial house. Now, what did I expect? It's built in France during Colonial period. I don't know what I was expecting? It's a French Colonial three-story! It could be on Lullwater [*audience laughter*]. I mean, a little bit bigger than

the ones on Lullwater, but it could be Lullwater. And I looked, and honest and truly, I'd seen a hundred like it in America, because it's a French Colonial three-story.

But then, rather quickly, he and his wife had a couple of children. So, he's living over near Versailles, he's not too happy with life. The people at court had changed, and this mistress had become very powerful with the king, and she was changing whom the king listened to. But--and they lost, French lost something they called the "Seven Years' War" and what did we call it? The French and Indian War. Over here, we called it the French and Indian War. It's when George Washington first became a leader. The French and Indian War--it was the Seven Years' War over there, and they lost it over there. And they got driven not only out of the United States [sic], but you know what else France lost? India. They got driven out of India.

So, here's the intellectual dauphin who perceives himself as the sun god. "The sun doesn't come up until I lift it in the morning." The most powerful ruler on the face of the earth, and he's lost America and India. And he's sitting there sucking his thumb, and he's mad. "I'm supposed to be rich and famous and doing all these great things, and my country's falling apart." But he had a guy who worked for him that was like our Kissinger: brilliant [skip in recording; could be "strategist and tactician"?] worldwide--he could look at the world and perceive things. His name was [JP pronounces it "Cho-sul"] "And [inaudible name] says, "You know, if we lost India, where the British are, and we lost America, where the British are, what we need to find out is where the British have committed their armies, and we'll steal everything else. They can't defend the whole world, they're too small." Well, wait a minute. Wonder how many soldiers have committed to America? One way to find out. Let's send a spy.

In 1767 the man who lived near Versailles was called back in; he was delighted. "I'm back in. I'm now getting accepted. I'm back in the fraternity. The old boys' network is working again, and I get sent to America." His orders were to come to the United States [sic], identify the leaders of the possible revolution, determine if there was going to be a revolution, and come up with recommendations to position the French government's role during and after that revolution. 1767. Took him a hundred days. What a downer! "Boy, I got a new job! Only takes me a hundred days [inaudible] to get there." What a downer! And, I tell you, the other thing that scared him to death was leaving the Hague, which is the name of--H-A-G-U-E, it's the Dutch port, leaving on the same day, and he almost got on the other one; it didn't arrive at all. That's scary. Too many people were in the shipping business at that time. There were just too many

ships out there, and I don't know how to say this, but they just did not know what they were doing. And he got one that really did know what they were doing.

When he got to Philadelphia, he wrote something that I want the original copy of for our files; and I've been fighting for it for about nine years. It's a letter where he says his first impressions after that month was there will be a revolution, and it will be successful. To my knowledge he is the first person, independent observer, to say that this group of disparate people, less than four million of them, are going to take on the mightiest military power in the world, England, and have a free country, and that the French should cooperate. That was his view. But he did a brilliant thing! At the time, the greatest leader in Europe that was actually out there on the battlefield was German. Actually, he was Prussian. So, DeKalb went around, and he said, "How do you do, I'm a Prussian," to the British, the British commander in Philadelphia. "I'm a German guy. If there's a resurrection [sic; means "insurrection"?], how you going to protect this place? Do you have cannon?" He got a beautiful list. "From one professional to another, this is how we're going to crush those Americans. This is how we're going to do it." And he wrote it down!

And then something else I want for our files: he sent it to his wife in code, and it's a code that you played with when you were a child. You open a book, and you number the words across and down. And he would send two letters, and that would be a word and a book. But then accidentally he lost the book. So, he could no longer send her code. And he finally found one in New York--I guess at the Strand Bookstore, those of you who go to New York [*audience laughter*]. He went to the Strand and found this book. And he could once again write her, but then a letter came from her. He'd only been here two and a half months; he was supposed to stay a year. And it said, "John, somebody's opening our mail." Do you know what the penalty for spying was in the Colonies? [*Whistles and makes gestures to suggest hanging.*] Immediate hanging. No jury, no grand jury, nothing--just the military in command of the area would take you out and hang you, and that was it. And that's a pretty frightful kind of threat. So, he decided he'd learned all he needed to know, and what he learned was that the British had, in fact, made a major military commitment to the Colonies. And he sent all that information back to his Henry Kissinger, a guy by the name of [JP pronounces it "Cho-sul"], and [JP pronounces it "Cho-sul"] presented this information daily--sort of, I mean, or whatever the messages came in from DeKalb's wife, to the king. So, DeKalb gets on his ship, and he goes home.

He expects to walk into the palace, and the king say, "John, here, have a seat" [*audience laughter*]. "Let's talk about this wonderful thing you've just done." He makes the contact with the council, and he finds out that neither [JP pronounces it "Cho-sul"] nor the king want anything to do with him. He came home early. He didn't complete his mission. [*Whispers*] He is crushed, just crushed. Goes back over to his beautiful home, about three or four miles away from where [*inaudible; audience member coughing*], and realizes he has blown this opportunity to rejoin the old boys' network; and he is absolutely brokenhearted.

But he has met some interesting people. He has met a guy who has published a newspaper in Philadelphia. Who was that?

AUDIENCE RESPONSE: Benjamin Franklin

JP: Benjamin Franklin. You probably don't know this name, but when you're studying the American Revolution, you will stumble across a guy by the name of Benjamin Rush, who was one of the first doctors in America. He had met Benjamin Rush. Benjamin was from the same area of Bavaria that he was, so he contacted him as a German. He'd met some other real leaders. He had learned the American idiom of the English language. I mean, his language skills were wonderful, fabulous. But now he goes back, and he sits in his house, and the years click away: '67, '68, '69, '70, '71-- [*numerical prefix*] 17, by the way--'72 '73. [*Walks over to tablet, points to timeline, and whispers*] What's beginning to happen here? We're getting a little more interested in getting rid of these British taxes. '75, '76--1776, what happens? I'm telling you folks, if we had had modern communications, that date would never have happened in Philadelphia. Those men would not have gone in and said, "We are independent of England," because England was to America, in terms of military power, what Puerto Rico is to the United States.

I can't--let me tell you why. In 1767 the British passed a law here. You know what that law said? A law that there may be some of you disagree with [*rest inaudible*]--no gun manufacturing in the Colonies. Not one gun plant! We're declaring war, we're saying we're independent, and we don't have a single gun manufacturer, because it's against the law. Now, there were some folks up in the mountains--and you've seen these long rifles that they built--but those were one at a time in two or three weeks, maybe four weeks. But, you know, by now, you needed at least a cannon to help you scare the other side. And there were no cannons! No place to cast a cannon. No place to manufacture gunpowder, and they sat in that room and said, "Hmph!" to Russia [*sic*]

or “Hmph!” to the United States [sic] military? It’s incredible that they did. We don’t fully understand that when Patrick Henry signed it, what did he say?

VOICE FROM AUDIENCE, *off-camera*: “Give me death.”

JP: “Give me liberty or give me death,” and he fully expected death. He fully expected the mighty British army and navy to come in and crush them. If you--if you were living in Las Vegas in 1776, the odds would have been about 25-1 against Philadelphia. They’re going to lose! And we don’t understand that. The reason we were successful in the Revolutionary War--and we’ve already talked about it--one is the enormous distance, a hundred days to send a ship. You can’t fight a war trying to supply them a hundred days before you can get to a wagon. And the second thing was the English people were highly divided. They really did not want a war. Why? A lot of them owned a lot of stuff here. Or their brother had come over, and by now they’d built a house. I mean, it was one country. These were English people, and all of a sudden, they just didn’t want war. The country was divided. And to this very young generation now, I’m telling them it was, in a completely different way, but in many ways in England, like Viet Nam was here. People weren’t sure that there should be a war to begin with. Go negotiate it, go work it out. And by the way, there were a lot of attempts to do that, until something happened in Boston, and bang, bang, bang, and all of a sudden we had a war.

So now we’ve got a war, and these people, while they are phenomenally brave and don’t really plan to die but are risking death, look around and they say, “My gosh! We don’t have any guns. What are we going to do?” Let’s go to France and get them. France woke up, because France hates Great Britain. You know, they’ve been at war with them for a hundred years. Let’s get France on our side. And then they asked an interesting question, and I’ll ask it in this room. “Does anybody here speak French?” There was one in the room, one in the room. Do you know who that was? His name was Silas Deane. He was a schoolteacher in Connecticut, and he taught French. So, he raised his hand. And they said, “Do you want to be ambassador to France? You’re our ambassador to France” [*audience laughter*].

Now, wait a minute. Ambassador for what? An ambassador for thirteen colonies that had nothing in common, had no ability to raise taxes, no ability to communicate with each other, nothing but a group of hotheads that showed up in Philadelphia. They were representing nothing. He gets on a ship, and he goes to France. Does the guy who raises the sun every morning welcome this guy who represents nothing? [*Audience*

*laughter*] He won't let him near Versailles. He won't even let him get on the bus [sic] in Paris to come out. "I don't want to talk to you! Who are you, you clown?" There are important people--the king of Switzerland's coming by appointment tomorrow. The next day, the king of Italy. Who are you? You represent some people who have no money and no guns? I don't understand you.

Silas Deane was crushed. He's walking around the streets of Paris. By gosh, the whole revolution is depending on [inaudible]. What am I going to do? And I promise you, I don't drink, but my version of what happens is he walks into a bar [*audience laughter*], because we don't know. And he's telling the bartender his sad tale of woe, and the bartender says, "Well, you know, out there near Versailles, there's this strange guy. He's a military leader, he's royalty. On occasion, he can get to the king. But boy, he's fierce. And not only that, somebody told me that he speaks English. And somebody else told me that he had been to America and knows a lot of leaders there."

And Silas Deane eyes got about this big, and he says, "I'm going to meet him."

Silas Deane goes to DeKalb and says, "Please, will you come to America and help us?"

And he responds, "Certainly, I'm glad to be your commander in chief" [*audience laughter*].

And Deane says, "B-b-but we already have one. His name is George Washington."

And DeKalb says, "Not interested. I will come, I will serve your military, but I am not putting my fortune at risk. But you know, there's that hothead, the wealthiest man in France"--the Donald Trump of France in those days--"nineteen years old, and during that Seven--Eight Years' War? His dad was killed by the British. He absolutely despises the British. Let's go talk to him."

So, Silas Deane and DeKalb go to LaFayette, a nineteen-year-old, who had been in school all his life, never [inaudible] anything. He's got thirty-seven [inaudible]--that's how rich and famous he was. And DeKalb says to him, "Have you ever thought about kind of helping the Americans out?"

"Yes!" he said. And he prances around, and he screams and he shouts, "Is this my change to go kill British? Yes! I've been waiting on this! I will overcome my dad's death!"

And Silas Deane says, "[inaudible]. Can you put any money into it?" [*Audience laughter*]

[*Whispers*] "My entire wealth I will put at your disposal."

And he gets on his horse, and the three of them race to the nearest French coast, and they look around, and they say, "There's a ship!"

And they go up in it, and LaFayette says, you know, "See my broker. I want that ship." And he buys it, and then he breaks out a bottle of champagne, and he smashes it on the bow, and he names it *H.M.S. Victory*.

He was something else. But the most important thing about him was that he only spoke French. He had no multiple-language ability at all at the time. He commissioned that ship, he and seven others get on board. Silas Deane has been going around making generals out of [inaudible]. Where [inaudible] a general and get a few guns [inaudible], because it proved to be a much more difficult task than he thought. The only one who brings guns is LaFayette, and they sail to Philadelphia.

To make a very long story short, they get across in some sixty-two days, and the captain of the galleon says, "Land ho!"

Somebody said, "Aren't those pine trees? Isn't that sand? Maybe we better put a boat ashore and see where we are" [*audience laughter*].

So, they put a boat ashore, and they went ashore, and there was this huge bay. And they went down in the bay, and they had found Georgetown, South Carolina; they were in Winyah Bay in Georgetown. The wind had blown them off course. So, the four of them, LaFayette, DeKalb, and a couple of officers, go marching up this lawn toward a large home--it happened to be the Revolutionary War coordinator for that district. He sees them coming, he arms his slaves, because he thinks it's a British invasion. He's never seen those kind of uniforms before, and all four of them almost got killed before they got started. But finally, they made contact, they then go into Charleston, they buy horses, and they start for Philadelphia. But do you realize that royalty has one slight problem [inaudible]? They're lousy at buying horses. The horses died, and they had to walk. They only got up partway into South Carolina before all the horses died. They [inaudible] at all, I mean hard. The wagons spilled--the people in Charleston cleaned their clocks, I mean they were just--[*audience laughter*].

And they get to Philadelphia just in time for the Continental Congress to read, with absolute astonishment, that Silas Deane is over in France giving away generalships, and all the generals in America say, "Look, if he's going to do that, then we're not going to fight. We've earned the right to be generals. Who are these clowns coming in from abroad?"

So, the Continental Congress said, “We invalidate all the commissions granted by Silas Deane” the day they walk into town. Bad timing, bad timing.

So, several things began happening. Remember DeKalb’s been there before, and he knew a few leaders. So, he goes to--one of these leaders is Ben Franklin, and says, “Who’s running the show here? Who’s in charge?”

Well, the war is being pursued by something called the Committee of Public Safety, and if you want a rare weapon indeed, get your hands on a Revolutionary War gun that has stamped with “The Committee of Public Safety.” It is invaluable; there are very few of them around. The Smithsonian only has three. But the committee was [inaudible] producing arms. The committee was running the war, so we’ve seen that. So, DeKalb and LaFayette walk up to what we now know as Independence Hall’s back door, and they knocked on the door. And somebody opens the door. I think it was John Laurens of South Carolina, though I can’t prove that. But history sort of suggests that. And Laurens looks at him and says, “Yes, can I help you?”

And they said. “I’m Brigadier General DeKalb, this is Major General LaFayette, and Major General--” Boom! The door was shut.

“God, we’ve got generals coming out. Every time I open that door, the generals walk in.”

So, DeKalb goes back to Franklin and says, “You don’t understand. Sitting down there in the harbor at Charleston is a load of guns.”

And Ben Franklin jumped up and ran with his overweight state and said, “Welcome, General.”

So, Congress honored the major generalship of LaFayette, a nineteen-year-old who could not speak English, because he brought guns, but no others. LaFayette then negotiated that DeKalb’s generalship would be honored, and so DeKalb stayed. The rest of them went back home. So that’s how DeKalb got here; that’s how LaFayette got here.

[JP goes to tablet, turns the page, and writes something--possibly legible on video.] Two years go by--1778 is when they arrived, and now we come into the year 1780. And it’s the strangest orders I’ve ever seen written in my life. George Washington, in 1780, gets word the British are going to shift their focus from the New England area to the South; because they think if they can capture one major city in the South, all these people who love England will rise up against these colonials who are trying to be separatists. Sort of like we were in Cuba--you know, if we can just get it

started, everybody'll welcome us? But that was [inaudible]. We'll go down and capture Charleston; and then everybody in the South will say, "We love the queen!" or the king, and the war will be over.

And Washington, he thinks he--he's never been able to order a soldier across a state border. He's a colonial army leader; but when the state militia gets to the state line, they say, "Hey, have a nice day." The colonial army was being paid with something called Colonial [sic] Dollars. And have you ever heard the statement, "Not worth a colonial [sic] damn?" The colonial money was printing-press paper with nothing behind it. Nothing! So, they sold it by the bushel. The colonial [sic] army was very difficult to order around, and Washington just--he couldn't get enough people together. So, he sent a message in the early part of 1780 to Baron DeKalb and said, look, would you do me a favor? Go into Philadelphia. If you can raise supplies, and if you can raise an army, then please proceed south and take some pressure off our troops that are in Charleston. Try to distract the British attention and take pressure off the troops in Charleston. And if you can't, just do your shopping in the city and go back home [audience laughter]. So help me! That's what the letter says. That's what the letter says.

Well, friend, that's all DeKalb needed. DeKalb was accustomed to armies of 300,000 [or] 150,000 [or] 100,000 facing each other from fifty feet apart; and so far, the most people he'd ever seen was about sixty on horse. The Revolutionary War was a comical sideshow as far as the Europeans were concerned. It wasn't a war. It was just sort of something was happening over there; people got mad and just shot each other. It was no big deal to them. DeKalb finally--someone had finally said, "Here's your [inaudible]. Here's your destiny. Here is something that you will never be forgotten for. Put together an army! Go south!" And brother, he did. We understand that he unloaded warehouses against the desires of their owners [audience laughter], he took horses from people who were headed downtown and never made it--it was the first example, I guess, of carjacking [audience laughter], and he rounded up an army. And then he did something else: he started writing letters, and every state that he was going to go through, he would write the governor. We have the ones he wrote to Thomas Jefferson, and he says, please, Tom, we got no food, but we're going to go fight. Can you help us? You provide food for your militia. When the colonial army goes through, can you give us some food? Please, please, please? Well, he didn't hear from Jefferson, so he rode over to see him and spent three days, and he got nothing.

So, the army just kept coming, running out of more and more things. [*Writes on tablet.*] They got to Hillsborough, North Carolina, right on the South Carolina border, and doggone it, history repeated itself. Congress met. Now, remember, I said George Washington wrote the letter to DeKalb. Congress met, and they said, Do you know what that crazy George Washington has done now? And by the way, you won't believe it--there was enormous battle between George Washington and Congress--seventy-six long letters back and forth. When are you going to support me? When are you going to help me? Why don't you get off your duff and [inaudible phrase]. Why can't I get food? Why can't I get shoes? Why can't I get--I mean, it was an enormous [inaudible]. George Washington, we really do, in fact, owe the Revolution to him. But George Washington had written this letter to DeKalb, and Congress [inaudible]. You know what Congress says? Do you know what crazy George has done now? The only army we've got in the field, the one that's proceeding down the east coast is led by a German! And one out of every three troops that we face--one out of three of the British troops--were purchased mercenaries called Hessians, who were German. How do you know we can trust him? How do we know we can trust him? He's served with the French army. We've got to do something.

So, they went up and picked up the Hero of the Battle of Saratoga [Horatio Gates], who was sitting on his porch rocking, because he didn't like George Washington; he didn't want to fight anymore. And he got on his horse, and he rode south, and he headed off DeKalb, and he finally met the army, and he said, to DeKalb, "I relieve you." And he took DeKalb's army away from him. And DeKalb said, OK, what are our orders?

And he said, "Well, where are British?"

"Well, they're down there in Camden."

"Well, why don't we just go to [inaudible], and that's where we'll get our supplies."

One of the strangest--war is full of incredible coincidences, but these two armies--one hungry, without shoes, is joined overnight by a whole group North Carolinians. They're farmers. They've brought their axes and their rifles, and they came to help the colonial army that was under DeKalb and has now changed generalships. They said, "We'll help" and meant it. That [inaudible] about 1,400 people. The decision is made a twelve o'clock at night, "Let's go down that dirt road leading to Camden, and then very early in the morning we'll surprise them." Guess what. The British general is

saying, "Why don't we go up that dirt road tonight [*audience laughter*]-why don't we go up that dirt road tonight and surprise them?" You got to go to that dirt road--it's paved now, but it's not much better than a dirt road, just north of Camden.

So here comes the British army, and here comes the colonial--on this side there were the North Carolina, big farmers who had never really fought--you know, their heart was in the right place; and then the colonial [sic] army that was dead-tired and hungry, and the only thing they'd had to eat the night before was green corn and molasses, and most of them had dysentery and could hardly walk. They run into each other. The British are well-fed, and they know tactics. They spread out immediately, form battle lines, and a little bit of skirmishing even takes place. And then the sun comes up, and the British charge. And those folks who have seen a British charge before the day of the machine gun know what fear is, because they looked at the sun angle, and they made absolutely certain that the sun angle shown off the bayonet. You know how you can hold a mirror and shine something? Well, as they were walking, as the sun was there, they were shining that bayonet in their eyes. You only got one round, so you only got one bullet, so you were trying to do fear. Guess what the North Carolinians did? They decided that [inaudible]. They ran. They threw down their guns and ran. [*Whispers*] And ran. The only people left on the battlefield was the British army and DeKalb's troops. The general who had taken over command got on his horse when he saw these people running. He said, "We must have lost," and he rode into Charlotte, North Carolina, fast enough to win the Darlington 500 [*audience laughter*]. It was an incredible retreat.

DeKalb stands, and these colonial [sic] troops are around. And they fight, and they fight, and they fight and fight, and this is hand-to-hand, person-on-person combat, professional against fairly well-trained colonials but not real professionals. DeKalb takes about at least three bullet wounds and six saber holes--whack! And he still fights. Ka-whack! And he still fights. And they finally beat him down to his knees, and the British stop. They move back, and they say, "This guy is incredibly courageous!" And they try to save him. After all, you know, we military--and there are things you civilians don't understand--we military have our own code of honor. So, they picked him up, and they put him on a wagon, and they take him into Camden, and they try to see if he will live. He dies. Lord Cornwallis--the name you probably remember him from sixth or seventh grade in school--decides, "We will bury him with highest military honors." British military honors. They dig a hole in the ground behind the

house that was serving as a hospital, and they lower him down, and they bury him with highest honor--that means bugles, guns, sabers rattling, everything.

It's the biggest defeat the colonial army suffered in the Revolution. Now, why are six counties named for this man that fought one battle, it was a huge defeat, and there are six counties named after him? Now, to put that into perspective, folks, the number-one name of counties in the United States is Washington. The number-two name for counties in the United States is LaFayette. The number-three name is DeKalb; there are six DeKalb Counties. Why? Because, obviously, while they were still in the popular mind as heroes when the counties were being formed. And then came other wars, the War of 1812 and others, and the heroes changed. But these first heroes got a lot of counties named after them. He's buried. And, folks, he's pretty much forgotten, except in the minds of--since we are mostly post-World War II or World War II folks, the G.I. Joe remembers him, the foot soldier, the guy who never had command of anything, the guy who gets up and marches and shoots and dies, that guy remembers him. And as he goes into a place called Georgia, a new county is to be named, and the name comes up. And he goes into Alabama; the name DeKalb comes up. Goes into Indiana; the name comes up. So, his name spreads.

But let's go back to one other thing, and then we're through--[*Turns to a bank sheet on tablet.*] An extraordinary thing happened in American history in 1824. The American Congress still at it--no different from today--get word that one of the original heroes of life, meaning the Revolution, was in prison in Germany. He had been stripped of everything, all lands, all properties, all titles. He was now laughingly known on the streets of Paris as "citizen Fayette"--no longer "La" Fayette, meaning "of royalty" Fayette, but citizen Fayette. And his health was bad. But let me tell you what. He still had a beautiful woman. He was an incredible womanizer. Even in prison, he had arranged for a woman to move into the cell next to him [*audience laughter*].

So, Congress sends a message to the government over there and says release the guy and let him come here, and we will give him 60,000 acres of land. Now, just like Congress today, they didn't own it [*audience laughter*]. They didn't own that property, but it perked up LaFayette at age seventy-seven, and he sails across and he gets here, and it is the most remarkable single carnival America has ever seen. And it's too bad that it's a long way we weren't told about this. People gathered around him as if he were the Second Coming of Christ. He represented everything that had happened here, this wonderful marvel that everybody was so proud of, because by now the

country had become pretty powerful. And it was obvious that it was on the way and that there was a new way to live called democracy, and here was the one guy who was still alive. All the rest of them were dead--why were they dead? He was nineteen when he was in the war. They were thirty, forty, fifty. So, he outlived them all. He's the last guy. People followed him everywhere he went.

But when he landed in New York, guess what one of his first questions was? "Where is my friend DeKalb?" And we think it was a reporter passed the word. And the mayor of Camden hears that God is coming to Camden, South Carolina, because he wants to see his friend DeKalb's grave. And he's buried out back behind a house under a piece of marble that hadn't been polished in thirty years. But the guy who designed the Washington memorial lived not far from there and was currently building a Presbyterian church; he wasn't through with it yet. So, the mayor runs over--it's a good political figure--and says to this world-known architect, "Could you design a monument that we could [inaudible] when LaFayette comes?"

"Sure, I'll do that. Where shall we do it?"

"I don't know--the church front porch? Why not right there? He was Protestant, and he never became--and it would help your church."

By the way--Presbyterians accounted for about fifty percent of the generals in the Revolutionary War. The Presbyterians, because of their religious history, hated the British more than other folks did. So, he found a home, a political home. So, John Mills designs this obelisk--it's about, oh, thirty feet high, and LaFayette comes to town, and they dig up Kalb, and they move him down the street, and they [inaudible] on the front--well, it's about as far as from here to that window, from the front entrance to the Presbyterian church, and build this obelisk over him. And LaFayette dedicates it.

It was--from then on, they took--as the people in Camden say, it's been downhill ever since [*audience laughter*]. I mean, you just don't get any higher than that. But if you ever--do you know where Camden is? I would almost beg you to drive down and just realize how much this world has changed since someone killed in battle would be buried in honor on the front--nobody else. No other general anywhere that I'm aware of before or since has been buried that close to a church. There's no funeral ground there except for Kalb. He's just buried there. That's the story of Kalb. I do hope you enjoyed it [*audience applause*].

Questions or thoughts or comments?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Very interesting

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: How did you find the--I can understand the letters and the records, the military--but how did you find the description [rest of sentence inaudible]. You gave a very vivid description of what the guy looked like. Where did you get your information?

JP: You can judge that by his--in his personal letters he will mention--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: He will say--?

JP: He will say, "I walked thirty miles, and it made me feel much shorter" [*audience laughter*]. It's documented--his size is documented, and the other way to know it is that they were absolutely sure that it was DeKalb's body that they found in Camden, because it was six feet tall when they dug it up. So, he was six feet when he died, and that sort of suggests that he was [inaudible] [*audience laughter*].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What was your initial interest in this?

JP: I moved so much with--I did--with a corporation up and down the eastern seaboard, and I was in the Navy before that, and I [inaudible]. I always made it a habit to try to understand the local history, because I really enjoy filling the pieces. And I walked into the DeKalb County library and said, "Where's the DeKalb section?" And there is none. And I said, "You're kidding."

And they said, "No, we have one book that was published in Germany, but it's kept in the vault."

And I said, "How do I sign for it?"

And they said, "I don't know. You come back tomorrow" [*audience laughter*].

So, I went back to Emory, where I have friends, and we did a nationwide search of the literature and found this book [*holds it up*]. There are only about five hundred of it published; it's a--one man just kind of--it's not a book, it's just stuff dumped into it, and that gave me my start. And then I went to France and Germany to find the rest of the tale. My son speaks fluent German.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Who's next?

JP: Excuse me?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Who is next?

JP: Next?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Your list

JP: Oh--I spent the last four years on the making of the atomic bomb in Oakridge, just as a curiosity. Other comments or questions?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: So, where'd the information that's on our markers and stuff come from?

JP: Probably came from--you see, it was not known--until the 1860s--that he was not a baron. So, it came from the myth, the myth that--nobody challenged him. When he showed up in America, he was a baron. So that just became part of the written record here that he was a baron. And a German scholar back about 1868 is the first one to go to that church and find the Bible and say, "Wow, this is the guy we're talking about." Because--I got a tingle--written in another hand, much, much later in another--right beside his birth record in that Lutheran church--is "Died as Baron DeKalb in Camden, 1780, Colonial America." So, the priest who was there, or was directly responsible for keeping records for the community, knew that this guy, who was one of the peasants, died as a baron, but he didn't publish it. He just kind of [inaudible] and closed the book. A scholar went back and found it in 1868 or so.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Translate what does the word "K-A-L-B" mean?

JP: Farmer

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What?

JP: Farmer--that's what they told me. The lady who bears the name wants you to think that there are a whole lot of Germans who think otherwise. But she thinks it means farmer or peasant. Other comments or questions?

Well, we've all got to get back to work, so have a good day [*audience applause*].

END OF RECORDING

Transcribed by cgs