

# OUR CAMP JOURNAL



Volume 28, Issue 8

"We are but few in number but formidable." - Pvt. James Shelton, 7th Md. Co. B

March 2025

An article published in the May 11, 1861 issue of *The New York Times*.

## The New York Times

FROM THE RELAY HOUSE; DISPOSITION OF GEN. BUTLER'S COMMAND

*A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY*

GEN. BUTLER'S CAMP CLERMONT HILL,  
Opposite Relay House, MD

Tuesday, May 7, 1861.

The men now under Gen. BUTLER's orders here are encamped on one of the most beautiful spots the eye could rest upon. The Relay House is situated in a deep valley, through which the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad runs and from which the hills on either side slope gradually to a height commanding a full view of the surrounding country.

The Eighth New-York Regiment was the advance guard in taking possession here, and arrived at noon on Sunday. The Sixth Massachusetts arrived somewhat later, by special train, from Washington. The Eighth New-York occupy one of these magnificent hills, and the Sixth the other, the valley, which is lined with troops - detachments from the regiments - separating them. I went over the camp this noon, and was surprised to find how rapidly the men had

thrown up their tents and batteries, and made themselves comfortable. The tents and camp appointments of the Sixth have not yet arrived from Boston; but anyone to look at their quarters on Clermont Hill, would suppose that they were in little need of other tents than those which adorn the place of their encampment. Numerous tasteful little barracks, made of limbs and boughs of trees, beautifully thatched and decorated with foliage, and well lined with straw within, are dotted all over the hill.

The men are well provided with provisions, and they have a part of a house far down on the west side of the hill, which they call Doctor's Quarters. The family who occupied the house when the troops took possession of the place still remain, and have sufficient room for comfort.

The men are particular here, as indeed they are everywhere they

go, to cause as little discomfort, and no interruption to the ordinary routine of daily occupations, as is consistent with their duty; and it is a gratifying thing to hear the people at this place and at Washington, expressing their pleasure at the behavior of the Northern soldiers. They are quiet, inoffensive, and always sober. The men here are a splendid set of fellows in appearance. Gen. Butler himself has a fine, military presence, self-possessed and full of vigor, with a hearty urbanity of manner that makes him very popular. He rides over the camp daily, mounted on a splendid animal apparently as full of fire as his manly-looking rider. The officers attached to the General's staff and to the regiments are noble-looking men -- strong, sinewy, and full of a determined force of character. They are of polished manner also, and know how to treat a lady with deference, even though she be a Secessionist. They

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# Upcoming Campaigns

## Annual Company Meeting

Saturday, March 8th, 2025, from 12 noon until 2:00 pm at the  
C. Burr Arts Public Library, 110 E Patrick St, Frederick, MD 21701

The meeting will be held in the Maryland Room within the library.

## GEN. BUTLER'S CAMP CLERMONT HILL, Opposite Relay House, MD

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meet with many having such sentiments in this latitude.

One of the Eighth (New-York) Regiment accidentally shot himself this morning, while resting his chin on the muzzle of his gun. The bullet entered the poor fellow's brains, killing him at once. One of the Sixth was also unfortunate to-day. He came near being poisoned, -- something of that nature having been given him in the food or drink he had taken in the neighborhood. The men intend to keep a strict watch hereafter. A noisy Secessionist, a Baltimorean, was arrested here this morning. He shook his fist in the face of an officer, and with imprecations, said: "I was one of

them who fired on you at Baltimore, and I'll do it again when I get a chance." This, with other insulting remarks, procured a lodging for him in the Guard-house, where he awaits Gen. BUTLER's orders.

They have a few men on the sick list here, but none dangerously ill. Friends at home may be sure that the sick will be tenderly taken care of. Miss Powell, from New-York, has been all through the camp here, and has placed two of the efficient nurses of her corps under the orders of Gen. BUTLER, to go wherever they are wanted with his men.

The Boston Flying Artillery that accompanied the troops here, have planted two fine batteries,

commanding both points of the road leading to Baltimore and Washington. One commands the Bridge of the Washington Turnpike across the Patapsco, and the other could rake in a few moments the magnificent stone railroad bridge of the Washington branch, and has a fine sweep of the main track. It is a splendid military position, and can be held against any force that would make an attack.

The Fifth (German) Regiment are new stationed at the Annapolis Junction, about 22 miles from Washington. They deserve the greatest praise for their vigilance and devotion. I saw them to-day, and their movements were very fine. I was amused at the way in which one of them related his love for the "Junion," (Union.) The Regiment is under Col. Schwarzwaelder, and are well-built, active men. For some reason the afternoon train which was to go to Baltimore to-day has been ordered back to Washington.

I saw Capt. BRIGGS, son of Ex-Gov. BRIGGS, of Massachusetts, at the Relay House today. He had just come from Fort McHenry. You may fancy how well the fort is occupied when you hear that some of the officers are obliged to camp in the stables.

This is a beautiful region of

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**Members of 8th NY Infantry encamped somewhere near Annapolis Junction, Maryland.**

*Courtesy of NY State Military Museum*

## Civil War History of the Thomas Viaduct and Relay, Maryland, Area



Union troops pose for a picture at the Relay House in 1861 with a waiting locomotive. Courtesy B&O Railroad Museum.

### Part 1 By Bill Hart

The B&O Railroad was the only railroad into Washington DC until after the Civil War, thus it was an essential supply train route for the Union during that time. To prevent Confederate attack or sabotage of the Thomas Viaduct and Washington Junction, the Sixth and Eight Massachusetts regiments, as well as Cook's Boston Artillery Battery, took control of the railroad junction, Relay House train station, and the Thomas Viaduct on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1861. The Relay House itself be-

came the occupying Union Army headquarters.

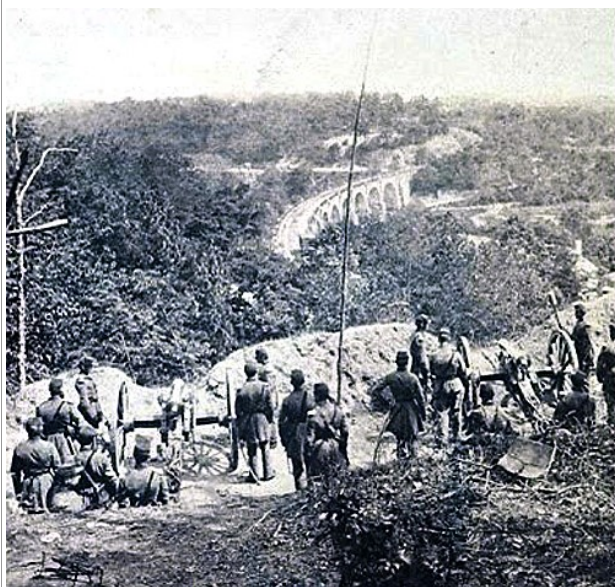
Cook's Boston Light Artillery "Bouquet Battery" was set up on a hill overlooking the viaduct on the Elkridge side of the Patapsco River. Two cannons were positioned overlooking the southern end of the bridge and river valley facing north towards Relay and the hilltop encampment became known as Camp Essex.

Cook's Boston Light Artillery also set up a 2-cannon sandbag battery on the Old Main Line facing west to protect the Thomas Viaduct from threats coming from that direction by rail. It was located about 150 yards west of the Relay end of the viaduct.

A Union fort known as Fort Dix was built in Relay on top of the hill behind the Relay House overlooking the viaduct and Patapsco River valley and was named after General John A. Dix. The engineers who were in charge of building the fortifications on Federal Hill in Baltimore built an earthen-type fort which included a substantial timber blockhouse and a magazine sunk deep into the ground which was covered with a high mound of earth. In front of the magazine entrance was another mound of earth to protect it from incoming enemy shells. An artillery battery was set up on the bluff overlooking the Thomas Viaduct with 7 twelve-pound cannons, 1 thirty-four pounder and one heavy howitzer.

To prevent the smuggling of arms and supplies by railway to the Confederate southern states, both freight trains and passenger trains passing through Relay were stopped and searched at the Relay House station by Union Troops. Passengers had their trunks and even their food baskets searched. Everything from picnic baskets full of brass buttons destined for Confederate uniforms to thousands of percussion caps for rifles and pistols hidden in trunks were found and confiscated.

There were eventually over 2,000 troops stationed around the Thomas Viaduct in Relay, Elkridge, and the fields across the tracks from Relay that would later become the village of St. Denis. The entire area became a military occupation for the duration of the war, much to the dismay of the local residents. People's homes and buildings were occupied. Some of the soldiers not satisfied with their camp grub would forage around the countryside for some-



Cook's Boston Light Artillery "Bouquet Battery" in 1861 on the Elkridge end of the viaduct. There are 2 cannons deployed on the hill overlooking the Thomas Viaduct. This battery and the encampment behind it was known as Camp Essex. Courtesy, Howard County Historical Society.

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## Civil War History of the Thomas Viaduct and Relay, Maryland, Area



Cook's Boston Light Artillery "Bouquet Battery" in 1861 on the Elkridge end of the viaduct. There are 2 cannons deployed on the hill overlooking the Thomas Viaduct. This battery and the encampment behind it was known as Camp Essex.

*Courtesy, Howard County Historical Society.*

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thing better, often robbing chicken coops, meat houses, dairies, etc. If the soldiers at any of the camps wanted wood, hay or straw, they usually took it without the permission of the owners.

Soldiers caught stealing chickens were often forced to march up and down the Relay House platforms all day wearing a wooden barrel with the top and bottom knocked out of it. A sign saying "Chicken Thief" was hung from it so that everybody passing by could see what they had done. Another popular form of punishment was having the offender march up and down the platforms wearing a knapsack full of rocks.

Elkridge resident Rebecca Pue Dobbin Penniman, whose father was a southern sympathizer and owned the land where Camp Essex and the artillery battery was positioned, reported that northern Union soldiers tended to be more rude and insolent to suspected southern sympathizers living in the area than soldiers from the western regi-

ments. She wrote that horses, fruit, and vegetables were stolen from them by northern regiment troops. She also reported that no sanitary regulations were observed by Union regiments and that they simply moved to a new location when their current camp site became too unbearable to use anymore.

*("Elkridge. Three Wars & the*

*Peace". Copyright 1983 by the Elkridge Heritage Society. Page 45.).*

There was another recorded incident of a group of soldiers under the command of a non-commissioned officer that began taking straw from a stack without the owner's permission. The farmer only mildly protested because he didn't want to get into trouble, but his wife didn't share his fears. She demanded to see a quartermaster's order for the straw. The non-com replied that he didn't need one and told his soldiers to continue loading up the straw. She drew a pistol from under her apron and told them that she would shoot the first man that put a fork in their straw without an order. The soldiers left the farm, and the non-commissioned officer returned later with the requested quartermaster's order. She then let them take the straw knowing that the government would pay her for its value.

The areas of Relay and Elkridge were under martial law for four years so there was little to no advancement or improvements made there until the end of the war in 1865. Relay remained only a small hamlet until after the war was over.



**Boston Light Artillery in camp near the Relay House June, 1861. Notice the man in the foreground appears to be sewing a garment.**

*Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society.*



# Perfumes



GODEY'S LADY'S BOOK Philadelphia, 1850



FROM the time that myrrh and frankincense were indispensable to many Jewish ceremonies, we have accounts in history of the use of perfumes among all nations. The luxurious Cleopatra had her scented bath; the elegant Athenian finished his toilet with the delicate ointment compounded of roses and violets; and, down to our own times, the love of perfumes is found among all classes and in every *civilized* country.

We do not object to their use – far from it – but their *abuse* is so frequent and so disagreeable to delicate olfactories, that we have thought to offer a few rules for the guidance of our lady friends.

The consideration of the subject was forced upon us, not long ago, at the reading of Hamlet by Mrs. Butler, at the Sansom Street Hall. All who were there, will remember that the house was crowded, and the air necessarily confined. Close to us sat a badly attired lady, whose gaping dress, shining oily hair, and coarse gloves did not speak much for her refinement. Involuntarily, "a shudder took us," and we retreated as far as possible from her neighborhood. But what was the play, if we could not see the animated face of the reader? And to do this, it was necessary to lean very near the lady in question. Presently, the heat of the room drew forth her handkerchief. It was saturated with *bouquet de Caroline*; and, with every fresh movement, the overpowering odor was wafted towards us. "Whereat," as Trincolo says, in the Tempest, "our nose was in great indignation." But there was no help for it; and, as our neighbor was not the only lady who had availed herself freely of Roussel's extracts, the air was heavy



and surely unwholesome before the end of the second act.

As a first principle, all decided or *strong* odors are in bad taste. What is a perfume, but the counterfeit breath of sweet flowers; and nature rarely overdoes her work, in making that addition to their loveliness so obvious as to be disagreeable. To be used successfully, then, all extracts should be like the faint breath of flowers, floating lightly on the air, but never burdening it. Besides, many people dislike peculiar perfumes so much – such as otto of rose, musk, or patchouli, once so fashionable – as to be absolutely faint by coming in contact with them. Charity – with this in view – would dictate a sparing use of what is not essential to our own comfort.

We once knew an old lady who adopted a very ingenious method to rid herself of annoyance in the shape of musk, which her granddaughter was very fond of using to an unlimited extent. The young lady

had an equal dislike to *ether* – so called – which had been recommended to "grandmamma" for some nervous affection. Knowing this, her ammunition was provided; and the next Sunday, when Mademoiselle shook out her perfumed handkerchief at "meeting," what was her horror at finding it overpowered by a flask of *ether*, which was produced from the old lady's pocket. Frowns and remonstrances were of no avail. "So long as thee *will* use musk, Emma, I shall resort to an antidote; for it brings on my nervous attacks meet unaccountably." And finally a truce was established, and Miss Emma's musk was locked up with grandmamma's ether.

We have known a whole box of ladies at the theatre grow ill, by the plentiful use of otto of rose made by one of their party; and, to this day, patchouli has a similar effect upon ourselves.

Perfumes, in old times, were divided into two kinds. The first, or thicker sort, were compounded into a kind of ointment – often almost invaluable in price – and put up in costly boxes and vases (sometimes of alabaster), as the well-known instance described in the Gospels. The use of liquid perfumes was considered as effeminate, or voluptuous; but grave senators and sober matrons indulged in the first without reproach. Grecian ladies considered them indispensable appendages to the toilet; and those who prepared and sold them were among the most *petted* and successful artisans in ancient Rome.

Perfumes are extracted principally from flowers, seeds, roots, and

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# OUR CAMP JOURNAL

## Butler's Camp

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country, and to-day's bright sun and lovely blue sky, light up the hills and valleys with all the soft, green, glowing beauty of early Summer. You have only to descend to the valley on the West side of Clermont Hill, to find yourself out of sight of the troops, who are within a minute's walk on the hill. In this valley your gaze is shut out by the hill from everything but the peaceful meadows of velvet green, the quiet cattle grazing, and the calm heavens. It was difficult to realize in this holy peace, that

grape and cannister, and bullets and cold steel were on the other side of this high hill, ready to do a terrible work, and illustrating a commotion which will startle the world. Oh! that the men who have insulted the Stars and Stripes could really feel the value of this holy peace which they have broken, and the dreadful results to them which must follow. I told a Southern gentleman, to-day, who was expressing, with myself, a sorrow for the suffering which must fall on the South, that the world could never forget that when they rebelled against the Government, they had the control over it in both Houses of Congress. He sighed and said, "Yes." That reproach will always cling to them, and most damage their cause.

More anon. Adlou. E.



*Civil War Re-enactors;  
America's Living Historians.*

## Perfumes

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woods, with the rinds of odoriferous fruits. Besides these, we have musk, which is the product of a little creature (*moschus moschiferus*) native to Thibet and Tonquin. It is originally a viscid fluid, but dries to a hard brown substance that is easily pulverized. It is very costly; but a small quantity is sufficient to scent a large stock of perfumery.

Civet is similar to musk, but is used only to stimulate or strengthen other perfumes.

The present taste of the day seems to have fixed on extracts of flowers in the form of *eau spirituse*, and Lubric, of Paris, and Roussel, in our own city, have excelled in these delicate preparations. The *extrait* or *esprit* of roses, violets, mignonette, jessamine, orange-flowers, acacia, tuberose, and lavender are, beyond question, the most exquisite of all perfumes; and an agreeable variety is produced by

a judicious mixture of several here enumerated. Eau de cologne – so called from the name of the city most celebrated in its manufacture – is composed of several fine *extraits* diluted with pure alcohol.

Now, either of these, when moder-

ately used, are agreeable to most people; but a handkerchief saturated with coarse eau de cologne, or a strong essential oil, marks at once a person as possessing very little good taste. We have always found the following the best method: Procure a quantity of *poudres aux fleurs* – which is common hair powder scented with flowers, and is to be procured at any perfumer's – fold it in an envelop so that it cannot escape, and lay it in the drawer appropriated to laces, gloves, handkerchiefs, etc., which will acquire from it that faint, scarce perceptible odor which is so pleasing. Scented French glove-boxes are sufficient in themselves, sometimes, for all necessary purposes; and, if a liquid be used, let it be as sparingly as possible. In a future paper, we may have something to say of cosmetics generally; but at present we only seek to impress upon our lady. friends the truth of the old proverb as applied to perfumes – "Too much of a good thing is good for nothing."

