

A Brief History of Relay

Relay was the first stop on the nation's first passenger railway, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O).

The first horse-drawn car on the B&O railroad ran from Baltimore to Relay on May 24, 1830. Cost: 75¢



Relay was the first town created by a U.S. railroad in 1830.

The first hotel built on the B&O was the Relay House, built in 1830. The first horse-drawn passenger trains changed horses here for the final six miles to Ellicott's Mills.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton was the only signer of the Declaration of Independence to be on a train that stopped at Relay House.

The first successful steam engine in the U.S., the Tom Thumb, ran from Baltimore to the Relay House on August 28, 1830.

John Quincy Adams, the 6th President of the United States (1825-1829), rode the train from Baltimore to the Relay House on December 17, 1830 on his way to Washington, D.C. He was newly elected to the House of Representatives by his home state of Massachusetts by this time.

On June 6, 1833, President Andrew Jackson, the 7th President of the United States, rode on the B&O from Ellicott's Mills to Baltimore.

Andrew Jackson was the first U.S. President to ride a train while in office.

Construction of the Thomas Viaduct began on July 4, 1833 and was finished on July 4, 1835. It is the world's largest multiple arched stone railroad bridge built on a curve.



The world's first telegraph poles were installed in Relay in 1844.

On February 13, 1845, President James K. Polk, the 11th President of the United States, traveled by train from Cumberland to Relay where a Baltimore delegation met him with an artillery salute. Two thousand people attended.

President Zachary Taylor, 12th President of the United States, visited the Relay House on January 24, 1849 on his way to Washington, D.C. A large crowd staged a demonstration in his honor.

By 1850, the Relay House was the second most passenger-generating point (second only to Ellicott City) on the B&O line between Baltimore and Wheeling, West Virginia.

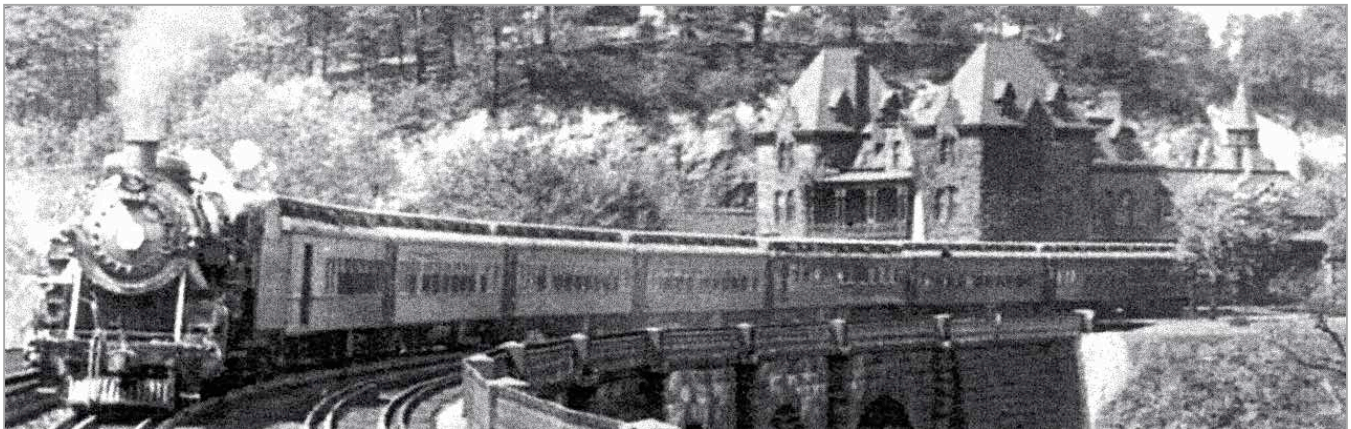
During the Civil War, "Camp Relay House" was composed of a number of camps and fortifications on both sides of the Patapsco River.

May 5, 1861- General Butler took control of the Relay House and the surrounding area with the Eighth New York and the Sixth Massachusetts regiments.

May 11, 1861- Colonel Jones of the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment captured the steam gun at Ellicott's Mills and brought it back to the Relay House.

May 13, 1861- General Butler left the Relay House and captured Baltimore City.

On September 30, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln changed trains at the Relay House on his way to Antietam.



In 1872, the B&O built the Viaduct Hotel, a showcase combination hotel and station at Relay overlooking the Patapsco River. It was surrounded with gardens, graveled walkways, flowers, hedges, and evergreens. It was the first hotel station in the nation built for the comfort of railway passengers.

Relay was home to one of the first volunteer fire companies in Baltimore County. In 1892, on Arlington Avenue, there was a one-room building which housed a hand-drawn fire engine. In 1910, the present two-story structure was built (Town Hall) and the hand-drawn engine was replaced by a large hose carriage and three paid firemen.

The second public library in Baltimore County, established in 1929, was also housed in the Relay Town Hall.

- Ray Chism

Link to Historical Marker Database - Relay Markers

<http://www.hmdb.org/results.asp?Town=Relay&State=Maryland>

Link to The Thomas Viaduct Animation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HUQZMtOoHk>