

THREE MUSKETS IN THE DEFENSE OF BALTIMORE

SEPTEMBER 12-14, 1814

by Frederick Gaede



Figure 1. Musket display at the ASAC meeting in Buffalo, N.Y. in 2014.

Introduction

This image of three muskets (Figure 1) is of a display by the author at our 2014 meeting in Buffalo, N.Y. Each musket represents one of the three methods the state of Maryland utilized to gather some 16,000 muskets and stands of arms for the defense of the state, and particularly the city of Baltimore, between 1809 and 1814. The complete story was originally published in the Society of American Bayonet Collectors' *Journal* as "Bayonets & Muskets for Maryland: J.J. Henry's War of 1812 'Consortium'."¹ A limited-edition compilation by the author and Joseph R. Marsden was issued the following year in conjunction with The Company of Military Historians' 2012 Annual Meeting, held in Baltimore, Md.

Synopsis of the Battle of Baltimore

Two hundred and seven years ago this September these muskets were involved in the American repulsion of a British attempt to capture Baltimore, and rid themselves of the so-called 'den of pirates'. In the years following the *Chesapeake-Leopard* Affair in June 1807, Maryland took steps to adequately arm its militia before what appeared to be another, inevitable armed conflict with Great Britain. However, it was not until 1812 that war between the countries was declared. After a disastrous retreat the previous month from Bladensburg, Maryland (August 1814), and resultant burning of Washington, D.C., the third brigade of the Maryland Militia, raised in Baltimore City, delayed the British advance on Baltimore at the Battle of North Point (September 12, 1814). The British commander, Major General Robert Ross, was killed in the engagement. Under the command of General Stricker the brigade then retreated to join nearly 15,000 militia gathering from



Sketch of the entrenched position of the American forces near Baltimore on the 13th Sept. 1814. Paltney, Sir, 1768-1838. Published 1814. Williams L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

Figure 2. Contemporaneous sketch of the entrenched positions of American forces near Baltimore on September 13, 1814. Courtesy William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Map Collection.



Figure 3. Model 1763 Charleville style musket made at the Mauberge Arsenal, with high comb on the stock.

four states, which were entrenched on Hampstead Hill, which is referred to as “Chinkapin Hill” in this contemporaneous sketch (Figure 2) by an English officer.

Meanwhile Vice Admiral Alexander Cochrane led a fleet of British warships toward the Baltimore harbor, in an attempt to reduce Ft. McHenry. The elimination of the fort was required so the entrenchments could be enfiladed and the Americans forced to retreat. After a tremendous and unsuccessful bombardment of the fort on the 13th and 14th of September, Cochrane informed Ross’ successor, Colonel Arthur Brooke, that he had been unable to capture the fort and any action on the entrenched Americans would be at Brooke’s own discretion. The next day the British army decided to return to their ships without attempting an assault. While not clear at the time, the British retreat thus ended the Chesapeake Campaign and further threats to the East Coast of the United States. The battle at New Orleans was still four months in the future, but the War of 1812 was effectively over. The war officially ended with the Treaty of Ghent, ratified on February 16, 1815.

Purchases and Receipts from the Federal Government, 1809-1813

As noted, these three muskets represent the primary ways Maryland used to accumulate about 16,000 ‘stands of arms’ (muskets, bayonets and cartridge boxes) before the Battle of Baltimore. The state started with four purchases of muskets and bayonets between 1809 and 1812, totaling 7,600 weapons, at \$10 each. It received another 3,050 sets in 1813, distributed through the Militia Act of 1808, for a grand total of 10,650 from the federal government.²

The majority of these weapons were, in one way or another, obsolescent surplus from the Revolutionary War. Many were original French Charleville-style muskets, used in that war and turned in at its conclusion that had remained in storage. Others, such as the example in this display, were brought in from France but likely did not see action during the war. The French arms remained in storage in the 1780s and 1790s at various federal facilities, and were examined, updated and repaired until opportunities to dispose of them appeared, such as sales to the states. Indeed, four thousand of the 10,650 noted above came through a 1798 Congressional authorization to sell arms to the states to arm their militias. In addition, it has been estimated parts for from 50,000 to 100,000 additional French muskets had been imported by the end of the war, with many of those parts made up in the 18th and early 19th centuries into muskets of mixed configurations.

French M1763 Musket

The furthest back example is a Charleville-style musket (Figure 3) was assembled in France ca. 1763-6 at the Mauberge Arsenal, the name of which is engraved on the lock. It originated as a Model 1763, evidenced by that designation on the breech tang and incorporation of a ramrod cover, now removed, between the top and middle barrel bands. It also has the first type of a tall comb on the

butt of this model musket, which retains the French Army acceptance stamps in the stock, opposite the lock side. This musket remained in storage at the Philadelphia Supply Depot, and later Schuylkill Arsenal, until after 1801. Among other contract armorers, Messrs. Joseph Perkin and John Nicholson examined, cleaned, updated and repaired numerous surplus muskets.³ The initialed marks of **IP** and **IN** (Figure 4) in the stock confirm this piece having passed through their hands in the 1780s, with 1784 a particularly active year. At that time they likely added the double struck **US** at the tail end of the lock, and could have made the alterations it currently has. For example, the removal of the ramrod cover, and a shorter but contemporary ramrod substituted for the French original. Although the upper sling swivel is missing, the musket is remarkably close to its original configuration, with the lower band not having a spring retainer added, nor a ramrod retaining spring. After Perkin and Nicholson, the musket was examined again, as indicated by the **x/V** stamped mark on the flat opposite the lock.



Figure 4. The stock markings of “IP” and “IN” indicating the musket had been worked on by Joseph Perkin and John Nicholson, Jr., respectively, at Schuylkill Arsenal in the 1780s.

Having been superseded by US-made muskets from Springfield and Harpers Ferry Armories, it completed its federal ownership when sold to Maryland, likely between 1809 and 1813. Subsequent state ownership is evidenced by the bold **MARYLAND** brand (Figure 5) on the stock in front of the lock, a standard place for this mark to appear. Interestingly, it did not receive the other iconic mark denoting the state’s ownership, a letter **M** applied on the breech end of the barrel.

Of further interest, of the 60+ confirmed bayonets known to have accompanied Maryland-marked muskets, none are original French bayonets with the same Maryland **M** on the face of the blades. This musket was bought from a family in 1995, and the replacement bayonet that accompanied it is displayed with the musket (Figure 6). Clearly it has a **W** on the face of the blade and not an **M**, but is of American manufacture in the French style.

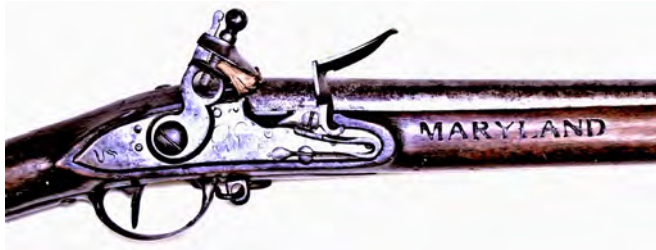


Figure 5. MARYLAND brand on the fore stock indicating ownership by that state.

Contract with J. Joseph Henry, 1813-1814

When an authorization to acquire 6,000 muskets, approved by Maryland's General Assembly in 1808, went unfilled by 1813, the state turned to a known arms contractor, J. Joseph Henry (Figure 7) of Philadelphia (later of Boulton), Pennsylvania. Taking its own initiative, on July 8, 1813 the Governor's Council "*ordered that the Executive will take of Mr. J. Joseph Henry of Philadelphia [1786-1836], for the use of the State of Maryland one thousand Muskets at twelve Dollars and seventy five cents each Musket; the same to be delivered in six weeks from the twelfth day of July instant [ie, the same, or 1813] and will continue to take one thousand Stand of Muskets every six weeks till the order shall be countermanded of which three weeks [sic] notice shall be given. By order, Ninian Pinkney, Clerk.*"⁴ Realizing from the outset he was over committed for his own capacity, but not wanting to pass on a hard-won and potentially lucrative contract, Henry in turn sought the assistance of other manufacturers and dealers. Seven makers associated archivally with Henry and the amounts credited to Henry for deliveries to the state are:

Asher & Pliny Bartlett (Springfield, Mass.)	917
James, John & Nathaniel Brooke (Chester, Pa.)	183
Owen & Edward Evans (Evansburg, Pa.)	433
Daniel Henkels (Philadelphia, Pa.)	831
Stephen Jenks & Sons (Providence, R.I.)	276
John Miles, Jr. (Bordertown, N.J.)	25
Amos Sweet (N. Providence, R.I.)	200
Total:	2,865

In addition, Henry himself made or at least delivered another 2,071 as a total of 4,936 muskets were credited to Henry by the

armorer in Annapolis, John Shaw, in his books of receipts and disbursements.⁵ Possibly several other assemblers, like Lewis Ghiskey; Oliver Bidwell; Abraham or Daniel Nippes; Winner, Nippes & Steinman, and Goetz & Wesrphal contributed some of these muskets but the connection with Henry has not been established or is tenuous.

The second from the back musket (Figure 8) is a typical example of the type of musket Henry expected and got from these subcontractors. It is one of the 433 made by the Evans brothers, Owen and Edward, for Henry's Maryland contract. It has a Charleville-style lock and stock, modeled on the later low comb French 1777 musket style, still with a banded, .69 barrel. Basically, this musket is an 1808/1812 pattern. Full federal proof markings on the barrel are lacking, indicating it was not intended in fulfillment of their concurrent federal contract. Henry was paid more by the state than the contractors were being given by the government (generally \$10.50 each), and could offer them more for each musket and still eke out a small profit, with a less strict inspection. Consequently, many of these suppliers willingly siphoned off pieces that should have gone to the government and sold them to Henry, rather than deliver them to fulfill their federal obligations, for which they had received advances.

Despite all the references to authorizations for marking muskets (and probably by inference bayonets) dating back to the Revolutionary War,⁶ even as this so-called 'Second War for Independence' was about to be declared in the 19th century, the General Assembly of the state of Maryland felt compelled to reinforce a marking requirement. On June 18, 1812, meeting in extra session, it passed a resolution "*That the executive of Maryland cause the word 'Maryland' to be marked on all arms and accoutrements, now in the several armories of this state, and which may hereafter be received.*"⁷

To date the only archival evidence about actual arms being marked by the state that has surfaced has been dated after the conclusion of the War of 1812. For a time Third Brigade Quartermaster Colonel Richard Waters operated a sub-armory/storage depot in Baltimore City and received all four of the M stamps from Henry. Whether he retained just one and sent the remaining stamps to the other armories (Annapolis, Frederick and Easton) is unknown. What is known is Waters sent (at least) three "Receipts for Stamping Muskets" to the adjutant general of the state of Maryland, indicating 1,692 muskets were marked after the war ended. On June 28, 1815 Waters was paid a penny each for marking 660 muskets;



Figure 6. American-made bayonet made in the French style that came with the French Model 1763 musket. It is marked "W" on the face of the blade.

on October 3, 1815 for 716 more; and on January 6, 1816 for a final 316. The 60+ known muskets with marks of state ownership may all be the survivors of these 1,692 muskets.⁸

included in the display (Figures 10 & 11). The scabbard is a militia adaptation of the Federal P1808. Three are known with the same tooling and Maryland associations.

Miscellaneous Purchases, 1813-1814

Only about 1,500 small arms can be documented as having been delivered for the defense efforts through miscellaneous or otherwise poorly documented purchases. These do not appear as being received in any of the official state registers of arms and accoutrements, which cover 1790 through 1824 in detail.¹⁰ My total so far is only 1,486, made up of 4 transactions: 896 from purchases made from various dealers under the authorization of 1808; 72 rifles delivered directly to a company of the 27th Regiment in Baltimore City; 200 delivered in 1813 by J.J. Henry directly to a unit in Elkton, Maryland; and 318 inspected, and repaired if necessary, by Baltimore gunsmith James Haslett (Figure 12). Interestingly most appear to involve Baltimore City units or the temporary sub-depot operated in Baltimore by Colonel Waters.

Haslett's work has proved most interesting, and was the subject of the author's presentation to the ASAC in 2015.¹¹ Possibly Haslett handled more than the 318 described in the one significant document located to date, a receipt dated April 15, 1813 (Figure 13). However, his name branded on four 18th century French infantry muskets, including the one in the display pictured in the foreground, confirms his having worked on the pieces for the city, probably in 1813. He repaired and received arms that went to Baltimore City's "Committee of Supply," formed to manage \$20,000 raised for the city's defense. Haslett later served as a major in the 11th Brigade of the Maryland Militia, but only briefly during the September days of the city's defense.

The musket in this display (Figures 14, 15 and 16) was assembled at the St. Etienne Arsenal in France. Remnants of the army's acceptance marks are on the butt of the European walnut stock. As it has the remains of a rivet that once secured a ramrod spring, it includes the improvements adopted in M1774. It was in store after



Figure 7. Ca. 1813-20 advertisement by Henry.

In addition to the brothers' name and an eagle on the lock (Figure 9), and standard proof marks on the barrel, this Evans-made musket has both the full name of the state branded on the fore stock and the Maryland M stamped on the barrel.

A single X-marked bayonet, associated with Henry's contract with Maryland, is displayed with this musket. As expected, it does not have the iconic Maryland M on the face of the blade as none of the X or XX-marked bayonets were so marked. They were likely made by Abraham Nippes, who delivered over 3,000 bayonets to Henry.⁹ There is circumstantial evidence that the known XX-marked bayonets were made for Delaware, and thus the X-marked ones are believed to have been for Maryland. One of each has been



Figure 8. One of 443 muskets made by Owen and Edward Evans for Henry's Maryland contract.



Figure 9. Lock of the Evans' musket and state brand on fore stock (left) and breech of the Evans musket showing the iconic 'Maryland M' above the proofs (right).



Figure 10. Likely made by Nippes and delivered to Henry in support of his contract, these X-marked bayonets are associated with Maryland.

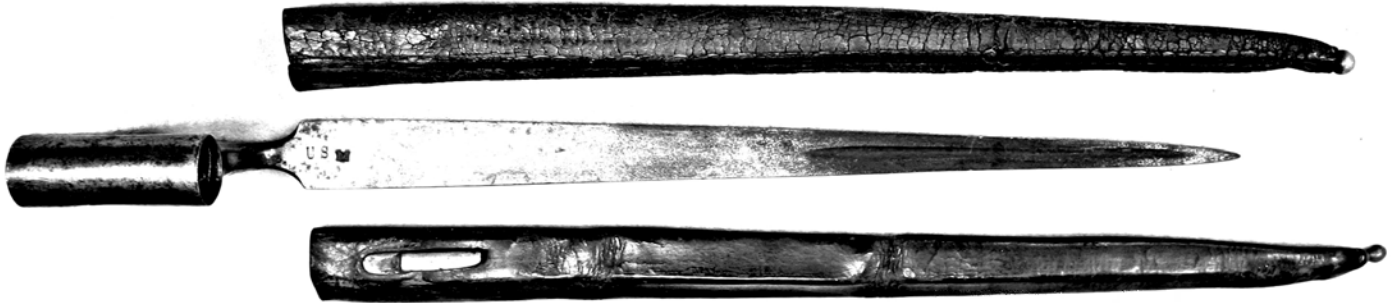


Figure 11. The back of the militia scabbard shown above, with a standard P1808 scabbard below, flank a US armory-made bayonet likely delivered with the receipt of some 10,650 muskets from the government.

the Revolution as it has Nicholson's ca. 1790 examination mark IN in the stock. Nicholson also likely applied the US surcharge on the tail of the lock (Figure 15). The stock flat opposite the lock also has three marks indicating examinations while in storage at Schuylkill Arsenal, before being sold to agents and subsequent acquisition by the city. Interestingly all four of the Haslett-marked muskets are similar Revolutionary War Charleville-style pieces, marked by the gunsmith in the identical place. Further, and not surprisingly, they also all bear Frailey's stamp of Baltimore City's 39th REGT, applied by Haslett on the flat opposite the lock (Figure 16). Both men had served in that regiment. Clearly, these muskets had been together before the threat to Baltimore became serious in 1814.

The just mentioned receipt signed by Haslett was for 41 swords from "Mr. Lemon," eight having broken during the proofing process. 238 muskets from "William Hollins," of "a good quality, 9 of them, the Hammers were soft. 34 the breeching projected beyond the touchhole [sic], which defects I have remedy'd, One bayonet broke in proof, not yet replaced." 50 from "Mr. A. Clopper" and 30 from "Capt. Stiles, ["they have brass pans"]," as well as 12 pairs of pistols from "Mr. Carthand, ... that may do with wiping up.... The bayonets of neither sample are as good as they ought to be."¹² None of these names are known to have been gunsmiths, but were likely just dealers or agents.

Sign of the Golden Gun.

JAMES HASLETT,
GUN-MAKER,

RESPECTFULLY informs the Public, that he has removed from No. 4, Light-street, to No. 28, Water street, within a few doors of Market-space; where he has, at present, an elegant assortment of double and single Guns, and duelling Pistols, both of his own and London manufacture, which he can afford to sell lower than any of the same finish ever offered for sale in Baltimore.

He begs leave to return his sincere thanks to the Citizens of Baltimore, and the Public generally, for the liberal encouragement he has received since his commencement in Baltimore, and assures them, that he will endeavor to merit a continuance of it.

November 12. ●o6t||

Figure 12. An 1805 advertisement by Haslett noting his relocation to Water Street.

James A. Buchanan, Esq.
Sir,

I have examined the 49 swords at Mr. Lemons, and broke in Proof, 8, leaving 41 serviceable, which I have altered according [to] Mr. Leonard Taylor's orders, I have examined at Mr. Wm. Hollin's 238 muskets of a good Quality, 9 of them, the Hammers were soft, 34 the breeching projected beyond the touchhole [sic], which defects I have remedy'd [sic], one bayonet broke in proof, not yet replaced.

I examined Mr. Carthand's Pistols, there is 12 pair that may do with wiping up.

I have overhauled the whole of Mr. A. Clopper's muskets, and find only Fifty, that are any way serviceable for Militia. They are nearly alike wide in the Caliber, They have brass pans. I have them in my possession, They want to be wiped up and some trifling repairs done to some of them.

Likewise the whole of Capt. Stiles' Arms they are of the same quality of Mr. Clopper's, I have selected 30 from his of the same finish as Mr. Clopper's / Brass pans / The bayonets of neither sample are as good as they ought to be.

I have examined Mr. Pitt's [sic] 10 Muskets they make very good fire arms, are very good for Ship use but not calculated for Field use. They differ in caliber and they have lost their Bayonet Fastenings.
[s] James Haslett

Baltimore 15th April
1813
Recognition
[TAM:G]

Mr. Lemon	31	Mr. Carthand	12
Mr. Hollins	238	Mr. Stiles	30
Mr. Clopper	50	Mr. Pitt	10
Total	318	Total	12

Figure 13 Transcription of the April 15, 1813 letter Haslett sent to James A. Buchanan, Esq., who had been appointed just two days before to be a member of Baltimore's "Committee of Supply." The committee was to manage \$20,000 appropriated by the City Council on April 13th for its defense.

Because they were owned by the city, these 318 muskets, and likely a similar number of bayonets not enumerated, repaired and marked by Haslett, are not noted in the "Statement of Arms" in the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis, nor in Shaw's "Maryland Armory Book," now at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C.¹³

Besides the four M's received from Henry in November 1813, and the markings applied by Colonel Waters in 1815 and 1816, the only other record relating to stamps or brands located to date is a receipt from one Leonard Frailey dated May 7, 1813 for "A Brand

for marking the arms” of the 39th Regiment, for which he charged \$1.50.¹⁴ Frailey and Haslett had served as officers in that regiment, and both would resign to serve in the additional Regular Army units being raised for the war.

A generic, American-made replacement bayonet for French muskets, likely made during the Revolution, has been selected to join this musket (Figures 17 and 18). It, however, also does not have an M on the face of the blade.



Figure 14. One of four known similar Haslett-repaired muskets for the city, and issued to the 39th Regiment



Figure 15. Lock (top) and Haslett’s mark on the repaired musket in the display (bottom).



Figure 16. Flat opposite the lock with three examination marks applied while in storage at Schuylkill Arsenal, as well as the 39 REGT mark likely applied by Haslett with Frailey’s stamp. This musket almost certainly was used at the Battle of North Point, September 12, 1814.



Figure 17. American made bayonet that went along with the Haslett musket.



Figure 18. American made bayonet that went along with the Haslett musket; close up.

Endnotes

- 1 Frederick C. Gaede and Joseph R. Marsden, "Bayonets & Muskets for Maryland: J.J. Henry's War of 1812 'Consortium,'" Society of American Bayonet Collectors *Journal*, Vols. 74, 75 and 76 (Winter 2010; Spring 2011 and Summer 2011, respectively).
- 2 Photostatic copy of "Statement of Muskets, Rifles, Swords, Pistols, Cannon, Cartouch Boxes, Pistol Holsters, and so forth, purchased by the State from Seventeen hundred and eighty four to December 1824," copy 82-541 of HR5610, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.
- 3 Matthew Skic, "Joseph Perkin Arms the Revolution," *ASAC Bulletin No. 115* (Spring 2017), 18-25. See also by same author, "'The Industry of our Ingenious Gunsmiths,' John Nicholson and Joseph Perkin in Revolutionary Philadelphia," *Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum* (Vol. 17, 2019, No. 4), 6-31. See also by same author, "'Muskets for the Use of the United States': Philadelphia's Gunsmiths During the War for Independence," Master's Thesis, University of Delaware (Spring, 2016).
- 4 Henry Family Papers (Accession 1209), Box 8, Folder 8, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE. Thanks to librarian Lucas Clawson for finding Henry's copy of the contract, which established the Governor's Council contracted with him, not the General Assembly
- 5 "Statement of Muskets, Rifles, Swords, Pistols, Cannon, Cartouch Boxes, Pistol Holsters, and so forth, purchased by the State from Seventeen hundred and eighty four to December 1824," copy 82-541 of HR5610, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.
- 6 Colonel William Smallwood (as well as Brigadier General Rezin Beall) was instructed in September 1776 "to procure a stamp to be made, on which the word Maryland shall be engraved, and that he therewith cause all the Guns, belonging to this State in the hands of the regular Troops including the Independent Companies, to be stamp. And Brigadier General Beall, or the commanding officer of the militia of the Flying Camp is requested to cause all the Guns in the hands of the said last mentioned Troops, to be stamp in the same manner." William H. Browne, ed., *Archives of Maryland, Journal and Correspondence of the Maryland Council of Safety, July 7-December 31, 1776* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1893), Vol. XII, 265.
- 7 *Laws Made and Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Maryland, at an Extra Session Begun and Held at the City of Annapolis, on Monday the Fifteenth, and Ending on Thursday the Eighteenth Day of June, in the Year of our Lord Eighteen Hundred and Twelve* (Annapolis: Published by Authority, Jehu Chandler, Printer to the State, 1812), 3. Besides muskets, the state's name has been observed stamped a several pairs of saddle holsters, as well as a canteen.
- 8 Contingent Expenses of Colonel Richard Waters, Brigade Quarter Master, Adjutant General Papers, War of 1812, S931, Box 68, Folder 37, Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis, MD.
- 9 Marine T. Wickham to Callender Irvine, November 17, 1813, Box 1, E 2001, Coxe-Irvine Papers, RG 92, OQMG, NARA
- 10 Refer to Endnote 5 for details.
- 11 Frederick C. Gaede, "James Haslett, Baltimore Gunsmith, and the War of 1812" *ASAC Bulletin No. 112* (Warwick, RI; 2015), 8-35. See also Richard H. Randall, Jr. "James Haslett: Baltimore Gunsmith," *The American Arms Collector* (April 1957), Parts I and II, 53-97. Haslett begins advertising in 1803 that he is in "the Gun Business" and by 1806 that he can be found at the "Sign of the Golden Gun." See also Daniel D. Hartzler, *Arms Makers of Maryland* (York, PA: George Shumway, Publisher, Longrifle Series, 1977), 33.
- 12 War of 1812 Records, BRG 22, Baltimore City Archives, Baltimore, MD. The muskets with brass pans may have come from Eli Whitney's manufactory in Connecticut. Following a French musket as a pattern, he was known to have made muskets with brass pans as early as 1803, with 8,000 delivered to the government through 1809. Moller, *Military Shoulder Arms*, II, 160-3. The "Capt. Stiles" mentioned was likely the commander of the *The First Marine Artillery of the Union*, which manned cannon on Hampstead Hill during the British advance.
- 13 (John Shaw), "Maryland Armory Book, 1813 to 1820," Un-numbered Entry, Record Group 156, Office of the Chief of Ordnance, NARA, Washington, DC.
- 14 War of 1812 Records, BRG 22, Baltimore City Archives, Baltimore, MD. A receipt for paying \$50.00 to "Ludley & Simpson" for "services in repairs and cleaning arms" for the 51st Regiment is dated June 25, 1813, but does not mention marking the regimental weapons.

