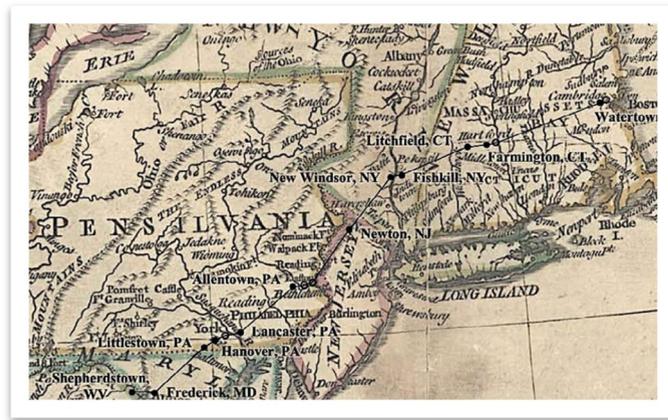


## The Bee Line March



On June 14, 1775, the Second Continental Congress called for the raising of 10 companies of riflemen from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia to join General George Washington at the siege of Boston. This call is regarded as the beginning of the United States Army.

The Berkeley Committee of Safety selected Captain Hugh Stephenson to command and recruit one of the two Virginia companies. Within a week, Stephenson had recruited 98 men in the Shepherdstown area (then called Mecklenburg).

The men were mustered by June 22. While they waited to acquire arms, they drilled and organized for their trek. William Morgan gave a barbeque for the company on July 10, and the men vowed to meet there again in 50 years. The company rallied at Morgan's Spring before leaving Shepherdstown on July 17 to begin their march to Massachusetts. They arrived in Cambridge on August 11, covering the nearly 600-mile distance in 25 days.

The trek became known as The Bee Line March. A diary kept by Shepherdstown resident 4<sup>th</sup> Sergeant (later Major) Henry Bedinger detailed the journey, making the Shepherdstown company the best documented and most famous of the 10 companies raised that June.

Henry and his brother George Michael Bedinger were among the few surviving members of Stephenson's company who attended the gala reunion barbeque at Morgan's Spring 50 years after the Bee Line March.

## The Bee Line Marcher

Our Bee Line Marcher, Adam Sheetz, is based on period descriptions, especially that of Shepherdstown resident 4th Sergeant (later Major) Henry Bedinger, who kept a diary of the march.

*Volunteers presented themselves from every direction in the vicinity of these Towns: none were received but young men of Character, and of sufficient property to Clothe themselves completely, find their own arms, and accoutrements, that is, an approved Rifle, handsome shot pouch, and powder horn, blanket, knapsack, with such decent clothing as should be prescribed, but which at first was ordered to be only a hunting shirt and pantaloon, fringed on every edge, and in Various ways.*



Sheetz, who is represented by a mannequin in the Arts and Industries Room on the third floor, would not have been able to bring a rifle that was worn, battered, or shot-out; an approved rifle was one inspected and pronounced in good working order, and a number of the volunteers had ones newly-made. As a member of the Sheetz family, he'd likely be carrying a Sheetz-made rifle. As he was making typically 25-30 miles a day, his trousers are stained, his hat a little battered and his shoes repaired. His powder horn has his name and a typical motto of "Liberty and Property".

Nothing else is known of Adam Sheetz during the march other than when near Reading, "he had such violent Fitts that we were afraid for his life."

We have given him a hand axe; not something showy and menacing but a common one, practical for chopping wood or preparing game, that could fit in his knapsack. We also have not given him a face. But at the end of 600 miles of fast marching, assume that his face looks tired.

## Historic Shepherdstown

[www.historicshepherdstown.com](http://www.historicshepherdstown.com)

Historic Shepherdstown promotes wider recognition of the historical assets of Shepherdstown; provides stewardship of the landmark Entler Hotel and Museums; preserves Shepherdstown's heritage, its historic landmarks, and a record of the contributions of its people; and obtains and exhibits artifacts and documents of historic value. Open since 1983, the Historic Shepherdstown Museum tells the story of Shepherdstown and its residents. The James Rumsey Steamboat Museum features a replica of the steamboat that inventor James Rumsey successfully demonstrated on the Potomac River in December of 1786.

## Kentucky Rifle Foundation

[www.kentuckyriflefoundation.org](http://www.kentuckyriflefoundation.org)

The Kentucky Rifle Foundation's mission is to preserve the heritage of the Kentucky Rifle through educational programs and exhibits, museum assistance, and the publication of books about its history and significance. This history was intimately involved with the trials and tribulations of this nation's early settlers. Today, the Kentucky Rifle is widely recognized as a uniquely American work of art and a historical document. Two hundred years ago, however, the Kentucky Rifle was a tool of the ordinary freeman, a tool needed to provide food for the table, and defend the family, the community, and the country. The Kentucky Rifle played a role in the American Revolution, in many Indian conflicts, and in the War of 1812. Kentucky Rifles made before and during the Revolution are scarce. As such, most collectors concentrate on the period from the close of the Revolution through the first years of the 19th century, the Golden Age of the Kentucky Rifle.

*Historic Shepherdstown would like to thank the Kentucky Rifle Foundation for its help organizing and co-sponsoring this exhibit, as well as all of the people who loaned us rifles and other artifacts to display.*



## Longrifles by the Sheetz

### Family and other

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129 E. German Street

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April 19 to October 19, 2025

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