

# KRF PARTNERS WITH HISTORIC SHEPHERDSTOWN

As part of Shepherdstown, West Virginia's 250th anniversary commemoration of the 1775 Bee Line March to Boston, the Kentucky Rifle Foundation and the Historic Shepherdstown Commission and Museum are co-sponsoring an exhibit of Kentucky longrifles from mid-April to mid-October, 2025. The exhibit will be held at the Historic Shepherdstown Museum. It will feature rifles from Jefferson and Berkeley Counties in West Virginia, with a particular emphasis on examples by the Sheetz family. Brothers Philip and Henry Sheetz were among many gunsmiths who held contracts with the Continental Congress to provide rifles to the Virginia militia during the Revolutionary War.

The exhibit will feature longrifles by several members of the Sheetz family, including a restocked Philip Sheetz rifle and rifles by Jacob Sheetz, Martin Sheetz, and William Miller Sheetz. It also will include firearms by other regional makers, including Martin Rizer of

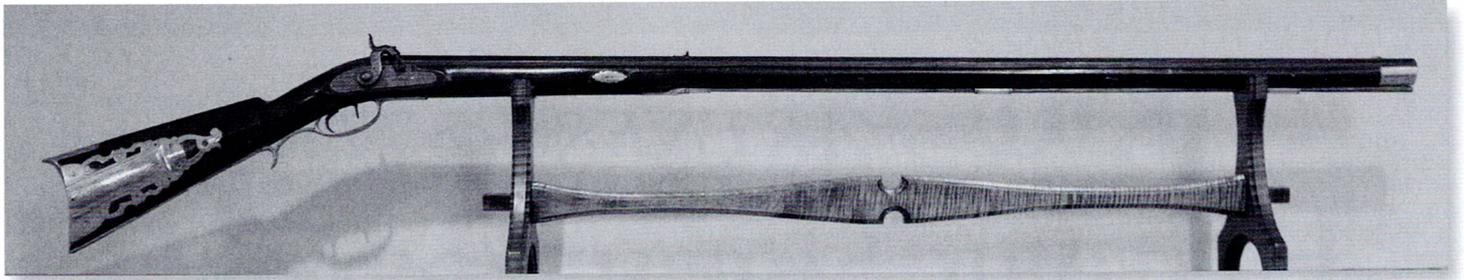


Portrait of Rezin Davis Shepherd (1784–1865) by Gilbert Stuart (American, 1755–1828), Boston, Massachusetts, 1825. Oil on canvas. Illustrated in Lawrence Park, *Gilbert Stuart: An Illustrated Descriptive List of His Works*, vol. 4 (New York, William Edwin Rudge, 1926), 465.

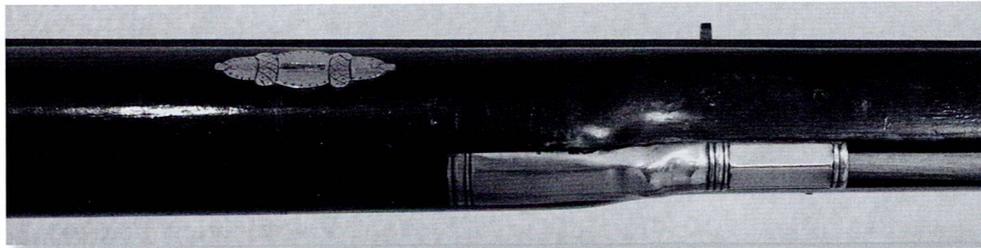
Martinsburg and Daniel Marker, who worked in both Martinsburg and in parts of Maryland. Most of the rifles on exhibit are being loaned to the Historic Shepherdstown Museum courtesy of Kentucky Rifle Association members, but two William Miller Sheetz rifles, a Sheetz shotgun, and a Jacob Entler fowler owned by the museum will also be on display.

Born in Shepherdstown, Rezin Davis Shepherd (1784–1865) was the son of Abraham and Eleanor Strode

Shepherd and grandson of Shepherdstown founder Thomas Shepherd. He commissioned one of the museum's two William Miller Sheetz rifles for his grandson Peter C. Brooks. The rifle is signed "W M Sheetz Shepherds Town VA No 85" in script on the top flat of the 44-inch rifled barrel. The maple stocked rifle is completely silver mounted, including its butt plate and trigger guard. The silver patchbox is finely pierced and engraved. A later, rectangular silver plate



Rezin Davis Shepherd's longrifle for his grandson Peter C. Brooks, made and signed by William Miller Sheetz (1810–1866), Shepherdstown, Virginia (now West Virginia), second-quarter 1800s. All photos courtesy Brian LaMaster.



inlaid behind the cheekpiece is inscribed: "Peter C Brooks From his Grandfather Shepherd".

Rezin Davis Shepherd lived in New Orleans, Louisiana, and Boston, Massachusetts, before retiring to Shepherdstown in the 1840s. He and his wife Lucy Taylor Gorham Shepherd had one daughter, Ellen. Lucy Shepherd died when Ellen was five years old. The widower Rezin purchased a home in Boston so his daughter could be educated in New England. Ellen married Gorham Brooks of Massachusetts in 1829. Her son Peter was the recipient of the rifle. The rifle then passed to Peter's descendants, where it remained in Massachusetts for more than a century. Peter Brooks's daughter Eleanor married Richard Saltonstall, and their son Leverett Saltonstall eventually served as governor and a senator from Massachusetts. The rifle was donated to the museum by the Saltonstall family.

Rezin Davis Shepherd left his mark on Shepherdstown. His most visible legacy is the building today known as McMurrin Hall on the Shepherd University campus. In addition to other factors, Shepherd considered

the building a worthy site for a town hall and the town clock, which he donated to Trinity Episcopal Church. The building served as the Jefferson County Courthouse from 1866–1871, before the county seat returned to Charles Town. Beginning in

1872, Rezin's grandson Shepherd Brooks leased the building to the board of the town's new college. A perpetual lease was signed in 1891.

The Historic Shepherdstown Commission and Museum and the Kentucky Rifle Foundation will host a special opening reception for KRA members on April 12, 2025. As part of the Historic Shepherdstown Commission's annual Speaker Series, KRA past presidents Tim Hodges and Brian LaMaster will lecture on the exhibit at the Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education at Shepherd University on April 16, 2025 at 7:00 P.M. The talks are free and open to the public.

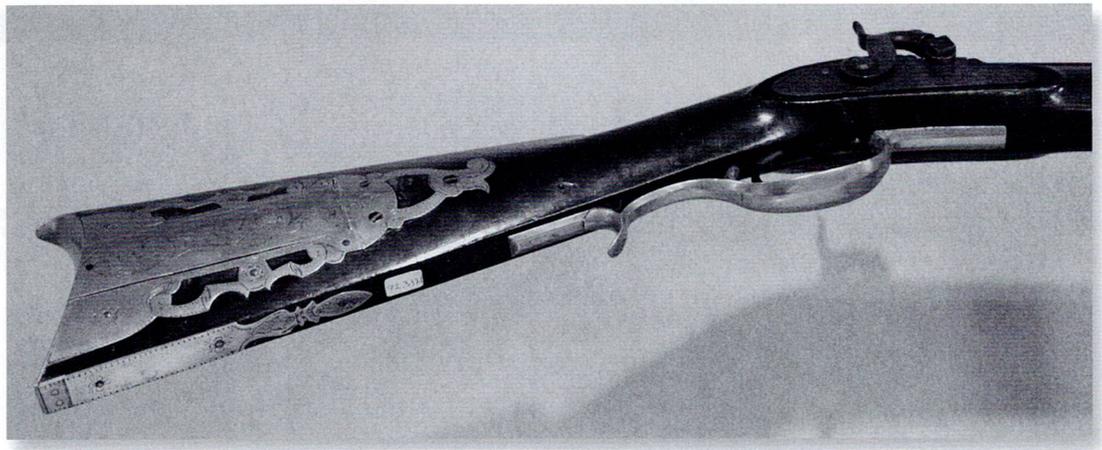


Jerry Bock, president of the Historic Shepherdstown Commission, thanked the Kentucky Rifle Foundation for its help organizing the exhibit: "It is very exciting for us to be able to host this important exhibit. We are very happy the Kentucky Rifle Foundation has agreed to help us with this endeavor."

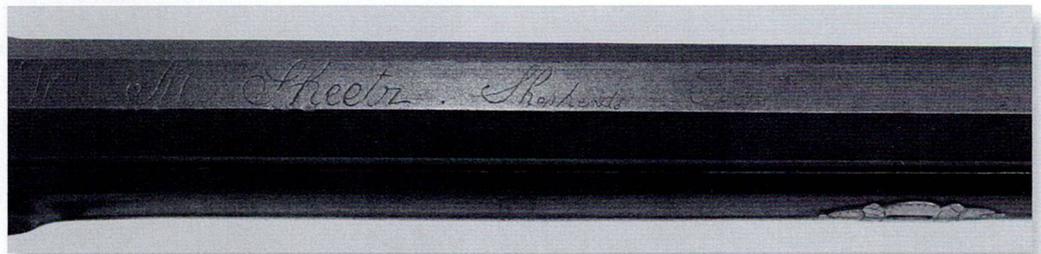
This summer is the 250th anniversary of the Bee Line March. In June 1775, the Continental Congress asked several colonies, including Virginia, to send companies of 100 militiamen to Massachusetts to help General George Washington blockade Boston. Under the command of Captain Hugh Stephenson, one company left Shepherdstown, Virginia (now West Virginia), on foot on July 17, 1775. They arrived in Cambridge on August 11, completing the nearly 600-mile journey in twenty-six days.

Shepherdstown is hosting several commemorative events, including an encampment of Revolutionary War reenactors at Morgan's Grove Park the weekend of July 19–20. A complete schedule of events can be found on the Bee Line March 250th Anniversary page on Facebook.

The Historic Shepherdstown Museum is located at 129 E. German Street, Shepherdstown, West Virginia 25443. The exhibit will be open to the public from April 19–October 19,



2025. Regular operating hours are Saturdays from 11 A.M.–5 P.M. and Sundays from 1 P.M.–4 P.M. The museum is also open by appointment, but please call at least a week in advance to ensure that a docent is available. Appointments can be arranged by calling (304) 876–0910 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Fridays between 10 A.M.–5 P.M., or by emailing [hsc1786@gmail.com](mailto:hsc1786@gmail.com). Adult donation is \$5; members of the military and children are free. More information about



the exhibit and the museum can be found online at [www.historicshepherdstown.com](http://www.historicshepherdstown.com). ■

