

The Kennedy Rifle of the Bear Creek School, Moore County NC

Matthew R Mutarelli

Gunsmith

Longrifle production 18th and 19th centuries in the United States

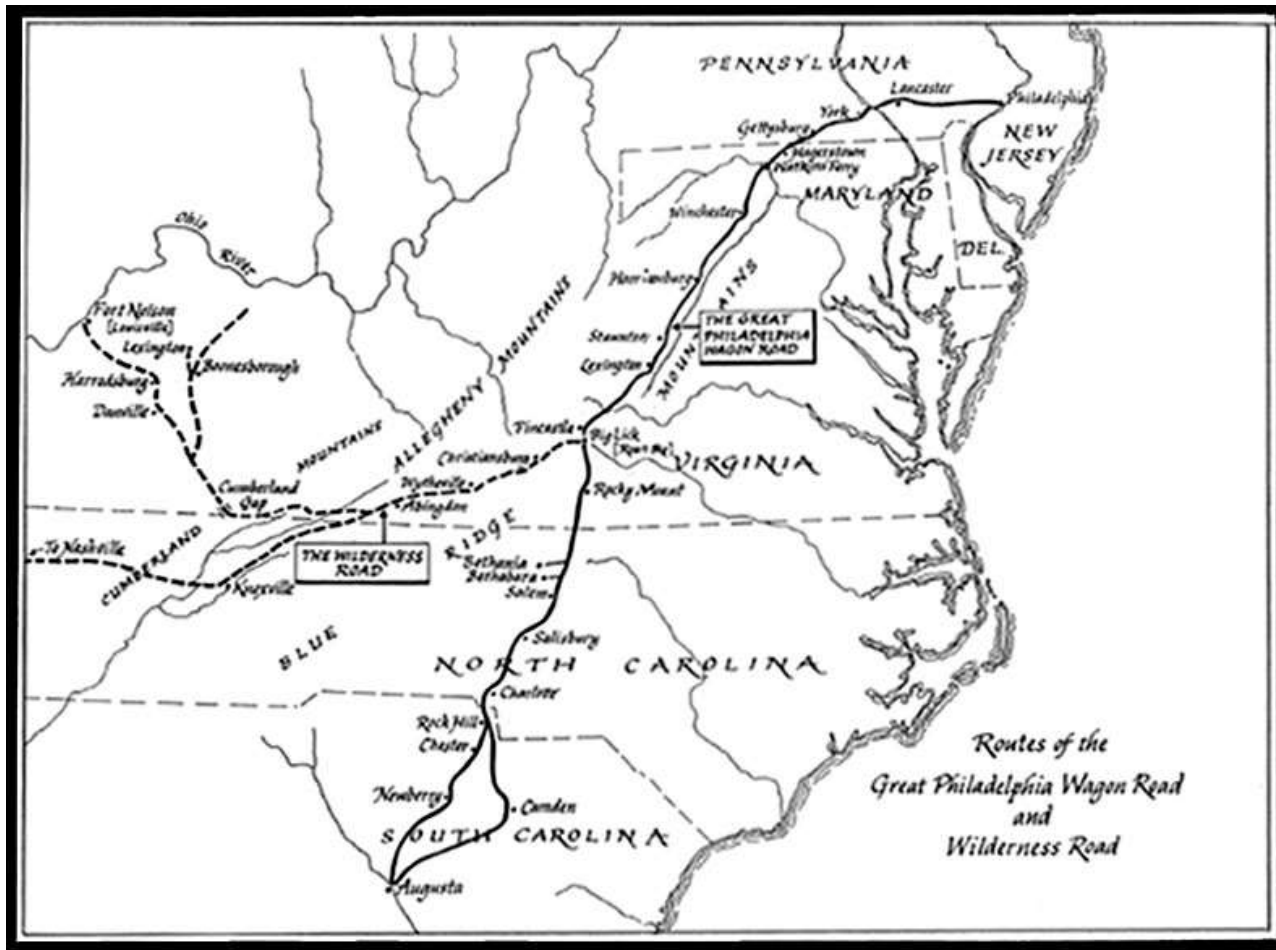
- Manufacture of Longrifles started in Pennsylvania early 1700s. German gunsmiths were the first to cut rifling/grooves into the barrel, imparting spin to the projectile. Range and accuracy were increased.
- Commonly referred to as a “Kentucky” rifle. Longrifles were made in Pennsylvania and elsewhere but were used on the Kentucky frontier.
- Golden Age of Longrifles 1770-1820.
- The longrifle is a blend of the smooth bore musket and the German jaeger rifle
- Smaller projectile +velocity +rifle grooves

Alexander Kennedy

- Born in Ireland 1738, Immigrated to Philadelphia PA, Arrived in Moore County 1768-1770
- Probably Apprenticed in Lancaster PA learning the trade of gunmaking (mechanic)
- Heard of gunmakers in the town of Hemp NC, boarded a wagon and rode to NC
- Served as a patriot soldier, Recognized by SAR?
- Known to make rifles and swords of good quality, However, only one signed rifle exists

The Great Wagon Road.

Conduit of longrifle manufacturing practices to the southern colonies



9 regional areas or schools of longrifles in North Carolina

- Bear Creek (Moore and Chatham Counties)
- Early Deep River (Guilford and Randolph counties)
- Jamestown (Guilford County)
- Salem (Forsythe County)
- Davidson (Davidson County)
- Rowan (Rowan and Iredell Counties)
- Mecklenburg (Mecklenburg, Gaston and Lincoln Counties)
- Catawba Valley (Iredell and Catawba Counties)
- Appalachian (Western North Carolina)

David Kennedy Rifle with Captured
Patchbox and daisy finial similar to rifles
made in Lancaster PA



Kennedy rifle on display in Robbins NC



Personal contemporary copy of a Kennedy rifle by Matthew R Mutarelli



David Kennedy (Kannedy)

- Brought the family business to a higher level than Alexander Kennedy Sr.
- Taught the trade by Alexander Kennedy Sr. diversified into saw mills and other businesses
- Built the most guns personally and through his business and his sons (5 total)
- Brought lock production in house to his shop vs buying imported English locks

Two Kennedy Rifle specimens:
David Kennedy's 1811 comet rifle, Unsigned Kennedy
Rifle, Shaw House SPNC



Kennedy Rifle Attributes

- 2 screw side plate
- Spear shaped tang with single screw
- Usually hard curly maple stocks
- Standard incised carving on the comb and along the ramrod channel
- Double set trigger
- .45 caliber
- Usually cast brass mountings
- Non tapered octagon barrel, 42-46" length

Contemporary copy of a David Kennedy flint pistol circa 1812



Utilitarian pistol grip reinforcements



Kennedy Patchbox with piercings and scrimshaw engraving



Kennedy Rifle with hunter's star and incised cut on the comb of stock.



War of 1812, Battle of New Orleans

Longrifles present and used to great effect on British troops 1,500 casualties on British side vs. 20 American



The Kennedy Rifle: The official NC State Firearm

- Currently only 9 states have official firearms
- The Moore County/Bear Creek/ Kennedy rifle is a solid candidate for the honor bestowed by the state legislature
- Presence in war of 1812 and Revolutionary War
- Produced 1790-1838 in Robbins NC by the Kennedy family
- Armed settlers going west crossing the Appalachians and into Kentucky
- Requesting endorsement letter from this organization to accompany letters to Representative Moss and Senator McInnis

QUESTIONS