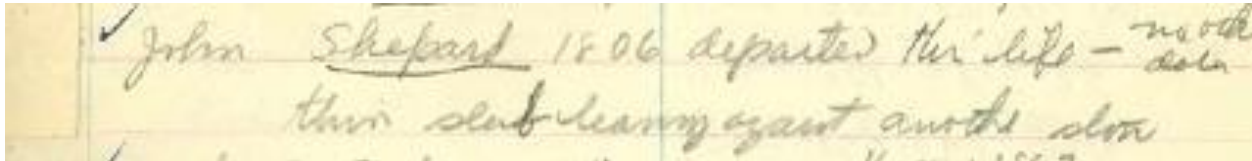


## John Shepherd

Died 1806

When Jacob Holdcraft surveyed the Old Berlin Cemetery in 1959, he recorded the following: “John Shepard, 1806 departed this life – no other date. Thin slab leaning against another stone.” When the cemetery underwent restoration in 2020, that “thin slab” was nowhere to be found.



Then, in 2022, we received information of one John Shepherd, a Revolutionary War soldier, who was buried in this cemetery. The following information is the result of research following that lead.

Little is known about John Shepherd’s parents, birth, or early childhood. However, based on various records, he was probably born in the late 1750’s or early 1760’s. (His future wife was born in 1758.)

On April 16, 1776, he enlisted as a private in the Skipton District Militia at Old Town (in Allegany County, MD) in Captain Thomas Waring’s company. Samuel Shepherd (relationship unknown) enlisted at the same time. Note: the Skipton District corresponds roughly to today’s Allegany and Garrett Counties. Capt. Waring had served previously in the French and Indian War, and after the Revolutionary War moved to Kentucky where he became a judge and helped write Kentucky’s constitution.

John married Elizabeth Wissman (aka Eliz’th Wiseman) on May 17, 1781, in Frederick County. Their marriage certificate doesn’t specify exactly *where* the wedding occurred, but most of her siblings were married in the Lutheran Church in Middletown, so they *may* have been married there. Note that this was before the end of the war.

The 1800 census shows the family of John Shepherd living in Berlin, which had been platted just 14 years earlier, with Leonard Smith selling lots beginning in 1787.

John was apparently a cooper (barrel-maker) by trade. On March 5, 1799, Feby Race “bound her son John Race to John Shepherd, cooper, to age 21.”

In 1803, John was appointed constable of Berlin.

The first record of John purchasing property was on Dec. 16, 1805, when he bought lot #12 in Berlin from Charles Beagle of Bedford County, PA, for 20 pounds. This is currently 1 North Virginia Avenue (just across W. Potomac Street from the ambulance company).

As indicated earlier, John died in 1806 and was buried in the Old Lutheran Cemetery (aka the Old Berlin Cemetery).

The value of John Shepherd's estate was recorded by Adam Baughman, Administrator, on Jan 18, 1808. His net worth, after subtracting debts of such things as legal fees, six gallons of whiskey, his coffin, etc.) was 57 pounds, 1 shilling.

Following his death, his family continued to live in Berlin for a while, as they are noted in the 1810 and 1820 censuses of that village. Their property was sold on April 28, 1825, to John House for \$100. John Shepherd's heirs were listed as Elizabeth Shepherd, Mary Martin [John's daughter and wife of John Martin], John Shepherd, and William Shepherd.

The 1830 census lists the following four families living close together in Berlin: John Martin, Elizabeth Shepherd, John Shepherd, and William Shepherd. However, by 1840, everyone had moved away except Mary and her husband John. I have not been able to trace any of them since then.

John Shepherd is the oldest burial in the Old Berlin Cemetery that we have a record of. He is also, to my knowledge, the only Revolutionary War soldier buried there.