

# LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK PROGRAM

Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

## Miksch Tobacco Shop

Local Historic Landmark #47

532 S. Main St., Winston-Salem

(Original Salem Lot 59)

Construction Date: 1771

Restoration Date: 1960

Landmark Designation Date: 12/06/1982

Johann Mattheus Miksch was born in Herrnhut, Germany in 1731. He arrived in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in 1754 with 53 other single Moravian brethren. Ten years later, he married Maria Christina Henrietta Paterman and moved to Bethabara, where he worked in the community store. In 1770, the Miksch family moved to Salem and began construction on their house. When completed in 1771, the Miksch House was the first privately-owned house in Salem.

The house had not been a residential building long before it also became a tobacco shop. Miksch was a rather sickly man and he had moved to Salem without knowing how he would make a living. Evidently, he was a very conscientious person; because of this, the Church leaders worked diligently to steer him into a suitable profession. The Moravian records stated, "If he is industrious, he could make his living by selling candles, shaving, making snuff, and fine-cut tobacco, selling oil and whale oil, growing young fruit trees, selling garden seeds, cabbage, pickled cucumbers, turnips, dried fruit and the like. He will have a hard time in the beginning." Miksch actually ended up selling all of these items from time to time, but became known primarily for his tobacco products.

The Miksch Tobacco Shop is somewhat smaller than most of the dwellings in Salem. Most of the earliest houses had been built with a central chimney that served a minimum of three rooms. The typical configuration included a large



room or entrance hall that took up half the building and two smaller rooms on the opposite side. However, the Miksch Tobacco Shop was originally nothing more than a two-room house, with a central chimney and small entrance foyer. Resting on a raised stuccoed half cellar, the building is 1½-stories, and is of log construction covered by beaded weatherboards. The single-leaf front door features a three-light transom protected by a gabled hood. Paired double-hung windows are six-over-six and have wood shutters. Throughout the years, the Miksch Tobacco Shop has had a series of owners and alterations.

The Miksch Tobacco Shop is the oldest tobacco shop on its original site in the United States. Old Salem, Inc. purchased the property in 1958; two years later, the building was restored to its 1771 appearance. Additionally in 1960, the adjacent Tobacco Manufactory building was reconstructed, based on historic photographs and maps.

Today the Miksch Tobacco Shop is an exhibit property of Old Salem Museums and Gardens.



Welfare Drug Store on Main Street in Salem, c. 1959  
(Miksch Tobacco Shop shown in center of photograph)  
Courtesy of Old Salem Museums and Gardens

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

<http://www.lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/legacies/NC/200002914.html>

[http://www.ewlane.smugmug.com/Other/Architecture/Architecture/15535653\\_AN9Sk/3/1163752173\\_HwYJF#1163752173\\_HwYJF](http://www.ewlane.smugmug.com/Other/Architecture/Architecture/15535653_AN9Sk/3/1163752173_HwYJF#1163752173_HwYJF)



This information is also available  
at the Forsyth County  
Historic Resources Commission's web site:  
<http://www.ForsythCountyHRC.org>