

LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK PROGRAM

Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

Bethabara Distiller's House

Local Historic Landmark #98

Historic Bethabara Park, Winston-Salem

Construction Date: 1803

Landmark Designation Date: 12/18/1995

The first distillery in Bethabara was constructed in 1756 – only three years after the establishment of the community. It was operated seasonally and could produce over 2,100 gallons of brandy during a winter. Wine and beer were also produced. The original log distillery structure was replaced in 1778 with a new distillery constructed of stone and brick. Measuring 66'x36' it was one of the largest buildings in Bethabara. It also served as the residence for the brewer and his family.



When fire destroyed the building in 1802, a new home for the brewer, Hermann Buttner, was built almost immediately, in 1803. The distillery continued in a neighboring building. Although by this time, the distillery was far less profitable than in earlier years; however, the Moravian Church leaders allowed the operation to continue. Distilling was an important trade in the community, which had become primarily agricultural in nature after the exodus of many of the trades people and craftsmen to Salem in the 1760s and 1770s. The 1803 Distiller's House is the only structure associated with brewing and distilling in the Moravian settlements of North Carolina.



Brewer's House in Bethabara, Date Unknown
Courtesy of Old Salem Museums and Gardens

The Distiller's House is architecturally significant because it is one of only three surviving masonry structures in Bethabara dating from the community's second quarter century of development. Although its 1803 construction date places it outside Bethabara's primary period of significance as the Moravian "House of Passage" community in Wachovia, the building remains a strong embodiment of the Germanic traditions expressed in 18th century Moravian architecture.

The Distiller's House is a 1½-story masonry dwelling typical of Moravian architecture of the period. The ground story is of stone construction covered with stucco, the main story is of stucco-covered brick, and the upper gables at attic level are weatherboarded. The house has a gable roof with an off-center interior chimney. The three-bay façade has an entrance at the northwest end sheltered by a shed porch. Because of the slope of the road, a cellar entrance is located immediately beneath the main entrance.

Today the Bethabara Distiller's House is an interpretative property for Historic Bethabara Park.



The Distiller's House in Bethabara, 1918
Courtesy of Old Salem Museums and Gardens

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Bethabara Historic District National Register Nomination
<http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/FY0048.pdf>

[http://www.cityofws.org/Home/Departments/
RecreationAndParks/BethabaraPark/HistoricArea/
Articles/1803Distillery](http://www.cityofws.org/Home/Departments/RecreationAndParks/BethabaraPark/HistoricArea/Articles/1803Distillery)



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