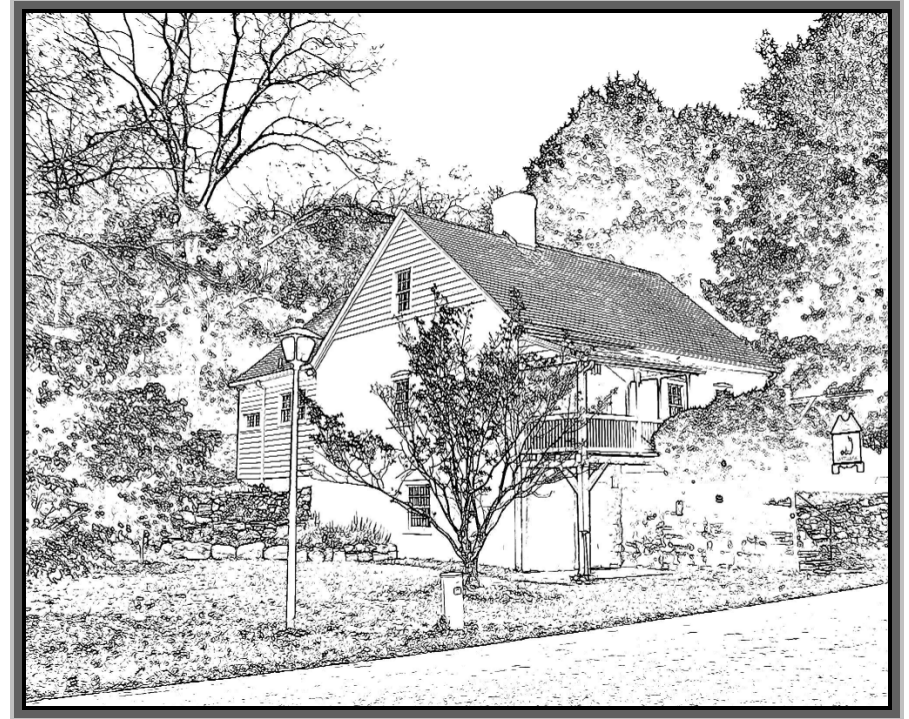


Brewers in Bethabara

Heinrich Feldhausen	1756–1764
Christian Pfeiffer	1766–1772
Peter Mücke, apprentice	
Peter Mücke	1779–1792
Philip Vogler, assistant	1779–1780
Abraham Transou, assistant	1780–?
Johann Hein	1792–1799
John Jones, assistant	1793–1795
Herman Buttner	1802–1807
Johann Christian Fockel	1807–1814



1803
Herman Buttner
House
Distillery
Historic Bethabara Park

History of the 1803 Herman Buttner House

Distilling spirits and brewing beer were common activities in the 18th century when the Moravians founded Bethabara. Not surprisingly, alcohol played an essential role in the life of early Moravians and was tolerated even by the conservative forces within the Wachovia communities. The Moravians made brandy, whiskey and beer for themselves, as well as for sale and trade with outsiders, and both beer and distilled spirits were served at Moravian love feasts in the early days.

Distilling and brewing are relatively simple processes, requiring only water, fire and agricultural products. Ingredients for beer are grain—typically barley and wheat, plus hops and yeast. Most fruits are distillable into brandy and rye can be distilled into whiskey. Distilling was indispensable in the 18th century for retaining the food energy available in fruits, and the Moravians regularly distilled their peaches and apples into brandy. However, the process becomes more complicated when producing large quantities of these products; good soil, large quantities of water and storage and distribution facilities must be available.

Distilling began in Bethabara relatively soon after settlement in 1753. By late 1756, large-scale, seasonal distilling in a log cabin distillery was underway and brandy production reached 2,100 gallons during the winter of 1776.

The original distillery was now limiting, so construction of a larger distillery, situated on the site of the current distiller's house, began in November of 1777.

Construction lasted for over a year, as the building was one of the largest in Bethabara, being both the distillery and the distiller's family residence. The new distillery opened on December 1, 1778 and survived until December 2, 1802, being destroyed by a fire that began at 5:30 that afternoon.

The last and current house, built in 1803, served as both the living quarters for the family of the distiller, Herman Buttner, and as a distribution point for the product. The new distillery was detached and possibly located adjacent to the Buttner House, where the gravel parking lot is today. In 1807, the Buttner family moved to a different house in Bethabara. Johann Christian Fockel, from Salem, moved in and started a tanyard (a hide tanning and leather production facility) and, on a limited basis, continued the Bethabara distillery. There is no mention of the Bethabara distillery in the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* after 1807, but it is known that Fockel stayed in Bethabara until 1814.

From the early 1800's until the mid-1930s, little is known, though various families probably lived in the house. From 1938 to 1953, the Buttner House was the parsonage for Bethabara Moravian Church.

When Historic Bethabara Park was established in 1970, the house served as the Administrative Office and Visitor's Center until the current Visitor's Center was built in 1987. The Buttner House became a museum craft shop and was used later for storage and sporadic housing of archaeologists—until restoration in 2002 brought it to its current state. Now, the 1803 Buttner House is used for Park festivals and special events and meetings of various community groups.