

42 W. Market Street- THE HORSFIELD HOUSE

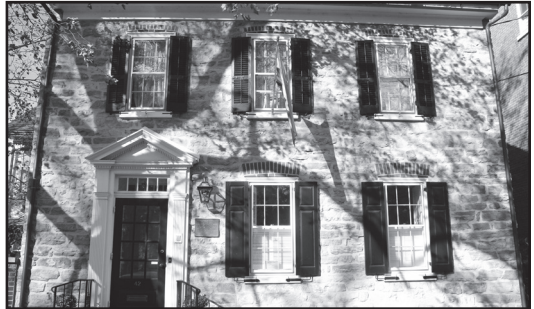
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The first private residence. The first store. The first public library.

The Horsfield House, c1749, is one of Bethlehem's original structures and appears on its earliest maps. It was built as a private residence for Timothy Horsfield, the community's magistrate, at a time when Moravian men and women lived communally on lands known as "The Economy."

The house was enlarged in 1753 to accommodate what was then the only general store, or "market," (hence the name Market Street) not only in Bethlehem, but also in the entire area known as "the Forks of Delaware." It operated on this site until 1764. The general store addition was demolished in the 1870s. A partial inventory of the store included: apron skins; powder horns; shoes and shoemaker supplies; pocket

books, stockings, gloves and hats; spinning wheels; firearms; deer and calf skins; steel and flints; farming implements; lanterns and candles; shovels; brooms; musical instruments; books and more.



Benjamin Franklin was a guest here in 1755 and 1756 while touring the Commonwealth to establish a line of defensive fortifications during the French and Indian War. Moravian artist/clergyman Valentine Haidt, whose portraits can be seen in the Moravian archives located at 41 West Locust Street, was also a guest here.

Horsfield's office was a meeting place for Native Americans and county officials during the peace conferences from 1756-1758. In 1785, the Oerter family of bookkeepers and bookbinders resided here for an astonishing 94 years and established a library said to contain 2,000 volumes in English, German and Latin.

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