

WILLIAMSBURG, February 6, 1772

I have just opened TAVERN opposite to the *Raleigh* at the sign of the KING's ARMS ...
and shall be much obliged to the Gentlemen who favour me with their company.

JANE VOBE

Mrs. Jane Vobe's advertisement in the February 6, 1772, issue of the *Virginia Gazette* alerted readers that she had relocated her business to a prime location near the Capitol. Her tavern was reputed to be "where all the best people resorted."

The King's Arms was a common tavern name in England and the colonies. By the 1770s, Parliament was out of favor with some colonists, but most Virginians remained loyal to the king. The tavern's name shifted with the political climate. Known as "Mrs. Vobe's" during the Revolution, it later became the Eagle Tavern.

The King's Arms and other Williamsburg taverns served as local gathering places where customers met to discuss business, politics, news, and gossip over drinks and meals. Taverns were, in this respect, unofficial public buildings. Before and during the Revolution, Williamsburg taverns, including the Raleigh and Wetherburn's, provided rooms for the politicians who debated independence and later operated the provisional government of Virginia. During this period Mrs. Vobe and other tavern keepers supplied food, drink, and lodging to the American troops.

The change of government had little effect on tavern operations. Like its colonial predecessor, the state required tavern keepers to apply for annual licenses and set maximum prices for food, drink, and lodging. The rates had to be posted in each tavern's public room.

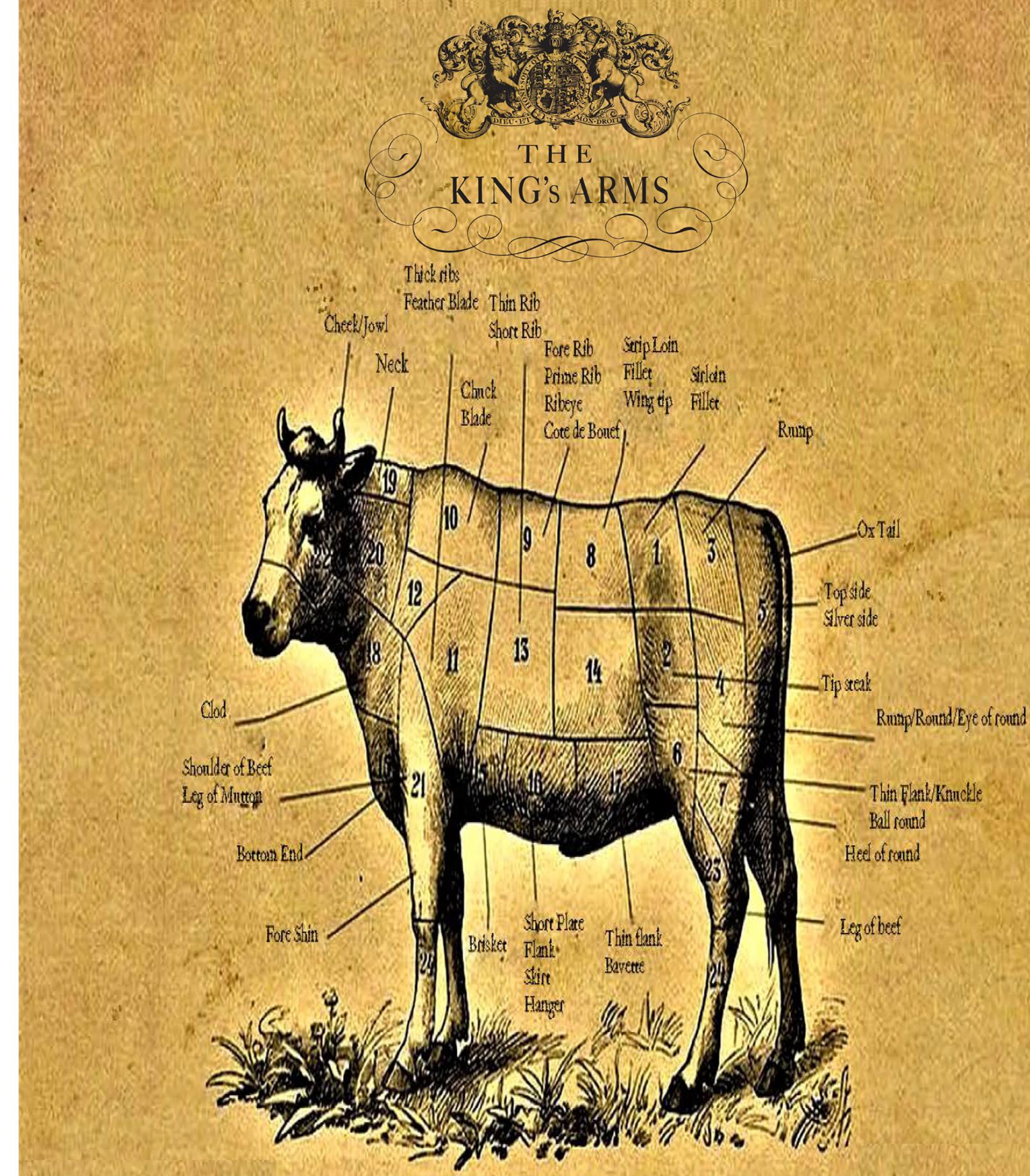
Artifacts found on the site and sketches of the tavern drawn on late 18th-century insurance policies assisted in the reconstruction of the tavern and the adjoining Purdie House to the east, which contains some of the dining rooms.

Reproduction chairs, tables, and serving pieces represent a deliberate mix of furniture styles popular with the Virginia gentry. The royal coat of arms on the dinnerware was fashionable in the colonies before the Revolution. Other accessories—the pewter candlesticks with glasses, pewter sugar and salt dishes, brass sconces, and maps and framed prints—correspond to items listed in inventories of taverns patronized by affluent customers.

Today's menu items are inspired by 18th-century recipes—with adaptations for 21st-century tastes and methods. Some of the more unusual names come straight from colonial cookery books.

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Evening BILL of FARE

VICTUALS *Pleasing to the PALATE & expeditiously served after the Best MANNER*

Soupes

Peanut Soupe

A tavern Specialty
Served with Roasted Peanuts and Sherry Cream

\$8



A Good Soupe for the Season

Boiled up daily from the finest market offerings

\$8

Salats

Romaine Hearts Salat

Crisp romaine, shaved Locatelli cheese, garlic croutons, lemon dressing another way with anchovy and good mustard

\$10

Duck from the Smoke House

Delicate garden greens, citrus, cracklings of skin, candied pecans, pomegranate vinaigrette

\$10

\$15

Starters

Heirloom Carrot Puff

Spring pea hummus, pistachio carrot pistou, benne seed sorghum lavosh

\$10

Hoppin' John Risotto

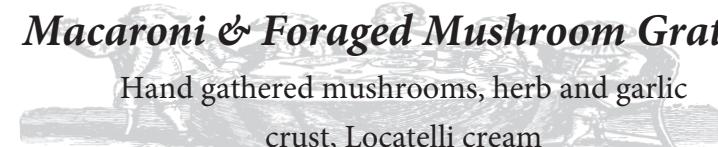
Blackeye peas, Carolina gold rice, country ham, baby spinach

\$13

Macaroni & Foraged Mushroom Gratin

Hand gathered mushrooms, herb and garlic crust, Locatelli cream

\$15



Main Dishes

Mrs. Vobe's Tavern Dinner *

Herb and Garlic Crusted Prime Rib of Beef

Served up with your selection of soupe and dessert

\$58

King's Cut \$8 Tariff

Madeira Braised Shank of Lamb

Rosemary orange gremolata,
a jus

\$44

Hunter's Game Pye

Tender venison, rabbit and duck with mushrooms, onions and bacon lardons. Stewed in fine port wine and put forth under flaky crust.

\$39

Sage Roasted Butternut Squash "Steak"

Wild mushroom ragout, parsley chili pesto

\$26

Smoked Golden Yard Bird

Pickled golden beets, raspberry mostarda

\$29

Daily Catch

The best to be found from market and the Chesapeake waters

Market Pricing

Chop of Shoat

Brandy and maple brined heritage pork, cherry apricot jam, whiskey pork jus

\$33

Beef Tenderloin

Cooked on the grid iron with roasted button onions and good Cabernet gravy

\$50

All main dishes are served to table with garden offerings dressed in the appropriate manner

*These items are cooked to order and may be served raw or undercooked. Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, beef, pork, lamb, seafood, shellfish or eggs increases your risk of food-borne illness, especially if you have certain medical conditions.