

Although Williamsburg seems land-locked today, the eighteenth-century city was closely linked to the wider world by its two ports. Queen Anne's Port and Queen Mary's Port were located on nearby deep creeks that fed into the James and York Rivers respectively, so vessels could bring goods and people from all over the world right to Williamsburg's door. Local merchants stocked imported goods, and Virginians could also order directly from merchants in Britain. Although the Navigation Acts dictated colonists could receive European goods only via Britain, they engaged in a robust illicit trade with the West Indian ports of other European powers. People arrived in Williamsburg voluntarily and involuntarily from Britain, Africa, Europe, and the West Indies, and many of them found their way to Williamsburg's taverns as either workers or guests.

Jean Marot, a Frenchman, operated a tavern on this site from about 1709 until his death in 1717, when his widow Anne took over. Their daughter Anne and her husband James Shields began to run the business in the early 1740s. They lived here with their several children, who likely assisted their parents with the work as soon as they were old enough. Shields also owned several enslaved workers.

By 1750, when Shields died, his tavern was one among seven licensed taverns competing for customers in Williamsburg. Located in a crowded commercial and residential part of town, it offered food and drink, overnight lodgings, and entertainment including gambling and billiards. Clientele could gather in a public room to mingle and exchange news with fellow customers or reserve a small space in which to conduct private business. Shields Tavern catered to the lesser gentry and upper middling ranks of Williamsburg society and to travelers to the capital from near and far.

An eighteenth-century visitor to Shields Tavern would have found ample evidence of the cosmopolitan nature of the Atlantic world. Many consumables came to the tavern from afar. A customer would find molasses, sugar, and rum from the West Indies; wines from Portugal, Spain, and France; coffee from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean; tea from Asia; lemons and limes from the Caribbean; and spices from all over the world. Archaeology shows us Shields served his patrons with British, Chinese, and German ceramic wares. Newspapers at the tavern reported the news of the world. Although a guest at Shields Tavern would have heard mainly English spoken by those about him, he would have been surrounded by many variations from Britain, the West Indies, and Africa. Taverns were both gathering places for locals and for people, objects, and ideas from all over the Atlantic world.

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## SHIELDS *Tavern*

### *Evening Bill of FARE*



## Firsts

Crayfish and Shrimp Stew  
*An 18th-Century Recipe of Tomatoes,  
Vegetables, Sherry, Shrimp, and Crayfish*  
cup \$7.95 bowl \$11.95

Soup of the Day  
*Seasonal Creation*  
cup \$6.95 bowl \$9.95

Tavern Garden Salet  
*A Salet of Romaine Lettuce, Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Red Onions  
Tossed in a Dressing of Your Choice*  
\$6.95

Mrs. Shields' BLT Salet  
*A Heirloom Tomato, Frisee Lettuce, Arugula,  
Bacon, with Crumpets Served on the Side with  
Peppercorn Ranch Dressing*  
\$8.95

Tavern Sampler Platter  
*A Taste of the Empire with Glazed Chicken, Virginia Ham Biscuit,  
Grilled Shrimp Skewer and Shield's Aioli*  
\$15.95



## Evening Mains

Mrs. Shield's 3-Course Supper  
*A Cup of Soup, Southern-Fried Chicken,  
Rosemary Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Fresh Green Beans,  
Choice of Williamsburg Ice Cream*  
\$29.95

Pork Shank  
*Pork Osso Bucco Generously Seasoned with  
Salt, Pepper, and Garlic, Served with Madeira  
Sauce, Herb Polenta and Braised Cabbage*  
\$28.95

Stuffed Holland Bell Pepper  
*Ratatouille and Quinoa Stuffing, Parmesan  
Cheese, Tomato Basil Fondue with a Warm Wild  
Mushroom Salad and Parsley Chili Pesto*  
\$22.95

Blackened Chesapeake Catfish  
*Seafood Etouffee, Hominy Grits and Tavern Greens*  
\$26.95

Ale-Braised Boneless Beef Shortrib  
*Tender Beef Simmered in an Ale-Laced Sauce  
with Roasted Carrots, Celery,  
Cipollini Onions, and Forest Mushrooms  
Served with Rosemary Garlic Mashed Potatoes*  
\$33.95

Many dishes can be prepared Gluten Free. Please ask your server for more information.

\*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.