

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 VOBES

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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Dinner BILL of FARE



First Course

Peanut Soupe

A Southern Favorite and a King's Arms Tavern Specialty,
Garnished with Peanuts and Served with Sippets

\$6.95

Soupe befitting the Gentry

Made from the Freshest Seasonal Ingredients
Inspired by 18th-century Recipes

\$6.95

Caesar Salet

Chopped Romaine, Parmesan Cheese, Croutons,
with House Caesar Dressing

\$7.95

Salet of Winter Greens

Garam Masala Butternut Squash, Toasted Almonds
Pickled Apple, Cracked Pepper Goat Cheese
Apple Mustard Seed Vinaigrette

\$8.95

Mrs. Purdie's Salet

Baby Iceberg, Cucumber, Heirloom Tomato,
Crispy Bacon, Blue Cheese Dressing

\$7.95



Main Course

*Mrs. Vobe's Tavern Dinner **

Choice of Soupe Followed by Herb-Garlic Crusted
Prime Rib of Beef, Horseradish, Herb Fingerling

Potatoes, Popover, Au Jus

Finished with Choice of Dessert

\$36.95

Stout Braised Shank of Lamb

Butternut Squash Potato Mash

Rosemary Orange Gremolata

Stout Lamb Jus

\$33.95

Sage Roasted Butternut Squash "Steak"

Herb Fingerling Potatoes, Wild Mushroom

"Gravy", Parsley Chili Pesto

\$22.95

*Chef's Catch **

Local Offerings Prepared with Accompaniments
of the Season

\$26.95

Hunter's Game Pye

Tender Venison, Rabbit, and Duck

Braised in a Fine Port Wine. Put Forth Under a
Flaky Pastry Crust with Mushrooms, Vegetables
and Bacon Lardons

\$29.95

Citrus Roasted Game Hen

Butternut Squash Potato Mash, Pan Jus,
Golden Raisin Agrodulce

\$24.95

*Beef Tenderloin**

Molasses Bacon Butter, Herb Fingerling Potatoes,
Cabernet Demi, Caramelized Cipollini

\$39.95

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.