

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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Midday 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

Add Grilled Chicken \$6

Add Grilled Fish \$8

Mrs. Purdie's Salet

Baby Iceberg, Cucumber, Heirloom Tomato,
Crispy Bacon, Blue Cheese Dressing
\$7.95

House Smoked Fish Dip

Sourdough, Pea Shoot Salet
\$13.95



Favourites

Sandwich and Soupe

**Cup of Soupe with Half Roasted Turkey
or Honey Ham Sandwich**
Served on Honey Potato or
Marble Rye Bread
\$14.95

Southern Fried Chicken Sandwich

Lettuce, Tomato, Dill Pickles
Spicy Tavern Mayo
Served with Tavern Fries
\$14.95

A Made Dish of Beef

Tender Beef Stewed in a Rich Red Wine
Sauce, Cippolini Onions, Carrots, and
Wild Mushrooms Put Forth on Goodly
Mashed Potatoes
\$16.95

Mrs. Vobe's Tavern Fried Chicken

*Lightly Spiced Skillet-fried Chicken,
Cook's Vegetables,
and Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes*
\$15.95

Norfolk Pottage Pye

Tender Chicken and Vegetables Made
into a Creamy Stew,
Baked Beneath Flaky Pastry
\$14.95

Roasted Turkey or Honey Ham

Your Choice of Fresh Roasted Turkey
or Honey-baked Ham with Cheddar
Cheese, Sage Tavern Spread Served on
Honey Potato or Marble Rye Bread
Served with Tavern Fries
\$14.95

*Grid-Iron Beefsteak**

Steak Patty Served up on a Potato Bun
with Lettuce, Tomatoes, Onion,
Cheddar Cheese, and Tavern Fries with
Choice of Shaved
Virginia Ham or Bacon
\$15.95

Substitute Beyond Burger \$2

Crispy Eggplant Griddle

*Sourdough, Tavern Spread Tomato
Bruschetta Served with Tavern Fries*
\$14.95

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.