



Chowning's TAVERN

WILLIAMSBURG, *October 10, 1766.*

I HEREBY acquaint the publick that I have opened tavern . . . where all who please to favour me with their custom may depend upon the best of entertainment for themselves, servants, and horses, and good pasturage.

JOSIAH CHOWNING.

THE “publick” that Chowning hoped to attract to his tavern with this notice in the *Virginia Gazette* was made up mostly of local residents—artisans, shoppers, farmers who sold produce at the market, individuals with business at the Courthouse, idle bystanders—and an occasional traveler.

In size, clientele, and services, Chowning’s resembled rural Virginia taverns located at ferries, crossroads, and courthouses or small English alehouses. Despite Chowning’s boast of the “best of entertainment,” he served plain fare and his drink selection was limited to rum, local beer, and cider. He may also have offered wine, brandy, and bowls of punch on demand. The few travelers who spent the night probably lodged together in a room upstairs.

Tavern keeping was often a precarious trade for modest operators like Chowning, who rented the tavern. Many keepers of small taverns lived on the premises with their families, who

helped with the work of waiting on customers, cooking, cleaning, and laundering. Little is known about Josiah Chowning. When the tavern was reconstructed, Colonial Williamsburg believed it was located on this site, but we now know that a store and dwelling were here and that the tavern was somewhere nearby. Chowning’s business lasted less than two years, but its twentieth-century counterpart has accommodated travelers and locals for over fifty years.

Chairs, benches, and tables represent the sturdy furniture found in colonial taverns catering to the middling sort. Excavated fragments show that the blue and yellow peacock on the dinnerware was one of several colorful bird motifs used by early Williamsburg residents. Utilitarian stoneware tablewares, plain tin sconces, and simply framed maps and prints accentuate the informality of Chowning’s Tavern.

All income from Chowning’s Tavern is used for the purposes of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, which operates the Historic Area, and to carry forward its educational programs. Colonial Williamsburg welcomes private contributions. Friends interested in discussing gifts to the Foundation are invited to contact the Director of Development, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Post Office Box 1776, Williamsburg, Virginia 23187-1776.

The print reproduced on the cover, “DOCTOR SYNTAX in the Middle of a smoking hor Political squabble, wishes to Whet his Whistle,” was drawn by Thomas Rowlandson and was published in London by Thomas Tegg sometime between 1807 to 1821. Courtesy, Library of Congress.

The illustrations used inside the menu are reproduced from catchpenny prints, popular eighteenth-century English engravings.

Chowning's TAVERN

All Day Fare



18

MODERN-DAY travelers and locals who congregate informally at Chowning's Tavern for plain fare and drink continue a tradition begun more than two hundred years ago when Josiah Chowning opened his tavern on Market Square in October 1766.

19

Mr. Chowning's Soup Pot \$8 Cup or \$12 Bowl

(A Chowning's Tavern Original)

Boiled up daily from the finest market offerings today

Brunswick Stew \$8 Cup or \$12 Bowl

(A Colonial Williamsburg Favorite)

Traditional stew made with young fowl, beef, corn, tomatoes and lima beans

Welsch Rarebit \$9

(A Colonial Williamsburg Favorite)

A savoury made of cheddar cheese, mustard and good wine. Served with country ham and Mr. Chowning's bread

SAVOURIES



Crock of Cheese \$10

(A Chowning's Tavern Original)

Fine cheese mixed up with red roasted bell peppers and chives. Served with pickles and good bread

Garden Lettuces & Seasonal Vegetables \$9

(A Chowning's Tavern Original)

The best of the garden dressed to your liking with sour cream & herb or Josiah's Spanish vinegar dressing

Salmagundi \$18

(A Colonial Williamsburg Favorite)

A popular eighteenth century "supper" dish is known as a Chef's Salad in America today. Garden greens, VA Ham, Chicken breast, cheese, eggs and fresh vegetables.

All Main Dishes are served to the table with garden offerings dressed in a the appropriate manner

MAIN DISHES

To Stew a Duck in the French Way \$30

(Martha Washington Cookbook - origin prior to 1759)

Roasted leg quarter to a light brown then placed in a stew pan with claret, thyme, marjoram, savory, rosemary, peppercorns and mace

Chicken Hash \$20

(Miss Dandridge's Recipe, 1753)

Take a chicken and stew it in good broth with onion, sweet herbs and parsley...thicken with butter and some flour...served on trenchers

Stewed Beef \$32

(The London Art of Cookery - John Farley, 1787)

Stewed over a gentle fire for 4 hours; then take out your beef, strain the gravy adding mushrooms thickened and poured over your beef. Garnish with horseradish.



Roast of Chicken \$25

(The Art of Cooking Made Plain and Easy - Hannah Glasse, 1765)

Rules to be observed in Roasting - take great care that the spit be very clean...your fire must be very quick and clear...a large fowl, three quarters of an hour; a middling one, half and hour, a very small chicken 20 minutes



Virginia Pork BBQ \$21

(A Chowning's Tavern Original)

Shoulder of pork seasoned with Mr. Chowning's spice blend & smoked slow over apple wood, served with tavern slaw and manchet bread



An Onion Pye \$19

(The Kitchen Garden Display's - Dr. Lobb's, 1767) Pare some potatoes...apples...onions and slice them...make a good crust. Lay in a layer of potatoes, a layer of onions, a layer of apple and a layer of eggs until you have filled your pie, strewing seasoning between each layer. Close your pie and bake it an hour and a half.

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.

Snow Eggs \$9

(James Hemmings, Chef d' Cuisine to Thomas Jefferson, 1787-1794) Beat the whites as you do for savoy cake, till you can turn the vessel bottom upwards without their leaving it...put in two spoonfuls of powdered sugar and a little orange water...dish up your whites with custard. A little wine stirred in is a great improvement

American Heritage Chocolate Cobbler \$9

(A Colonial Williamsburg Favorite)

A rich dish of baked custard and chocolate served warm

SWEETS



Peanut Butter Pie \$8

(A Chowning's Tavern Original)

Smooth creamy peanut butter baked nicely in a flaky crust with proper measures of sugar and butter

Chowning's Ice Cream Selection \$6

(A Chowning's Tavern Original)

Served with Ginger Wafers

All Sweets are homemade by Colonial Williamsburg Pastry Chefs