



A Midnight Modern Conversation (detail)
unknown artist, 1780
engraving
1985.03.001
Fraunces Tavern Museum

TAVERN FARE

Samuel Fraunces supervised kitchen operations and prepared specialty dishes himself. He was best known for his desserts, and Fraunces Tavern offered a wide variety of confections such as cakes, tarts, jellies, syllabubs, blaugame, and sweetmeats. For savory fare, the tavern advertised beef steak, mutton or pork chops, and veal cutlets, as well as soup and oysters, fried or pickled.

A CLOSER LOOK 🔍

Lean in to smell the scents of these spices. Nutmeg and cardamom were some of the most popular spices in 18th-century cookbooks. The grater on this panel would have been used to grate the seeds from them for ingredients in various dishes and drinks at Fraunces Tavern. Many of Samuel Fraunces' pies, puddings, cakes, and tarts likely would have included nutmeg and cardamom as well.

TAXES

After the French and Indian War (1756-63), new taxes, including the Sugar Act, Stamp Act, and the Townshend Acts, were placed on the North American colonies to recoup a portion of the war expenses. Samuel Fraunces and other tavern owners would have experienced tensions caused by these new taxes, due to the increasing price of goods, which were established to tighten British control over trade to the colonies and decrease smuggling. Colonists' resentment fueled organized protests by the Sons of Liberty resulting in the Boston Tea Party and other acts of resistance.

TRADE

Trade throughout the British Empire played an important role in maintaining British wealth and control over the colonies. Like many other tavern owners, Samuel Fraunces relied on imported goods to maintain his business. The 19th-century Chinese porcelain export ware shelved in the built-in cupboard to your left is similar to what Fraunces would have owned in the preceding century. These plates, bowls, saucers, and teacups were made in China and transported to England before being shipped across the Atlantic Ocean to the British Colonies. Fraunces also featured many imported spices in his foods and beverages including cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and cardamom.

GAMES

In addition to food and drink, colonists also came to taverns to play games. Playing cards was a favorite pastime in taverns. The earliest cards were printed only on one side and lacked numbers because the colonists' literacy rate was low, and they were more likely to recognize symbols instead of numbers. Board games, like checkers, were also popular. Players would use many types of small knick-knacks as markers, like polished stones, peanuts, or dried pieces of corn. Tavern keepers would charge players for the use of cards, dice, and other gaming equipment. Taxes of the time even impacted tavern gaming, for example, through the use of cards since the 1765 Stamp Act taxed all printed materials.

A CLOSER LOOK 🔍

Take a look at the tables in front of you. You will see various game pieces and boards that would have been played at an 18th-century tavern, like a checkerboard and playing cards. What games could you imagine playing at a tavern today?



WELCOME TO THE LONG ROOM

The Long Room represents what a typical tavern public room looked like in the 18th century. This room has been recreated using furniture, plates, and other objects original to the period. Almost all of the artifacts you see in the room are over 200 years old.

SAMUEL FRAUNCES AND THE TAVERN

Little is known about the origins of Samuel Fraunces. He first appeared on the historical record in documentation from 1755 when he registered as a “freeman” and designated himself as an “innholder” in New York City. This admission was required by law for all merchants, shopkeepers, and tradespeople who were neither born in the city nor had served a regular seven-year trade apprenticeship.

After owning and operating the Free Mason’s Arms on Broadway for five years, Fraunces mortgaged the business in 1762 to purchase the building on the corner of Dock and Broad Streets (known today as 54 Pearl Street). He opened the Sign of Queen Charlotte, named for the wife of King George III, and within a year the establishment was commonly referred to as the Queen’s Head Tavern. Fraunces lived on the upper floors of the building with his second wife, Elizabeth Dalley, and their seven children. The Fraunces household consisted of a minimum of 14 people including his family, several indentured servants and enslaved people of African descent, a hired maid, and a waiter.

Samuel Fraunces probably first met General George Washington between April and June of 1776, as both the Provincial Congress of New York meetings and court-martials were held at the Tavern.

When the British occupied New York City on September 15, 1776, Fraunces fled to Elizabethtown, New Jersey. In June 1778, Fraunces was captured, brought back to New York City, and forced to work as the family cook for General James Robertson. Fraunces used his position in the kitchen to aid patriot prisoners and pass on intelligence.

A CLOSER LOOK 🔍

Take a look at the bar to your left. Can you imagine what it might be like to serve at an 18th-century tavern? What might you hear, see, and smell?



Sharps and Flatts
M. Bath, 1777
engraving
1987.03.001
Fraunces Tavern Museum

TAVERNS

In addition to serving food and beverages, taverns served as centers of community and communication in Colonial and Revolutionary War-era New York. Fraunces Tavern was a place where travelers and locals would exchange the latest news and ideas. Visitors could play a variety of games, including draughts and cards, or enjoy a performance by the occasional musician. Additionally, the Tavern served as a meeting space for many groups such as the New York Sons of Liberty, which organized the April 1774 New York Tea Party in protest of the Tea Act of 1773.

A CLOSER LOOK 🔍

Take a look at this engraving. You will find several of the items in this image on display in the room, such as tobacco pipes and glasses. What other similar items can you find?



EVACUATION DAY

On November 25, 1783, the last British troops left New York City and transferred control of the island to Continental soldiers led by General Henry Knox. Great Britain's departure symbolized the independence of the new nation, as New York City had been occupied for seven years during the Revolutionary War and was the last city to be evacuated by the British.

As a show of celebration, General George Washington led a parade of Continental soldiers from Bull's Head Tavern in the Bowery to Cape's Tavern on Broadway and Wall Street. The parade was followed by a dinner at Fraunces Tavern, prepared by Samuel Fraunces himself and hosted by New York Governor George Clinton in honor of General Washington. New York City's annual celebration of Evacuation Day continued for over a century until World War I broke out and the United States formed an alliance with Great Britain.

WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL

On December 4, 1783, General George Washington gathered his remaining officers in the Long Room of Fraunces Tavern to thank them for their service and bid them farewell. Both General Henry Knox and Major Benjamin Tallmadge were present to witness this emotional parting, which Tallmadge recalled in his 1830 account, *Memoirs of Colonel Benjamin Tallmadge*.

Following the farewell, Washington boarded a barge at Whitehall wharf and traveled to Paulus Hook, New Jersey (now Jersey City). From there Washington continued to Annapolis, Maryland, where he resigned his military commission before the Continental Congress. After his resignation, Washington returned home to Mount Vernon on Christmas Eve. Six years later, George Washington returned to New York City for his inauguration as the first president of the United States at nearby Federal Hall on April 30, 1789.



**PRESS THE PEDAL ON THE FLOOR TO HEAR
GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON'S
FAREWELL ADDRESS**

CONTINUING COMMUNITY

Fraunces Tavern has continued to serve as a gathering space over the years. Many New York clubs and organizations have held meetings here such as the New York Chamber of Commerce, the New York Sons of Liberty, and the Society of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick in the City of New York. Today, Fraunces Tavern in addition to being a public museum and tavern is also the headquarters of Sons of the Revolution in the State of New York.

A CLOSER LOOK 🔍

Take a look at the glasses on the tables in front of you. Imagine raising your own glass. What would your farewell toast be if you were the General?



Washington's Farewell to His Officers at Fraunces Tavern
Harry A. Ogden, 1893
lithograph
1914.09.001
Fraunces Tavern Museum

At 12 o'clock the officers repaired to Fraunces Tavern in Pearl Street where General Washington had appointed to meet them and to take his final leave of them. We had been assembled but a few moments when his excellency entered the room. His emotions were too strong to be concealed which seemed to be reciprocated by every officer present. After partaking of a slight refreshment in almost breathless silence the General filled his glass with wine and turning to the officers said, **'With a heart full of love and gratitude I now take leave of you. I most devoutly wish that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable.'**

After the officers had taken a glass of wine General Washington said **'I cannot come to each of you but shall feel obliged if each of you will come and take me by the hand.'** General Knox being nearest to him turned to the Commander-in-chief who, suffused in tears, was incapable of utterance but grasped his hand when they embraced each other in silence. In the same affectionate manner every officer in the room marched up and parted with his general in chief. Such a scene of sorrow and weeping I had never before witnessed and fondly hope I may never be called to witness again.

Excerpt from *Memoirs of Colonel Benjamin Tallmadge*, 1830 MS239, Fraunces Tavern Museum, gift of Frederick Samuel

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to members of the Fraunces Tavern Museum community who have continued to care for this room over the years.

It takes a team to create and care for an exhibition of this scale. The names you see here were compiled from the Museum's Long Room exhibition file that documents its development and progress.

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