

**J. FOSTER
HISTORIC SIGNS**

*Handcrafted signs
in the style of
18th & 19th
century artisans.*

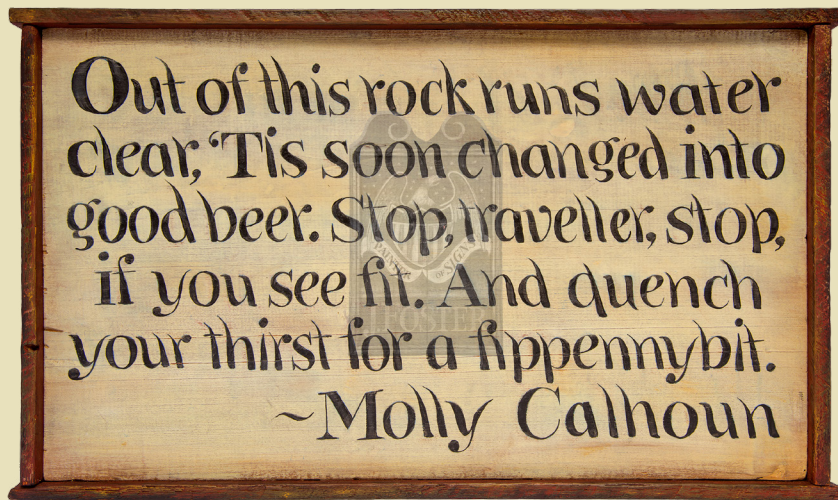
MOLLY CALHOUN: HER TAVERN & POEM

Although the majority of tavern keepers in Colonial America were men, women also played that role. Travelers' diaries speak of landladies as much as landlords. In many instances women were forced into these positions upon the deaths of their husbands, and even later opened new establishments in their widowhood. Some even had their initials placed along side their husbands on signboards.

In Connecticut alone, there were dozens of women who took up innkeeping after having supported their children through some type of trade. Abigail Stow Shaylor became an innkeeper after supporting her children, most likely by spinning and weaving, after her husband was lost at sea. Mrs. Shaylor successfully operated her tavern for the next two decades, even pleasing John Adams who was known to be particular. He found her menu "the finest and sweetest of wheat bread, and butter, as yellow as gold, and fine radishes, very good tea and sugar".

On the National road at the summit of Laurel Hill east of Uniontown, Pennsylvania, lived Molly Calhoun, who kept a tavern, a bake shop, and who posted this poem: *Out of this rock runs water clear, 'Tis soon changed into good beer. Stop, traveller, stop, if you see fit. And quench your thirst for a fippennybit.*"

Fippennybit was a Spanish half real (a unit of currency in Spain after the mid-14th century) used in the United States when hard money was scarce during the first forty years following the American Revolution. Its value was about 6 cents. –Sources: *Tavern Signs of America*, by Helene Smith, and *Lions, Eagles & Bulls, Early American Tavern and Inn Signs*, edited by Susan Schoelwer.



This sign was painted on reclaimed wood using water-soluble oils. Old tobacco sticks used for framing. It is completely hand-lettered and based on an 1800s toll bill type style. The reverse side treated with sealing oils. The size is 15" wide by 24" high. Please message for pricing.

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