

**J. FOSTER
HISTORIC SIGNS**

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

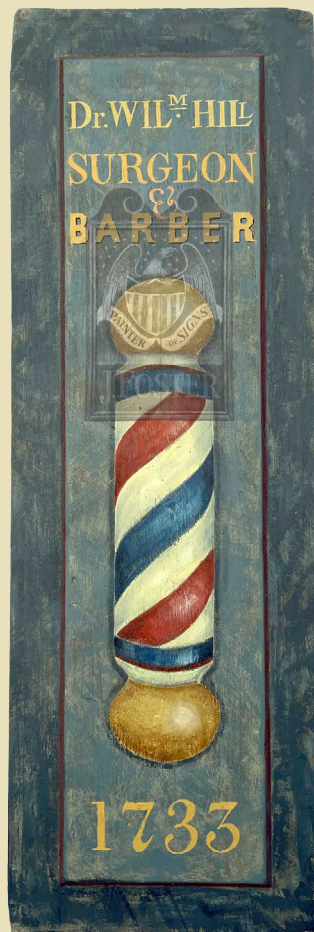
WILLIAM HILL, SURGEON-BARBER

In 1745, the guilds of surgeons and barbers, by the decision of King George II, were separated, and the barbers were restricted only to hair care.

Previously, the procedure most commonly associated with barbers was bloodletting. Many barbers displayed bowls of blood in their shop windows.

The white stripes on the pole represented the bloodletting rod; this was grasped by the patient during the procedure and encouraged blood flow. The red stripes symbolize the bloodied bandages, often hung out to dry on the pole after they'd been cleaned. The brass ball at the top represents the bowl of leeches, while the brass at the bottom evokes the bowl that catches the blood. For those poles that have a blue stripe added, many believe this represents veins. Rather than have its origins wholly in the original meaning of the color scheme, this is thought to have more to do with the fact that the U.S. flag is, of course, colored red, white, and blue.

Roots of the American barbershop can be traced back to the colonial era. During the 17th century, barbers did more than just cut hair; they also performed medical procedures, such as tooth extractions and bloodletting. These early barbers were often referred to as “barber-surgeons.” Luckily today people are no longer bled or teeth extractions are as painful! Later, in the American colonies, barbers became specialists in Peruke making—a.k.a. wigs.



This sign was painted on a reclaimed panel board most likely from an old door, using water-soluble oils.

The reverse side treated with sealing oils. The size is 9" wide by 27" high. Please message for pricing.

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