

**J. FOSTER
HISTORIC SIGNS**

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

JOIN OR DIE

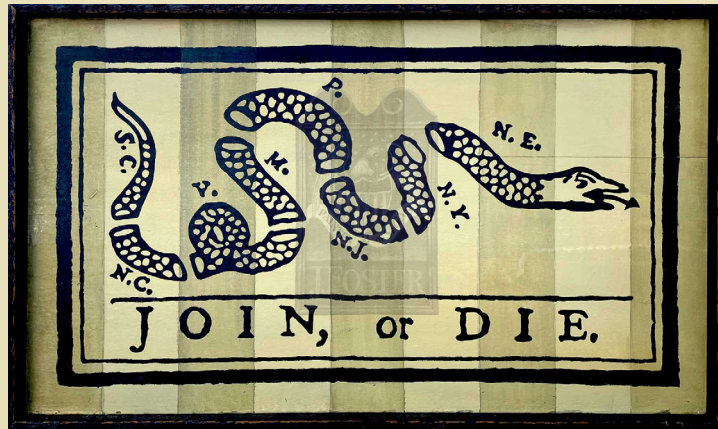
This sign is based on the first American political cartoon created by Benjamin Franklin, originally published in the *Pennsylvania Journal* in 1754. “Join or Die” became a rallying cry against the French during the French and Indian War.

The early American colonies had three flags: “Unite Or Die”, “Don’t Tread On Me” and the “First Navy Jack” flag, each containing a Snake, which became the symbol of colonial American union and defiance. In his 1751 satirical commentaries, Franklin suggested a fair exchange for criminals banished from England and sent to America would be a shipment of rattlesnakes which could be let loose in London. The cartoon titled “JOIN or DIE” was used to illustrate the Franklin editorial about the lethargic attitude of the colonies, and Franklin’s warning Americans about the tensions between France and Britain in America.

After the British defeated the French, and as the colonies drifted away from England politically and the movement for American independence grew, the snake became a prominent symbol. In 1774, Paul Revere added a snake to the title of his newspaper (*The Massachusetts Spy*) showing it in a fight with a British dragon.

In 1775, Franklin stoked the fires of rebellion by publishing an article in the *Pennsylvania Journal* in which he suggested that the rattlesnake might be a fitting symbol for American spirit. Franklin’s 1754 cartoon was resurrected, as were the “JOIN or DIE” flags. Americans which had used the snake as a symbol of defense against the French, now used the snake as a symbol of unity against the British.

—Adapted from *The Unfolding Journey*.



This sign was painted on reclaimed wood using water-soluble oils. Old tobacco sticks used for framing. The reverse side treated with sealing oils. The size is 25" wide by 15" high. Please message for pricing.

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