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HISTORIC SIGN PAINTER & MAKER
*Hand-crafted signs in the style of
18th and 19th century artisans*

1796 Entertainment

Eighteenth-century New England inn signs didn't generally use the words "inn" or "tavern". This sign shows the date (usually the year in which the innholder received his or her license), and a pictorial motif. Some also included the innholder's initials and the words "Entertainment", or "Entertainment for Man & Hors" (often without the "e")—a direct reference to the colonial legislation requiring that each town arrange for the "entertainment" of travelers and their horses, the word entertainment to mean simply, the "hospitable provision for the wants of a guest." Given the traveler's dependence on his mount, provision of stabling or pasturage was a crucial part of the inn's services: surviving accounts list oats, grain, or "horse-keeping" in addition to board, lodging, eating, and a selection of strong drink for the master.

The horse seems to have been one of the most popular "logos" for colonial inns. Horses may have had a special significance for patrons of inns in the Narragansett region, home of the first recognized American-bred horse. These pacers were very desirable and made up a significant portion of exports between 1725 and 1760, sold to discerning riders throughout New England and the West Indies. —*Adapted from the book, Lions, Eagles & Bulls, Early American Tavern and Inn Signs.*

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