

# Now as in earlier times — picture signs tell the story

Back when this country was new and a good share of the population had found little time for book-learning, tradesmen used pictorial signs to advertise their businesses to those who couldn't read.

Thus, in any town or hamlet you might find the red and white striped pole (which used to denote medical services as well as barber work), a boot to show where footgear might be found, a mortar and pestle to show the location of the local pharmacist and the wooden Indian with cigars in hand to denote the tobacco store.

Sometimes a name—perhaps that of an innkeeper—would be displayed pictorially.

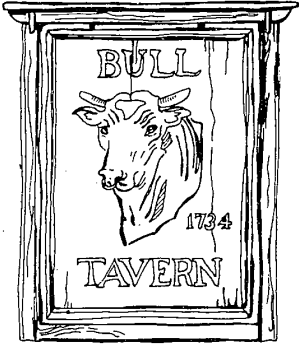
Most everyone can read now, but there's a new reason for using pictures instead of printing to advertise business. Franchises bring a uniformity of product, and highways

and freeways carry potential customers along at a rapid clip, so the tradesmen of today have to get their message across quickly. The familiar symbol, high in the air, does the trick.

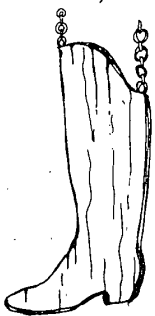
Wherever they are, and no matter how fast they're going or how occupied about getting there, people can spot the sign of the familiar hamburger, pizza, chicken, paint or snowmobile.

Put together, these commercial trademarks found in this area and around the country, have brought forth an old advertising form in a new form.

And the scantily-dressed Roman, the Kentucky Colonel who licked his fingers all the way to the bank, the donkey who brays and the blond boy painter have become as recognizable as relatives to all of us.



Photos by  
Art Emanuel



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