

**J. FOSTER  
HISTORIC SIGNS**

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

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## GIN, RUM, BRANDY \*

In Colonial America, the liquors illustrated on this sign were either drunk separately or used to create a beverage known as “Punch”, made by using a mixture of expensive imported ingredients. The alcohol content consisted of gin, rum, or brandy, to which sugar, citrus fruit, spices—usually grated nutmeg—and water were added. Punch was first drunk in Britain in the 1650s.

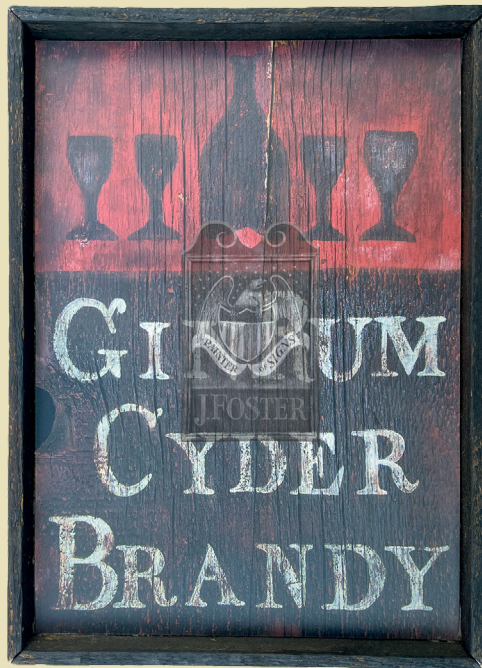
William Black recorded in 1744 that in Philadelphia he was given cider and punch for lunch; rum and brandy before dinner; punch, and sherry at dinner; and punch at bedtime; all in bowls big enough for a goose to swim in.

The oldest American reference to the word rum is found in the act of the general court of Massachusetts in May, 1657, prohibiting the sale of strong liquors “whether known by the name of rum, strong water, wine, brandy, etc.”

Reverend Increase Mather wrote in 1686: “it is an unhappy thing that a kind of drink called rum has been common among us. They that are poor and wicked can for a penny make themselves drunk”.

In New England, people drifted from beer to cider drinking due to the many apple orchards. All the colonists drank cider—young and old, and in all places. President John Adams remarked caustically “if the ancients drank wine as our people drink rum and cider, it is no wonder we hear of so many possessed with devils.” Yet he always began the day with a tankard of hard cider.

During the early eighteenth century, there was widespread alarm about the dangers of alcoholism due to the availability of cheap, home-distilled gin, and excessive punch drinking associated with unsociable and even criminal behavior.



*\* This sign is a re-print of one of my original boards. It is a high resolution photograph mounted on a panel board, with old tobacco sticks used for framing. The reverse side is painted in black oil. The size is 10-1/2” wide by 14-1/2” high. Please message for pricing.*

*Note: the photo contains a watermark for artwork rights protection. To receive an image of the sign minus the watermark, please message us.*