

Basic Detail Report



Title Sign of the Bull's Head

Primary Maker Captain Aaron Bissell Sr.

Medium Paint on pine board, iron hardware

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Description Images: on both sides: head and neck of horned bull, extending to

edge of board, with tree trunk, grass, flying birds, sky in background; side 2 has

been repainted. Construction: Single board; single, molded, horizontal rails;

columnar posts; applied pediment brackets. Board is set vertically and hand-

sawn at top and bottom to create decorative pediment and skirt profile; board

passes through full-width mortice cut through each rail and is held by nails.

Thin, columnar posts are tenoned vertically into both top and bottom rails.

Three turned finials are saddled over the top of the board, with triangular

extensions added to finish the lower points of the pediment; turned drops are

doweled into the lower ends of the posts. Moldings are applied to the top and

bottom of both faces and to the side edges of the signboard, creating a

rectangular "picture frame." Surface: Side 2 (with buckshot punctures) was

overpainted in the early 20th century, using a thick, glossy paint in highly

contrasting shades of black, white, green, blue, and brown. The overpainting

altered side 2 significantly, reinstating the earlier date and name, and creating a

streamlined, hard-edged, modernistic counterpart to the softly weathered

original. On the turned columns, horizontal rails, and framing moldings,

repainting extended only to the picture plane, leaving these sections curiously

two-toned when viewed directly on edge. The bull's heads are "mirror images,"

and may have originally been drawn with a template, although the overpaint

makes accurate reading difficult.

Dimensions Other (height x width of sign only): 56 x 36 1/2in. (142.2 x 92.7cm)