

Dutch Hex Signs

8/16/2018

[Comments](#)



Double Distelfing Pennsylvania Dutch Hex Sign With Hearts & Tulips ~ For Luck & Happiness

During the 17th century German Dutch and Swedish immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania brought a tradition of creating hex signs that were painted on barns and homes, mostly in the southern and northeastern United States.

It is important to differentiate between "Fancy Dutch" and "Plain Dutch" as the communities are not synonymous.

The Amish and Mennonite communities are considered "Plain Dutch" and did not participate in hexology as early "Fancy Dutch" settlers did. From what I have read, the Amish really don't like being asked about Hex signs, so please approach the communities respectfully if you are touring popular Hex sign tourism routes.

POWERED BY

✓ Dutch groups for the most part have assimilated into other groups in the



Dutch Country Pow-wow Magick symbols

United States. Some Fancy Dutch communities are still thriving in the rural parts of Pennsylvania including; Reading, Allentown, York, and Lebanon.

Colors

Colors are a subtle way to add additional symbolism and variance to traditional hex designs. 9 colors are predominately used and each color has a different symbolic meaning:

Black: Protection, Blends & Binds Elements Together

Blue: Protection, Peace, Spirituality, Calm

Brown: Earth, Friendship, Strength

Green: Growth, Fertility, Success, Ideas

Orange: Abundance

Red: Emotions, Passion, Charisma, Lust, Creativity

Purple: Royalty, All Things Sacred, Religion

White: Purity, Moon Power, Free Flowing Energy

Yellow: Health, Love, Sun, Connection To God

Hereford Cow: The Hereford cow protects farm animals and pets. The Hereford also highlights the important role that food and food animals play in our lives.

Horse: Ensures protection for farm animals and pets. Protects against disease and lightning. Commonly placed in 5 point or 8 Pointed Stars. Original livestock hexes and barn blessings used horses as the horse played a major role in early farm life of the Pennsylvania Dutch settlers.

Lambs: Represents children. Commonly used in "Bless This Child" hex signs with child's name enclosed in a heart. Lambs can also symbolize wonder and innocence. Lambs are commonly painted on hex signs with distelfinks (luck), tulips (faith, hope, charity), and a heart border to represent everlasting love.

Snakes: Represents temptation. Commonly shown in proximity to trinity tulips on marriage hexes.

Unicorn: The mythological white unicorn had a horn and a lion's tail. Unicorns symbolize piety and virtue on Dutch Hex Signs. Placing unicorns close to each other on the sign is designed to show how all of God's creature's, even "wild animals", can live in peace and harmony.

Unicorn signs are often decorated with hearts and trinity tulips. Unicorns are commonly shown facing each other. Overall this design represents piety, virtue, peace, and contentment. It is often designed to place on hope chests of young women. This unconquerable animal was also believed to become tame when confronted by a maiden. He would lay his head in her lap and was easily taken by hunter.

Bird of Paradise: Symbolizes beauty, wonder, and mystery of life on earth.

Distelfink: Symbolizes good luck and happiness. The distelfink was a bird that ate thistle seed and thus called the "Thistlefinch". The Pennsylvania Dutch referred to it as a "Distelfink". It is a stylized version of the common gold finch, though some believe its features are more heavily borrowed from European varieties of gold finches.

Using 2 distelfinks together on a hex represents "double good luck." Depicting 2 Distelfinks crossed over each other or intertwined means "true friendship".

Doves: Doves represent friendship and peace in marriage. Referred to as the "Doves of Peace". When doves are shown turned away from each other, this is also said to represent peace and trust in marriage.

Eagles: Eagles symbolize strength, courage, and protection. Double headed eagles are also commonly used in marriage signs. Double headed eagles with crossed or scalloped hearts to represent Strength and Courage in marriage. Eagles with hearts to represent faith, hope, and charity.

POWERED BY

Some rare and older hexes depict a more Germanic Double Headed Eagle seen in German heraldry as well as versions akin to the "Albanian Eagle".

Roosters: Like the eagle, roosters also symbolize strength, courage, and protection.

Leaves: Leaves represent long life, strength, and nature. Maple and oak leaves are the most common leaves shown on Dutch hex signs and are often embellished with acorns as well. Leaves can also represent diversity and beauty of life on earth.

The oak leaf seems to carry heavier symbolic weight than the maple leaf. Oak leaves are also used to symbolize strength in body, mind, and character. Can also symbolize smooth sailing in autumn years of life or the representation of strength of masculinity.

Pineapple: Represents warmth and hospitality for all. The pineapple is often used in Welcome signs and home blessings.

Pomegranate: A rare symbol used to symbolize abundance and fertility (due to the number of seeds it contains).

Shamrock: Represents luck and the "luck of the Irish".

Tree of Life: A different kind of hex sign that uses a tree with many branches containing different symbols. The symbols on tree represent God's bountiful fruit. The symbols inside circles on tree are hearts, tulips, rosettes, stars, and similar geometric designs.

Tulips: Tulips represent faith, hope, and charity, and can also be used to represent Holy Trinity. Tulips are frequently shown in multiples of 3 and are shown to represent a form of a lily. Another implied and eloquent meaning can include: "Faith in yourself, faith in what you do, and faith in your fellow man."

Sometimes, a snake is shown on or around a trinity tulip in marriage signs to serve as a warning to resist temptation.

Wheat: Wheat stencils represent abundance. Signs depicting wheat are not as popular as other motifs, but can still be easily found.

Stars generally represent luck and protection.

4 Point Star: The Morning Star, The Christian Cross, Star of Bethlehem. Native Americans also believed the morning star is a sign of courage and purity of spirit.

5 Point Star: Good Luck, Compass, Nautical Star

6 Point Star "Hexagram": 6 Days of Creation, or the 6 attributes of God (Wisdom, Power, Majesty, Love, Mercy, and Justice)

8 Point Star: Star of Redemption or Regeneration. Represents baptism in Christian faith.

10 Point Star: Harmony in natural kingdom, Spiritual well being. Could also represent 10 of the 12 apostles. (Judas is omitted due to his betrayal of Jesus and Peter is omitted because of his denial of Jesus.)

12 Point Star: Represents completeness. Also used to represent the Epiphany (12th Day of Christmas)

Triple Star Motif: Good Luck, Success, and Happiness. This motif is comprised of 3 nautical 5 point stars that are layered and rotated to reveal all points of all stars. When a brown outer ring is used, it symbolizes the cycle of the life making this particular sign a wish for a lifetime of happiness.

When hand painting or creating a digital rendering of a hex sign with traditional Dutch features, using appropriate lettering can add additional authenticity to the design. Early Dutch settlers used Fraktur, which is a type of blackletter calligraphy deeply steeped in European folk cultures.

It is very similar to old english fonts, but has a very distinct style. Comparing fraktur to old english side by side, fraktur seems to contain more solid lines and less filigree details. Dafont has a great selection of free blackletter fonts to experiment