

Once Upon a Time the Devil Lived in Bristol

Did you know that the devil lives in the Bristol Town Hall? Many have suspected that the three-story structure is actually haunted, but just in time for Halloween, proof has been discovered in the cobweb festooned attic. Albeit a frightening countenance to discover under a protective cover in the dark this morning, the memories of its original location brought nostalgic joy.

Kahn's Grocery was a gas station and store on the east side of Rte. 64 South between Bristol Center and Bristol Mountain. The devil's head was mounted in the roof just above the shed-roof entry porch and since the building was also painted red, the demon attracted much attention as an accent piece in complementary red. Most people used "Devil Head" as the name of the store and as a landmark for drivers, but children used it as the ultimate destination for penny CANDY. It seems altogether fitting and prophetic that the decoration retired in 1972 when the store closed would make its timely reappearance during Halloween week.

The trademark is carved from two logs and topped with a cow's horns and was originally a souvenir sold at the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876. The Kahns brought it here from New York City in 1946 when they fell in love with the area and purchased the store. The sneering dervish benignly surveyed the valley, the tourists who stopped for gas, the hunters who stopped for snacks, and the local coffee drinkers who swapped stories in front of the black, pot-bellied stove. This week you can meet the Faustian Fiend in the front display case in the Bristol Town Hall. Come on in and share your memories of our ghost who has just moved downstairs to Trick or Treat!



Photo and Story by Beth Thomas, Bristol Historian

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