

Bristol's Civil War Monument in West Cemetery

Bristol was the first town in Connecticut and one of the earliest in the North to honor those who gave their lives during the Civil War.

The Bristol Soldiers' Monument Committee was formed in 1865 at the suggestion of Josiah F. Peck Sr., one of the town's leading citizens. The charge of the Committee was to solicit funds for the erection of a soldiers' monument. It was voted "that subscriptions of \$1.00 be solicited as far as practicable from every inhabitant of the town." The contributions said amount would make the subscriber a member of the association.

The town was divided into thirteen districts, and two people were named for each district as solicitors. The population of Bristol, a thriving farming community at that time, was 3500. Also, a subcommittee of six gentlemen and seven ladies organized a Strawberry Festival to raise funds for the monument.



An agreement was signed on October 16, 1865, by Josiah F. Peck Sr. and James G. Batterson of Hartford, with Mr. Batterson agreeing to furnish and erect in Bristol a Soldiers' Monument. The specifications called for the monument to be six feet six inches at the base and twenty-five feet high. Material would be the best quality of Brown Portland Stone. It was agreed to cut upon the monument an inscription dedicated "to the soldiers from the town of Bristol who lost their lives in the late war of rebellion."

Mr. Peck, chairman of the committee, agreed to complete the foundation, to furnish transportation for the monument, to purchase the site of land, to help erect the monument, and on completion of the work to pay Mr. Batterson the sum of fifteen hundred dollars for the monument and lettering. The monument has an eagle at the top with its wings outspread. The names of local soldiers at the Andersonville Prison in Georgia and the Libby Prison in Virginia are listed.

The monument is located on a knoll in the West Cemetery, located on the corner of Pound Street and Route 6. For a number of years the Memorial Day Parade terminated at the cemetery, and services were held at the memorial. ■