



*Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin and Coltsville Superintendent James Woolsey sign agreement. Behind, from left to right Kiley Gosselin, Conor Quinn, Joanne Gangi-Wellman, Carol Coburn, Elliott Ginsberg, and Lynn Ferrari*

## Hartford Signs Agreement with National Park Service

In December 2014, President Obama signed legislation that “authorized” but did not “establish” Coltsville National Historical Park. Within the legislation were a series of “conditions for establishment,” basically steps that must be accomplished before the park becomes an official unit of the National Park Service. The park is now one step closer to establishment. On December 5<sup>th</sup>, Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin and Coltsville Superintendent James Woolsey signed a General Agreement between the city of Hartford and Coltsville National Historical Park.

The agreement covers four areas and provides a blueprint for a long term partnership between Hartford and the National Park Service: management plan (Coltsville NHP Foundation Document), visitor services, law enforcement and emergency services, and land use and cultural resource protection.

With the completion of this agreement, action now moves toward the final items needed for park establishment. Coltsville is working with Colt Gateway LLC (the owners of the historic Colt Armory) on the donation of two 1855 era historic structures, the only remaining part of the original 1850s Colt Armory. They will become the park’s visitor center. Once completed, the agreement will initiate a process to transfer the parcels to the National Park Service. Once the Secretary of the Interior makes a determination that all “conditions for establishment” are complete, within 30 days “the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register notice of the establishment of the park.”

## Museum of Connecticut History

In 1957 Penn Texas, the owners of the Colt's Patent Firearms Manufacturing Company gave the Museum of Connecticut History the company factory collection. The goal of the gift was to preserve the collection in Hartford and have a tax deduction. The collection at the Museum of Connecticut History constitutes one of the finest assemblages of early Colt prototypes, factory models and experimental firearms in the world. The collection also includes Colt-made Gatling guns, shotguns, automatic weapons, and almost 100 cubic feet of important documents and photographs.

In 1995 the "Rampant Colt" statue that had adorned the Hartford Colt factory since 1867 was acquired by the museum. In 2009 Samuel Colt's uniform became available and was purchased by the Museum. The Colt Firearms Collection, coupled with historic photographs and other related materials, is a "must-see" for those interested in the history of Hartford, manufacturing, or firearms.



*Original 1867 Rampant Colt from the Onion Dome  
(Museum of Connecticut History)*



*Lt. Col. Samuel Colts' uniform  
(Museum of Connecticut History)*



*A small portion of the Colt Collection  
(Museum of Connecticut History)*





*Dean Nelson Administrator*

### Spotlight – Dean Nelson

Dean Nelson is the Administrator of the Museum of Connecticut History at the Connecticut State Library, having joined the Museum in 1988. He has a B.A. in American History and a Master’s Degree in American History and Museum Studies from the University of Delaware. A U.S. Army Veteran, Mr. Nelson worked in Delaware as an Assistant Curator and Historian prior to joining the Museum of Connecticut History.

Dean indicated he loves collecting. In 1996 he led an effort called “Connecticut Cleans Its Attic: Right-Sizing the Collection in the 90s.” Museum items were auctioned off that clearly had historic or monetary value but have absolutely nothing to do with Connecticut history. The funds raised by this effort provided the resources needed to allow the Museum to purchase the Rampant Colt and Samuel Colt’s uniform.

Under his leadership, the Museum of Connecticut History has one of the finest collection of Colt artifacts in the world, with many experimental, one of a kind and low factory number firearms.

### The Celebrated Dr. Coult of New York, London and Calcutta

As a youth, Samuel Colt signed on as a sailor on a ship bound for Calcutta, India and spent some time wandering the world’s Ocean. On return to the United States, the eighteen year old Colt began touring the country as **“The Celebrated Dr. Coult of New York, London and Calcutta”**. As a “practical chemist” with a portable laboratory, he entertained crowds by administering nitrous oxide – laughing gas – to the audience and lecturing the giddy crowd.

He started his lectures on street corners and soon worked his way up to lecture halls and museums. His public speaking skills were so good that he was thought to be a doctor and was pressed into service to cure an apparent cholera epidemic on board a riverboat by giving his patients a dose of nitrous oxide. After three years of this activity Colt decided to use his lecturing profits as seed money for his planned firearms business.



(Museum of Connecticut History)

### Mobile “Visitor Center” Purchased for Coltsville National Historic Park

The National Park Service has purchased a mobile vehicle to use as a visitor center for the Coltsville National Historical Park, until a permanent Visitor Center can be established. The mobile unit provides the flexibility to take the park to audiences throughout the state.



*The plaque was on the top landing of the Colt Monument, just below the standing figure of Samuel Colt.*

### Colt Monument Plaque Stolen

On September 11, 2016 National Park Ranger Bert Barnet discovered that the 1906 Colt Monument's plaque had been pried from the base of the monument and stolen. The 42-pound inlaid bronze plaque of the Colt coat-of-arms was eventually found at a scrap metal company, who had cut it up into approximately 25 pieces, claiming they did not know it was stolen. Charges are pending against the alleged thief. While most of the pieces were recovered, given the destruction to the plaque, a substantial piece of Hartford History has been lost.



### Contact Us



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