



NPCA's Northeast Friends Group Convention - October 17 - 18th, 2015
Hartford Hilton (Program begins at 8am on Saturday, optional buffet dinner on Friday night)

The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has chosen Hartford as the site of Northeast Friends Group Convention. This annual gathering allows National Park Service (NPS) superintendents and staff, friends groups and local community organizations to collectively support our Northeast parks. NPS sites from throughout the Northeast including Acadia, Cape Cod, Adams, Edison and the new Coltsville National Historical Park will be represented.

Elizabeth Bowler, Northeast Program manager for NPCA notes that "this gathering offers a unique opportunity for friends groups to learn from each other, share lessons learned, and collectively address the great challenges facing our national parks. Participants at the conference will discover common connections and the power that friends groups can collectively assert in Washington as advocates."

If you would like more information please contact Elizabeth Bowler at (646) 324-1506 or by email at ebowler@npca.org. You can also visit the website link below. For information on a friends group for Coltsville, contact Carol Coburn at (860) 289-2658.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/northeast-friends-group-convention-tickets-17544999566>.

Current Status of the National Park- Six months ago Congress passed and the President signed legislation authorizing Coltsville National Historical Park. The authorizing legislation lays out a series of "Conditions for Establishment" before park establishment. The National Park Service along with its partners in Hartford set an internal goal of one year to get from authorization to establishment. Essentially, there are three agreements with the City of Hartford, Owners of the Colt Armory and the Church of the Good Shepherd to finalize before the park is established.

For all agreements the process started with a series of meetings. The NPS then used this information to create and circulate draft documents. Any comments or other concerns were then incorporated into a second draft. Currently, they are being reviewed by the respective parties.



Stain Glass Windows recently restored by the Church of the Good Shepherd



Congressman John Larson

Mayor's Award –Hartford Mayor Pedro E. Segarra presented Congressman John Larson the Mayor's Award for Historic Preservation on May 7th. Frank H Hagaman, Executive Director of Hartford Preservation Alliance said "Hartford owes a debt of gratitude for the tireless efforts, over many years, which Congressman Larson has made to bring Coltsville to the National Park System. The site where Samuel and Elizabeth Colt built an important manufacturing campus is linked to Hartford's industrial and economic development of the 1800s. Now in the 21st Century the Colt brand will again contribute to the future cultural and economic vitality of both Hartford and Connecticut."

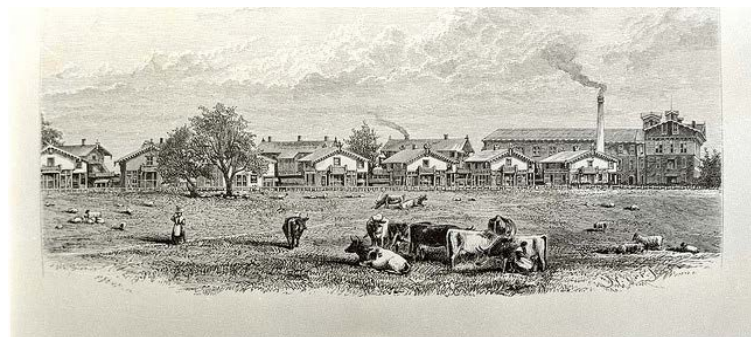
Preserving Coltsville - At the end of April, specialists from the National Park Service's Historic Architecture Conservation and Engineering Center (HACE) evaluated Coltsville's historic structures. Starting at the Church of the Good Shepherd, these historic architects, masonry experts, and conservators examined both the church and parish house

before moving to the Colt Monument, and finishing at the Colt Factory. This visit will result in a report prioritizing projects at the church/parish house, restoration possibilities for the bronze statues and scenes at the Colt Monument and a larger assessment of the Forge Shop and Iron Foundry within the Colt Armory.

A Colt Chair? – Not only was Samuel Colt in the firearms business, but he also manufactured willow furniture. He imported skilled craftsman from Germany to work in his willow-ware plant and built them a company town called Potsdam Village. A fire destroyed the willow-ware factory in 1874 and it was never rebuilt. Some of the houses remain today and are privately owned.



Colt Willow-Ware Chairs



Coltsville Potsdam Village

Economic Impact of Historic Preservation –

A 2002 study on the economic impact of historic preservation in Massachusetts found it fosters significant economic activity and benefits with “annual direct economic effects” of “\$2.3 billion in historic rehabilitation spending and \$2.5 billion in heritage tourism spending-for a total of \$4.8 billion annually. When multiplier effects are taken into account the total in-state benefits include a gain of about 87,000 jobs, \$2.6 billion in income, \$3.5 billion in Gross State Product, \$944 million in taxes (including \$463 million in state/local taxes), and \$1.4 billion in in-state wealth.”

Similarly, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation cited the following examples of the positive economic impact of preservation:

- In Georgia, historic preservation creates more jobs per \$1 million of economic activity than other major industries.

- In the city of Dubuque, Iowa, the average annual growth rate for historic preservation rehabilitation property values is 51%, compared to 5% for all properties in the city.
- Spending by visitors to twenty surveyed Civil War battlefields generated a total of \$21 million in state taxes and another \$11.7 million in local government revenues.”

As related to the nearest National Park Sites, a new NPS report shows that the 34,083 visitors to Weir Farm National Historic Site in 2014 spent \$1.9 million in communities near the park, supporting 23 jobs in the local area with a cumulative benefit to the local economy of \$2.6 million. The same study shows 20,595 visitors to the Springfield Armory Historic Site in 2014 spend \$1.16 million in communities near the park, supporting 16 local jobs and had a cumulative local benefit of \$1.57 million.



Colt employees on the shop floor, circa 1900, courtesy of the Connecticut State Library



HARTFORD BLOOMS GARDEN TOURS

June 6 – 14, 2015

Hartford Blooms was a nine-day showcase of Hartford's gardens and historic architecture, including tours of the Colt Onion Dome. This was the first public event at Coltsville between the partners of the National Park Service and Hartford Blooms since Coltsville National Historical Park was authorized in December 2014. There were 30 ranger lead tours over the period with 791 visitors to the Dome. Chef Harry Swartz provided refreshments in his studio café and there was tremendous support by the Hartford Bloom volunteers, and in particular Karen O'Maxfield. Through this event, visitors became aware of the future of all things Coltsville and the advantages of having a nation park in the community. The visitors were thrilled with an opportunity to see the dome. Of particular note, one visitor who had worked at Colt for 40 years said this was his first opportunity to visit the dome!

