



The Caldwell Hart Colt Memorial Parish House

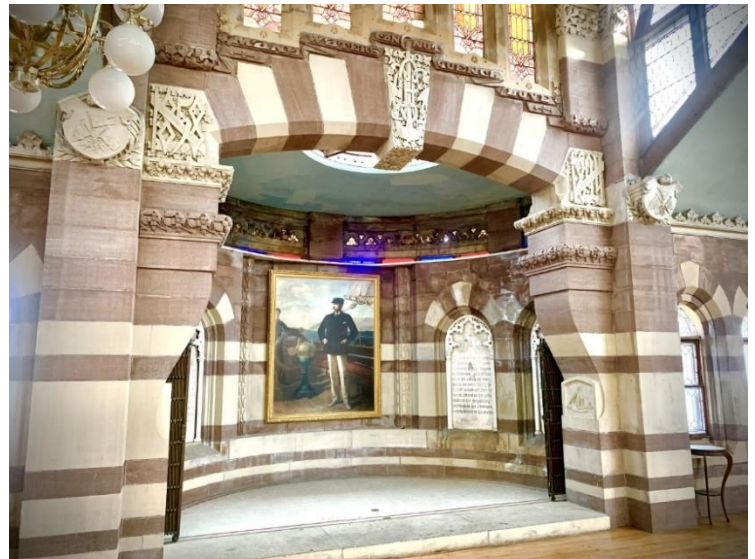
Elizabeth and Samuel's son, Caldwell Hart Colt, their only child to live to adulthood, was an adventurous young man who loved to sail and explore. Elizabeth doted on her son throughout his life allowing him to pursue his passions, which did not include the family business. For his 21st birthday she threw him a lavish party with over one thousand guests! After Caldwell's death, Elizabeth did not sell his ship, the *Dauntless*, but rather renovated it into a houseboat and visited the ship every year up until her death.

Caldwell, 35, passed away just days before a celebration marking the 25th year of the Church of the Good Shepherd. Elizabeth memorialized Caldwell, much as she did Samuel, by commissioning the Caldwell Hart Colt Memorial Parish House. The Parish House, completed two and a half years after his death and dedicated on September 10th, 1896, stands as a lasting symbol of a mother's love for her son.

Elizabeth was quoted during her dedication speech of the Parish House "...the stones tell the story of sunshine and shadow, of life and love and death, and of eternal hope..." This quote embodies the love and loss she experienced during her life as well as the hope that she would see Caldwell and her family again in heaven.

Elizabeth's love for her son is evident in the detail of the Parish House as it incorporates many elements that speak of Caldwell's passions, but there are many details that express a mother's love. Perhaps the most symbolic and emotional tribute to Caldwell can be found in an alcove on the second floor.

The ceiling in the alcove is painted crystal blue as the sky would appear on a clear day out on the sea where Caldwell loved to spend his time. This memorial features a painting of Caldwell on the *Dauntless* and four alabaster tablets that memorialize Caldwell and the qualities Elizabeth saw in her son.



*The Caldwell Hart Colt Memorial Parish House
NPS Digital Photo*

On the right, beneath his death date, is the *Dauntless* pulling into harbor with sails furled, signifying the end of the voyage, but with a lighthouse shining bright representing peaceful rest in heaven. Just above the alcove is the quote "Many waters cannot quench love," It speaks of the tremendous love Elizabeth had for Caldwell and that even in death, her love for him would not fade.

Through this loss Elizabeth chose to remember her son and build upon the legacy of a man who was "...mindful of the comfort and pleasure of others... liberal in his gifts, noble in his hospitality, courteous in his attentions..." Elizabeth built the Parish House to suit the needs of the community and doing so she embodied the characteristics of her son. Looking at this building, you can see the love Elizabeth had for her son and how she chose to remember Caldwell as an adventurous young man, engaging in his passion, sailing. She chose not to give up but rather, even during loss, to find love, hope and to keep her family close.

Today the Parish House still fulfills Elizabeth's mission in serving the people as a community center. You can take a virtual tour of the [Parish House](#) and the [Church of the Good Shepherd](#) and explore the memorials created by Elizabeth Colt!



Hartford's Community Hope Gardens

On November 7th, Rangers from Springfield Armory National Historic Site and the Coltsville National Historical Park Community Volunteer Ambassador (CVA) joined with local volunteers to help plant a Community Hope Garden in Colt Park. The Community Hope Garden is an initiative by the City of Hartford to create a living memorial to those who have suffered or lost their lives to the COVID-19 pandemic. Rangers and volunteers planted daffodil bulbs along the entrance from Wethersfield Avenue, and the intersections of Curcombe Street, Hendricxsen Avenue, Masseek Street, and Van Block Avenue. Make sure to stop by Colt Park in the spring when they will be in full bloom.



Left to right: Alex Laifer, CVA Eric Ott, Pearl Wesley, Dani Beekman and City Gardener Elizabeth Morin. NPS Digital Photo

A View of Some of the Planned Improvements to the Park. Image Courtesy of ToDesign.

Colt Park Transformation

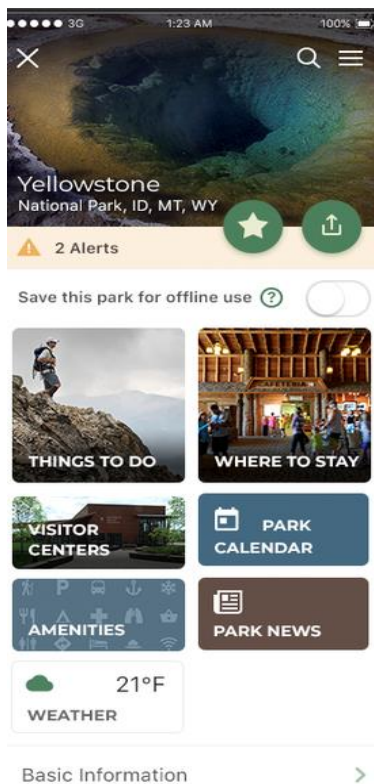
Visitors to Colt Park might notice closed gates and empty parking lots. That's not for a lack of interest in using the park, but rather, a joint effort to accommodate the ever-increasing community use. Contractors repaired and upgraded many of the existing resources within Colt Park. The National Park Service (NPS), the State of Connecticut, and the City of Hartford teamed up using the NPS Land and Water Conservation Fund to upgrade the sports fields, walkways, and tree canopy. The goal is to make long overdue improvements to the park with an eye toward heavy future use.

Upgrades include a complete makeover for Roberto Clemente Field, including a new backstop, batter's boxes and a scoreboard. Upgrades to the other baseball and softball fields include new backstops and expanded outfields. A new soccer field is being built thanks to a contribution from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, and new trees have been planted throughout the park. Additionally, the Hendricxsen Avenue entrance will be repaved, increasing access to the entire park, and getting a new entranceway that includes a curved wall for seating, and two decorative Coltsville blue onion domes. Make sure to check it out when the Park reopens in April.

Colt Park Establishment Update

This year, despite the pandemic, progress continued on the complicated land transfer required for the official establishment of Coltsville National Historical Park. The NPS received updated title commitments for the property earlier this year. These commitments provided a checklist to clear up any title issues. Our partners at Colt Gateway LLC, with assistance from the NPS, are working diligently to clean the title to transfer the property. While we continue to move forward, we have entered the most uncertain phase. It is not easy to forecast precisely how long this phase will take. The NPS, City of Hartford, and various State and Federal government offices continue to support our partners at Colt Gateway LLC as they work through this challenging stage.

A New Coltsville App is Coming Soon

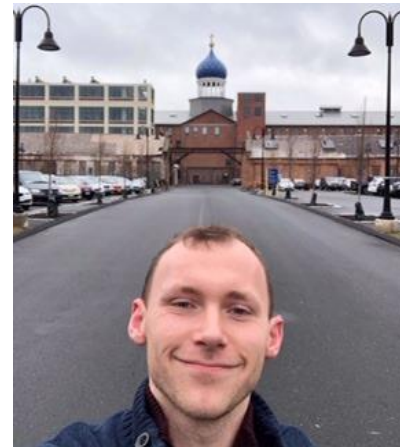


An example of the App Design

The National Park Service is expanding its digital platform and creating a service wide app for all national parks. This single app will connect visitors with all of the National Parks through a uniform layout. With an expected launch date in the first quarter of the 2021 calendar year, the NPS App will allow visitors to learn and explore different parks, including Coltsville National Historical Park.

The past few months we have been busy developing content for the app. Visitors will be able to learn about the locations in Coltsville including the East Armory, Colt Park, worker housing and Armsmear.

Users will also be able to stay up to date on park news and explore the park through “Ranger Suggestions” in the “Things to Do” category. We are excited about the possibilities the app provides and the ability it gives us to connect with visitors!



*Eric Ott
Community Volunteer Ambassador (CVA)
NPS Digital Photo*

Meet our Community Volunteer Ambassador

Eric Ott is currently serving as the Community Volunteer Ambassador (CVA) at Coltsville National Historical Park until 2022. Eric was born and raised in Connecticut, growing up just outside the city of Hartford. He attended college at Central Connecticut State University where he studied History and Secondary Education, graduating in 2017. Eric returned to CCSU in 2019 to pursue a Master of Arts in Public History. Before his term as CVA, he also served as a Student Conservation Association intern at Coltsville in 2019.

Eric values the history and culture in Hartford and seeks ways to engage city youth with the history around them. He hopes his efforts will inspire young people from cities like Hartford to work for the National Park Service. It has always been a dream of his to work for the NPS, and he appreciates the opportunity help build Coltsville into a positive force for the Hartford community. Eric can be reached via email at Eric_ott@partner.nps.gov or (860) 500-6087.



*Rangers Pearl and Dani
NPS Digital Photo*

Interpretation and Education Program Manager Update

Hello, we've missed seeing you during these past ten months. Our youth stewardship program hosted through Groundwork Connecticut wrapped up in May with the hope that we will host an in-person stewardship event once it is safe to do so. In

previous summers we have offered programs and thrived through our participation in community events. With the current status of COVID-19 we have been cautious in our community engagement efforts. Although our plans this year were scuttled, we have forged a youth programs partnership with Connecticut's other national park: Weir Farm National Historic Site in Wilton.

While you may not see us in person, I assure you that we are focused on strategic planning and maintaining and creating new connections in the community.

As we work towards formal park establishment we spent much of 2020 developing our five-year strategic plan - defining issues and identifying key opportunities to create our shared vision for the future park. Our immediate goals include stabilizing the historic factory structures - buildings 8 & 10, building strong partnerships and creating our shared vision for the visitor experience at Coltsville National Historical Park. We look forward to seeing you in person soon. Here's to a bright, healthy future on the horizon.

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