

Statement of Congressman Larson before Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks

STATEMENT
OF CONGRESSMAN JOHN B. LARSON BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE
ON NATIONAL PARKS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL
RESOURCES, CONCERNING S. 2519, TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF COLTSVILLE IN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT FOR
POTENTIAL INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM.

June
20, 2002

As the sponsor of the House version of the Coltsville Study Act, I thank the Committee for allowing me to speak this afternoon on an issue of importance to my constituents and to the historic preservation of an important American landmark of achievement. I would also like to commend my two delegation colleagues, Senator Dodd and Senator Lieberman, for their leadership on this issue.

The history of Coltsville is a history of industry in central Connecticut, beginning with Samuel and Elizabeth Colt, then Pope manufacturing's production of bicycles and automobiles, and finally blooming into what we now know as Pratt and Whitney in East Hartford. It is a unique regional and international landmark.

Hartford, Connecticut, the home to Colt manufacturing, played a major role in the Industrial Revolution, and when you look deeper at the area one begins to see the unique and holistic community that developed in the area and brought other early industrial leaders like Henry Ford to Coltsville to learn the innovative manufacturing techniques and equipment being invented and developed in the area.

In fact, Samuel Colt, founder of Colt manufacturing, and his wife, Elizabeth Colt, inspired Coltsville, a whole community that inspired and flourished during the Industrial Revolution and included Victorian mansions, an open green area, botanical gardens, and even a deer park.

The actual residence of Samuel and Elizabeth Colt in Hartford, Connecticut, known as "Armsmear," is a national historic landmark, and the distinctive Colt factory's blue dome is a prominent feature of the Hartford, Connecticut, skyline.

It is important to emphasize here that the Colt legacy is not just about firearms, but also about industrial innovation and the development of technology that would change the way of life in the United States. Mr. Colt worked with Samuel Morse in the development of the telegraph, and Colt manufacturing contributed to the development of technology in many ways, inspiring the jet engine pioneers Francis Pratt and Amos Whitney, who served as apprentices at Colt manufacturing. The influence of the community was extended overseas when Samuel Colt became the first individual in the United States to open a manufacturing plant overseas.

Coltsville set the standard for excellence during the Industrial Revolution and continues to prove significant as a place in which people of the United States can learn about that important period in history and its association with the Mark Twain House, Trinity College, Old North Cemetery, and many historic homesteads and architecturally renowned buildings.

This legislation and its overwhelming local support and excitement signifies that we are starting on the road to developing and cultivating Coltsville's history and its importance to Hartford and the State of Connecticut. Along with other members of the delegation and the community, I am committed to preserving the area's immeasurable historical value, and appreciate the Committee's consideration of this proposal.