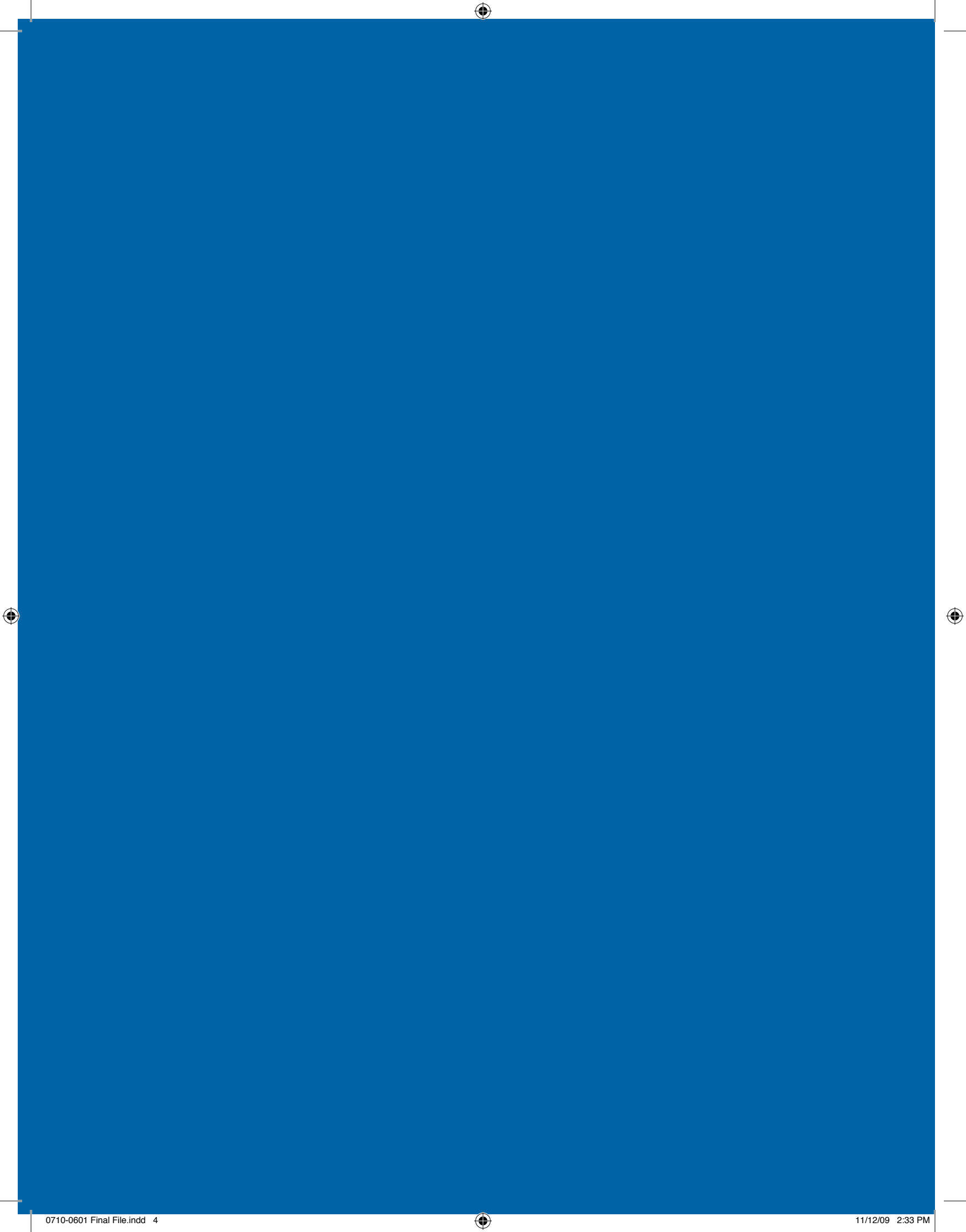




# Coltsville

Special Resource Study  
November 2009





## Executive Summary

Public Law 108-94, the Coltsville Study Act of 2003, authorized the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a Special Resource Study regarding the national significance, suitability and feasibility of the Coltsville Historic District, in Hartford, Connecticut, for potential designation as a unit of the national park system. This report constitutes the results of the study undertaken by the Northeast Regional Office of the National Park Service (NPS).

This study, in accordance with previous legislation (Public Law 105-391) establishing the criteria to be used in such analyses and reflecting current NPS management policies, examines the national significance of the Coltsville Historic District, its suitability and feasibility for potential designation as a unit of the national park system, and the need for NPS management of the resource versus management by other public or private entities.

The Coltsville Historic District in Hartford, Connecticut, was the site of important contributions to manufacturing technology made by Samuel Colt (1814-1862) and the industrial enterprise he founded, Colt's Patent Fire Arms Manufacturing Company (Colt Fire Arms Company). The Coltsville Historic District (Coltsville) is a cohesive and readily identifiable 260-acre area, most of which was originally listed as the Colt Industrial District on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. Also in the district, the home of Samuel and Elizabeth Colt was designated the Armsmear National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1966. On July 22, 2008, the Coltsville Historic District was designated an NHL by the Secretary of the Interior.

Samuel Colt is most renowned for developing a revolver design, which revolutionized personal firearms by eliminating the need to reload until five or six shots had been expended. His company drew upon the technological innovations of the firearms industry in New England to achieve a high level of mechanization and production. The Colt Fire Arms Company was a highly influential national source of innovation in precision manufacturing and firearms design well into the 20th century.

During both World War I and World War II, the Colt Fire Arms Company was one of the nation's leading small arms producers and made a vital contribution to the US war effort. Coltsville also is noteworthy because Samuel Colt planned it as a fully-integrated industrial community that includes manufacturing facilities, employee housing, community buildings, and landscape features built largely under the direction of Samuel Colt and his wife, Elizabeth Colt.

The Hartford-based Coltsville Ad Hoc Committee, with representatives from government, nonprofit, and private sectors, has been working for several years to develop support for a unit of the national park system at Coltsville. Strong community support for the NHL and unit designations was expressed at public meetings held to discuss this Special Resource Study and a potential National Historic Landmark designation for additional resources within the historic district.

Chapter 1 describes the purpose and background of the study, including the criteria used by the NPS to determine if a resource is eligible for potential designation as a unit of the national park system. It describes the study area and other related activities associated with the district and the study process.

Chapter 2 describes the history and resources of Coltsville from its development by Samuel Colt in 1855 until the present day. The chapter is not intended to be an exhaustive historical account. Rather, it provides the basis for public understanding of the resources of the district and information sufficient to determine whether the district meets applicable criteria for potential designation.

Chapter 3 analyzes whether the resources of the district meet the various criteria for potential unit designation including national significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for NPS management.

Chapter 4 describes the required consultation and coordination that occurred during the study, including a summary of public meetings and written communications.

The study team concludes that the Coltsville Historic District NHL meets the criteria for national significance and suitability. The study team is unable, however, to conclude that the historic district meets the criteria for feasibility and need for NPS management for reasons explained in Chapter 3.

With the publication of this report, the NPS will receive public comments on its contents and findings for a period of thirty days. A public response document will then be prepared and sent to all persons who commented on the report. At the conclusion of the public response period, the report with any appropriate changes resulting from public comments will be forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior. The Secretary will then transmit the completed study to the United States Congress.

# Table of Contents

## Chapter 1: Study Purpose and Background

- 3 Introduction
- 6 Study Area
- 7 Previous Designations
- 7 The National Park Service in Connecticut
- 8 Local Activities in Support for a Coltsville National Park Unit
- 8 Heritage Organizations and National Historic Landmarks Related to Coltsville

## Chapter 2: Historical Resources and Overview

- 10 Introduction
- 11 Resources
- 17 Historical Overview of Samuel Colt and Coltsville

## Chapter 3: Designation Analysis

- 35 Introduction
- 35 National Significance Analysis
- 37 Suitability Analysis
- 43 Feasibility Analysis
- 48 Analysis of the Need for National Park Service Management
- 48 Study Conclusions
- 48 Environmental Compliance

## Chapter 4: Consultation and Public Outreach

- 49 Notice of Intent
- 49 Public Scoping Meeting
- 49 Additional Meetings and Public Participation
- 49 Written Communication
- 50 Consultation

## Appendices

- 51 Appendix 1: Federal Legislation for Coltsville SRS
- 53 Appendix 2: Bibliography
- 55 Appendix 3: Study Team
- 56 Appendix 4: Letters of Consultation
- 61 Appendix 5: Letters of Support for Coltsville National Park Unit

