



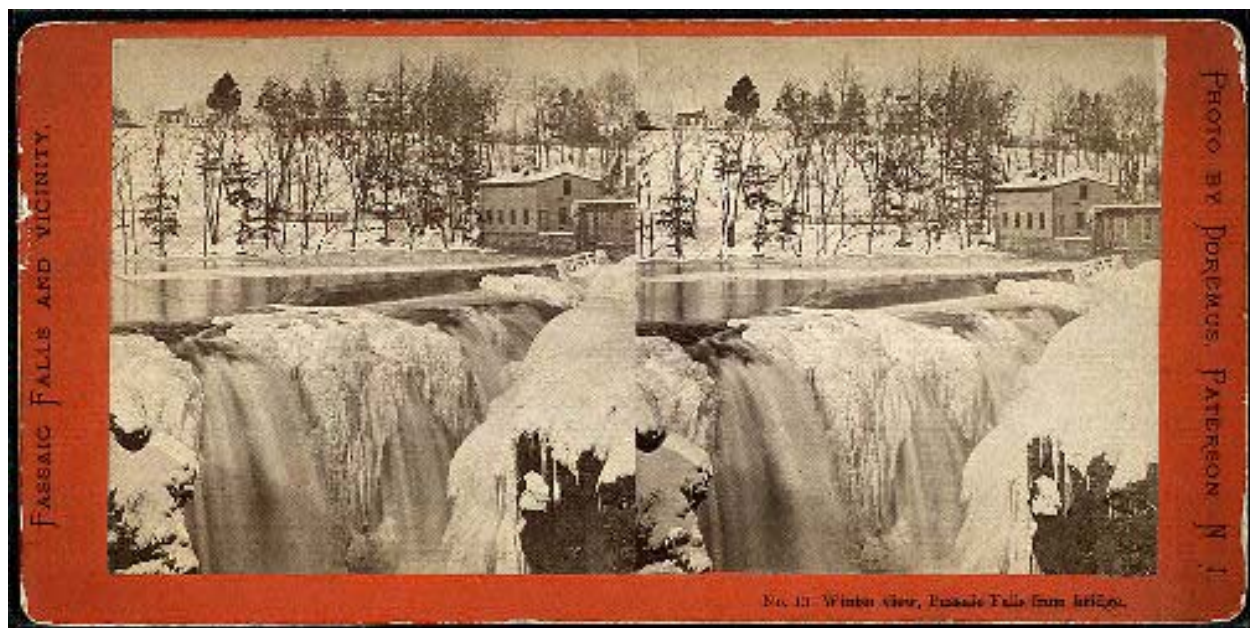
Chapter One | Study Purpose and Background

Purpose & Background

Special Resource Study | Great Falls Historic District | Paterson, New Jersey

Study Purpose and Background

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Stereoscopic views of Passaic Falls and Paterson, New Jersey. Robert Dennis Collection of Stereoscopic Views, Photography Collection, Miriam & Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints & Photographs, The New York Public Library.

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Study Purpose and Background

Introduction

In November 2001, the Secretary of the Interior was authorized by Congress through the “Great Falls Historic District Study Act of 2001” (P.L. 107-59) to conduct a Special Resource Study of the Great Falls Historic District in Paterson, New Jersey. This report constitutes the results of the study undertaken by the Northeast Regional Office of the National Park Service (NPS).

Areas comprising the present 390 unit national park system are cumulative expressions of a single national heritage. Potential additions to the System should, therefore, contribute in their own special way to a system that fully

represents the broad spectrum of natural and cultural resources that characterize our nation. The NPS is responsible for conducting professional studies of potential additions to the national park system when specifically authorized by an Act of Congress, and for making recommendations regarding new areas to the Secretary of the Interior, the President, and Congress. Several laws outline criteria for potential units of the national park system. To receive a favorable recommendation from the NPS, a proposed addition to the national park system must:

Background

- (1) possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources;
- (2) be a suitable addition to the system;
- (3) be a feasible addition to the system; and
- (4) require direct NPS management, instead of alternative protection by other public agencies or the private sector.

These criteria are designed to ensure that the national park system includes only the most outstanding examples of the nation's natural and cultural resources. They also recognize that there are other alternatives, short of designation as a unit of the national park system, for preserving the nation's outstanding resources.

An area or resource may be considered nationally significant if it is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource; possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage; offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study; and retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource. National significance for cultural resources, such as those comprising the Great Falls Historic District, is evaluated by applying the National Historic Landmarks' process contained in 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 65.

An area may be considered suitable for potential addition to the national park system if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the system, or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other

federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector. The suitability evaluation, therefore, is not limited solely to units of the national park system, but includes evaluation of all comparable resource types protected by others.

Suitability is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the resources being studied to other comparably managed areas representing the same resource type, while considering differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resource values. In this case, the resources are a collection of 19th century mills and an early water power system. The suitability analysis also addresses rarity of the resources, interpretive and educational potential, and similar resources already protected in the national park system or in other public or private ownership. The comparison results in a determination of whether the potential new area would expand, enhance, or duplicate resource protection or visitor use opportunities found in other comparably managed areas.

To be feasible as a new unit of the national park system, an area must be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment (taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond its boundaries), and be capable of efficient administration by the NPS at a reasonable cost. In evaluating feasibility, the Service considers a variety of factors, such as: size; boundary configurations; current and potential uses of the study area and surrounding lands; land ownership patterns; public enjoyment potential; costs associated with acquisition, development, restoration, and operation; access; current and potential threats to the

resources; existing degradation of resources; staffing requirements; local planning and zoning for the study area; the level of local and general public support; and the economic/ socioeconomic impacts of designation as a unit of the national park system. The evaluation also considers the ability of the NPS to undertake new management responsibilities in light of current and projected constraints on funding and personnel.

There are many excellent examples of the successful management of important natural and cultural resources by other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals. Most notably, state park systems provide for protection of natural and cultural resources throughout the nation and offer outstanding recreational experiences. The NPS applauds these accomplishments, and actively encourages the expansion of conservation activities by state, local, and private entities, and by other federal agencies. Unless direct NPS management of a studied area is identified as the clearly superior alternative, the Service will recommend that one or more of these other entities assume a lead management role, and that the area not be recommended as a potential unit of the national park system.

Studies evaluate an appropriate range of management alternatives and identify which alternative or combination of alternatives would be most effective and efficient in protecting significant resources and providing opportunities for appropriate public enjoyment. Alternatives to NPS management are not normally developed for study areas that fail to meet any one of the four criteria for inclusion listed above, particularly the “national significance” criterion.

In cases where a study area’s resources meet criteria for national significance, but do not meet other criteria for inclusion in the national park system, the Service may instead recommend an alternative status, such as “affiliated” area.

To be eligible for “affiliated area” status, the area’s resources must:

- (1) meet the same standards for national significance that apply to units of the national park system;
- (2) require some special recognition or technical assistance beyond what is available through existing NPS programs;
- (3) be managed in accordance with the policies and standards that apply to units of the national park system; and
- (4) be assured of sustained resource protection, as documented in a formal agreement between the NPS and the non-federal management entity.

Designation as a National Heritage Area is another option that may be recommended. Heritage areas are distinctive landscapes that do not necessarily meet the same standards of national significance as units of the national park system. Either of these two alternatives would recognize an area’s importance to the nation without requiring or implying management by the NPS.

Previous Administrative Designations and Congressional Actions

Currently, there are three distinct historic district designations involving cultural resources of the Great Falls and one designation relating to natural resources. Additional congressional actions have provided roles for the NPS in the District.

1. National Natural Landmark

The *Great Falls of Paterson* was designated a National Natural Landmark (NNL) by the Secretary of the Interior in 1967 and nearby *Garrett Mountain* was added to the NNL in 1976. The NNL Program recognizes and encourages the conservation of outstanding examples of our country's natural history. It is the only natural areas program of national scope that identifies and recognizes the best examples of biological and geological features in both public and private ownership. NNLs are designated by the Secretary of the Interior. To date, fewer than 600 sites have been designated throughout the United States. The NPS administers the NNL Program and, as the agency responsible for maintaining the registry, the Service has developed criteria for eligibility, including national significance (36 CFR Part 62). Together, the Great Falls of Paterson and Garrett Mountain provide an excellent illustration of the jointed basaltic lava flow which began a period of extrusion and intrusion throughout eastern North America in the early Mesozoic, influencing present day landforms in this region.

2. National Register of Historic Places

The *Great Falls of Paterson and Society for Useful Manufactures (Great Falls Historic District)* of Paterson, NJ was nominated as a district to the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places in 1970 and twice amended to expand its boundaries to include additional resources (1975 and 1986). The NPS administers the National Register of Historic Places. In the nomination forms (1970, 1975 and 1986) the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Officer recommended the level of significance of the resources as "national", and the nomination and addendums were signed by the NPS Keeper of the National Register. Areas of significance that were identified included architecture, commerce, conservation, education, engineering, industry, invention, landscape architecture, sciences, urban planning, and industrial architecture.

3. National Historic Landmark

On May 11, 1976 the *Great Falls of the Passaic/ Society for Establishing Useful Manufacturers Historic District* was designated by the Secretary of the Interior to be a National Historic Landmark (NHL). A National Register Nomination form was prepared by Russell Fries, a historian who had worked on the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) survey work in the Great Falls Historic District in 1973. In the nomination, engineering was identified as the area of national significance. The period of significance was determined to be 1750-1924 with significant dates as 1791, 1864 and 1914. The text also discusses the hydroelectric plant at the Falls as an element in the progression of the development of the system and of American engineering over the entire period. The statement of significance in the NHL

nomination also includes a list of important engineers and others involved in the design and development of the S.U.M. Raceway System (the system that provided water power) including: Alexander Hamilton, Phillip Schuyler, Pierre L' Enfant, Peter and John Colt, and Thomas Marshall.

4. New Jersey Urban History Initiative

In 1992, New Jersey Senator Frank Lautenberg was successful in earmarking funds in the Line Item Construction portion of the NPS budget for the “New Jersey Urban History Initiative” (UHI) involving projects in the cities of Trenton, Perth Amboy and Paterson. Paterson was allocated \$4.147 million of these funds for projects in the Great Falls NHL. The NPS has provided funds for these projects through a cooperative agreement with the City of Paterson. The City assembled a Core Advisory Group consisting of City officials, the City Historic Preservation Commission, the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office, representatives of the business community and interested citizens, to advise the NPS on the identification and administration of the UHI projects for Paterson. This group has recommended UHI funding for a variety of preservation projects. Many of the projects were designed to raise public awareness of the historic district and, through this awareness, increase public interest and involvement in protecting the resources that tell the stories of Paterson. On-going and completed projects conducted with UHI funds include:


- a condition assessment of buildings in the NHL District;
- an environmental assessment of the Allied Textile Printing (ATP) site;

- funding for a staff position for the Historic Preservation Commission (prior to the UHI, the Commission had no staff);
- development of design guidelines for the District;
- an AmeriCorps project to make the District more attractive and accessible to visitors by repairing trails around the raceway system and modifying the Visitor Center;
- an oral history project and ethnographic study conducted by the Library of Congress’ American Folklife Center;
- the development of a \$75,000 community grant program for historical, artistic or cultural projects related to the UHI;
- restoration and re-watering of a section of the historic raceway;
- hosting a symposium on rehabilitation;



Walking path along the historic upper raceway. NPS photo.

- conservation of a statue of Alexander Hamilton near the Great Falls;
- the stabilization of the ruins of the Colt Gun Mill using UHI funds as part of a match for a New Jersey Historic Trust grant to the City; and
- a cultural resource study, including archeological work and removal of hazardous materials, on the ATP site.



The development of design guidelines, assistance to the Historic Preservation Commission through support of a staff position, in combination with other actions taken under the UHI initiative, along with strong community support for historic preservation, led to considerable preservation and restoration of the district. This resulted in the National Historic Landmark Program removing the District from its “Priority 1 – Threatened List” and placing it on the “Watch” list in 2002.

In October 2004, the Governor of the State of New Jersey, by Executive Order, designated a portion of the Great Falls Historic District (including the historically significant water raceways) as one of three new urban state parks. With the advent of the State’s administration of a portion of the NHL, the NPS has executed a cooperative agreement with the NJ State Historic Preservation Officer to carry out a cultural resource survey on the ATP site.

5. Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-333)

Congress enacted the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (Public

Law 104–333). Section 510 of the Act established the *Great Falls Historic District* (the boundaries of the District are delineated as those contained on the National Register of Historic Places) and authorized \$250,000 for grants and cooperative agreements for the development of a plan for the District, \$50,000 for the provision of technical assistance by the Secretary of the Interior, and \$3,000,000 for the provision of other assistance for restoring, repairing, rehabilitating, and improving historic infrastructure within the District. All funding requires a 50% local match. No funds have ever been appropriated under Section 510. The legislation provides similar authorities to the Secretary as other legislation establishing affiliated areas of the national park system, or national heritage areas.

While not a designation bestowed by the Federal Government, the American Society of Civil Engineers named the Great Falls Raceway and Power System a National Historic Engineering Landmark in 1977. In 1984 the Society made a similar designation for the Lowell Waterpower System in Lowell, Massachusetts.

Study Area

The City of Paterson, New Jersey is located in northeastern New Jersey on the Passaic River, approximately 15 miles northwest of Manhattan (see figure# 1). It comprises a land area of 8.4 square miles. Major transportation access routes include Interstate 80 and the Garden State Parkway, as well as railroad access from the New Jersey Transit Main Line. The

2000 U.S. Census reported the population of Paterson to be 149,222 persons, 8,395 less than in 1990. The City's population is highly diverse and includes Latinos from many Latin American countries, people from the Middle East, Asians of Chinese and Korean descent, and African Americans, in addition to citizens of European ancestry. Foreign born residents comprise almost a third of the total population.

Paterson is the county seat for Passaic County and government is the City's largest employer, followed by health care. The City's current manufacturing base includes garments, textiles, electronic components, machine tools, ribbons, rubber goods, plastics, cosmetics, and packaging.



Great Falls Historic District boundary.



Regional context.

The Great Falls Historic District is located in the west central portion of the City along the Passaic River. The Great Falls Historic District Study Act of 2001, which authorized this study, describes the area to be evaluated as that within “the boundaries specified by the Great Falls Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places.” This area is slightly different than the boundaries delineated for the NHL Great Falls of the Passaic/Society for Establishing Useful Manufacturers Historic District. While it is important to note that the determination of national significance conferred through the NHL designation is for an area slightly smaller than that comprising the congressionally defined study area, this difference does not affect the conclusion of the study.

During the course of this study, public comments were received to include certain resources outside of the Great Falls Historic District in the study area. Included among these was Hinchcliffe Stadium which does not relate to the period of significance of the district. While these resources were reviewed, they either did not relate to the congressionally stated purpose of the study or did not contribute additionally to the suitability analysis. Addition of these resources would negatively affect the feasibility analysis.

Some resources are mentioned in the report to provide further context in the history and resources section, they are identified as being outside of the district.



National Historic Landmark District boundary.

The National Park Service in New Jersey and Related Studies

The NPS has enjoyed lengthy and collaborative natural and cultural resource protection relationships with the governments, organizations, and citizens of New Jersey. Units of the national park system in New Jersey include Morristown National Historical Park (the first national historical park in the system), Edison National Historic Site, portions of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Gateway National Recreation Area, and portions of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The 1.1 million acre Pinelands National Reserve, an Affiliated Area of the national park system occupies 22% of the State's land area. The New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (a second Affiliated Area), and National Wild and Scenic River designations for the Great Egg Harbor River, Maurice River, and various segments of the Delaware River round out the NPS presence. Recent NPS studies have resulted in currently pending legislation to designate the Musconetcong Wild and Scenic River. The state is also the site of the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area, designated on October 12, 2006.

NPS-administered Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grants have preserved significant amounts of open space and provided recreation areas in the State. New Jersey has received over \$117 million in Land and Water Conservation Fund grants since 1965. NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance staff have provided technical assistance for trails and recreational developments to many governments and

organizations throughout New Jersey. There are 55 NHLs and 10 NNLs in New Jersey and the NPS NHL and NNL Programs have provided grants and technical assistance to further protect the State's valuable resources. Since 1999, eleven New Jersey projects have received Federal Save America's Treasures matching grants totaling over \$3 million.

A Special Resource Study currently underway at Coltsville in Hartford, Connecticut has particular relevance to this study for the Great Falls Historic District. Although Samuel Colt established the Patent Arms Manufacturing Company in Paterson and began producing firearms in 1836, his business there failed in 1842 and he returned to Hartford, Connecticut, his birthplace, and established the Colt's Patent Arms Manufacturing Company. He resided with his family in Hartford at Armsmead, now an NHL. During the 108th Congress, the Coltsville Study Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-94) was enacted directing the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a Special Resource Study of Coltsville in Hartford, Connecticut for potential inclusion in the national park system. The study concerns resources associated with arms manufacturing conducted by Samuel Colt. That study has run concurrently with the Great Falls Historic District study and there has been close coordination between the respective study teams.

An important action by the State of New Jersey related to the Great Falls Historic District Study was the October 2004 designation of the *Great Falls State Park* which includes within its boundaries the extant resources most associated with the early years of the Society for the Establishment of Useful Manufactures

including the raceways and the Great Falls itself. The State is in the process of concluding a national design competition for first and second phase development of the park and has pledged \$10 million in park improvements. A representative of the NPS served on the State's competition jury to assist in selecting the winning design.



State Park phases 1 and 2.

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