



*Larry Dooley signing the agreement with the National Park Service. Behind, from left to right Lynn Ferrari, Kiley Gosselin, Elliott Ginsberg, Tim Sullivan, Carol Coburn, Bernadine Silvers, James Woolsey and Conor Quinn.*

## Colt Gateway Agreement Signed

In December 2014 Congress passed and the President signed legislation that “authorized” Coltsville National Historical Park. This capped an almost 15 year process to create a national park site based on the Colt Armory and associated Coltsville community built by Sam and Elizabeth Colt. Within the authorizing legislation there are specific “Conditions for Establishment” that must be completed before Coltsville can be “established” and become an official unit of the National Park Service (NPS). Most tasks have been completed but until recently two remained: (1) Agreement with Colt Gateway LLC (owners of the historic Colt Armory) to secure the donation of at least 10,000 square feet of space for a visitor center. (2) Transfer of this property and buildings to the National Park Service for the visitor center

We are pleased to announce that agreement has been reached with Colt Gateway on the donation of space for a NPS visitor center. Two 1855 era brownstone industrial buildings, the only remaining part of the original 1850s Colt Armory, have been

identified as the space to be donated. The two buildings are all single story structures that were used as the original forge and foundry for the Colt Armory. Each was specifically designed for their function dealing with hot metals and both had an elaborate ventilation system both to bring in fresh air and cycle out hot and smoky air.

Now we need to transfer the buildings to the National Park Service. This will include a review of site surveys, an environmental assessment of the grounds, and then a transfer of the title. The NPS lands specialists have warned us that the land and title situation is particularly complicated, and that we should expect delays to transferring the title. It could take 9 to 12 months to complete the land transfer. Once the NPS has ownership we can formally establish the park. Of course, then the real work begins starting with renovation of the industrial buildings. The structures are amazing historic treasures. However they are in very rough shape. Restoring and renovating the buildings for visitor use will be an exhilarating but time consuming endeavor. We invite all of you to join us in this work!

## Capewell Nail Factory

In 1881 George Capewell invented an efficient 'cold roll' production system that made very pure, strong, steel horseshoe nails, which set a new standard in the industry. In 1903 he built the existing Capewell Horse Nail Company industrial complex at the corner of Charter Oak Avenue and Popieluszko Court, after his previous headquarters burned down. It was reportedly the first fireproof building in the US. Capewell nails quickly became a dominant brand, hugely popular across the globe: the king of England, czar of Russia, and leading Japanese veterinarians all relied on Capewell nails for their horses. Capewell's efforts resulted in Hartford becoming the "horseshoe nail capitol of the world".

The company was acquired by Hartford Standard Machine Screw Company in 1970 and operated as a subsidiary. A few years later Standard Screw became Standadyne Corporation, which ceased production at the plant and sold the real estate in 1981. The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2000.



The factory building includes a Romanesque Revival-style square tower with brick corbeling and a high pyramidal roof. The administration building (photo) is Hartford's finest example of Dutch architecture with highly articulated brick and brownstone details. The Jacobean front gable is detailed with elaborately patterned brickwork not found elsewhere in Hartford.

## Corporation for Independent Living

For over 25 years the Capewell building was "a burial ground of failed development attempts". On April 1, 2014 the Corporation for Independent Living (CIL) acquired the main Capewell building. The CIL was founded in 1979 and has handled thousands of building projects including group homes, affordable housing, offices for not-for-profits, and factory reclamations. CIL is focused on completing projects quickly and delivering a quality product. Further, they secure 100 percent financing as well as they handle all development details, including large and complex jobs for state and municipal governments and non-profit agencies.

David McKinley is the Vice President of Development for the Corporation for Independent Living. David joined CIL in 1986. He indicated that, using the CIL wholly owned for profit subsidiary the CIL was able to obtain \$27 million for the Capewell project. All profits from the for profit subsidiary flow into the not-for-profit operations.

The first multimillion dollar step for the Capewell project was to remediate the environmental issues related to the historic site. Then CIL created 72 luxury "Capewell" lofts, of which 20% are income restricted. The lofts went on the market in November of 2016, and by March of 2017 all of these highly desirable apartments have been rented.



Capewell Loft Apartment





Capewell Horse Nail Calendar



David McKinley in front of the Capewell Lofts



Capewell Lofts Building



## Hold the Presses!

Of the numerous products produced by the Colt factory, in addition to firearms, one of the most diverse and intriguing is “the Colt Press,” a sample of which remains in the East Armory to this day.



*A Colt's Armory Press, possibly a "Quarto Medium size 2"*

Originally designed by a pressman-turned Lutheran preacher named Merritt Gally (thus, “Gally Press”), the design was first patented in 1869. Trade-named the “Universal,” Galley contracted with a variety of licensees to produce the press, whom then sub-contracted

with Colt’s for the job. At the failure of the smaller firms, Gally wound up working directly with Colt’s.

As the design was inherently solid, Colt’s built over 2,000 of them within the first decade of production, in a selection of sizes. Then Gally’s patent protection expired – shades of Sam Colt! For John Thomson, now manager of Colt’s Universal Press Division, based in the East Armory, and a boyhood enemy of the preacher, this was an opportunity. He began to conspire with Colt’s to freeze Gally out. Ultimately, through a series of lawsuits and legal actions, he was successful, and in 1902, the year Elizabeth Colt sold the entire Colt firm, Thomson acquired the Press Division. He eventually moved his company’s new business out of rented space in the West Armory, to its new home in Long Island in April of 1906, thus closing the chapter on the manufacture of “the Colt Press” at the factory.



*Nameplate on the Colt's Armory Press*

## Contact Us



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