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Hartford's Internal Beauty

The most important aspect in the City of Hartford we should continue in preserving involves our lovely parks. Many would dispute that the parks were just always there or built in the communities to become tourist attractions or to loosen the ties between the urban sides of Hartford and downtown. Such arguments may seem like a valid reason, but everything has its purpose and its history. Bushnell, Colt, and Elizabeth are our uniting ties of our past to present day Hartford.

Bushnell Park, for example, was the idea of Reverend Horace Bushnell who was a pastor of Hartford's North Congregational Church, which today is known as Immanuel Congregational. At the time, the suggestion of a public park was a suggestion that hadn't been made in any other American city. Plans were to have the park financed by public funds. In 1861, Swiss-born architect Jacob Weidenmann came up with a design. Now Bushnell Park has become like the heart of Hartford, known by all residents. It's carousel for entertainment, long pathways for strolls or going for a run, lovely pond and contains many monuments such as the Arch Designed by Hartford architect George Keller dedicated on September 17, 1886, the anniversary of the Battle of Antietam which honored the 4,000 Hartford citizens who served in the Civil War and the 400 who died for the Union.

Hartford didn't stop at Bushnell; Colt Park was once Samuel Colt and Elizabeth Colt's Victorian Garden. Samuel Colt was a self-made millionaire by the age of 40 for his widely known invention of the Colt 45 revolver. Now Colt Park is used by residents for baseball games, soccer games, swimming, concerts, dances, carnivals and many more

activities. Then we have Elizabeth Park which was once owned by Charles M. Pond. Mr. Pond was a wealthy industrialist and statesman whose career included being a Director of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad, Hartford Hospital, and the Phoenix Fire Insurance Company. Mr. Pond was also President of the Hartford Trust Company and he was Treasurer of the State of Connecticut. Although personally, his greatest contribution Elizabeth Park.

As a resident in Hartford, I myself have come to enjoy these parks since I can remember. Ever since I arrived in Hartford from Puerto Rico, I can always remember going to the park with my family. The hot and sunny days were we will take a stroll, autumn evenings were my mom will take me to go and play in the leaves and summer evenings when we'll go and see the beautiful roses in Elizabeth. We have maintained the opportunity for wonderful memories to form, from your first attempt at riding a bike, your first date or kiss or that moment when you couldn't stop laughing so hard that milk came out your nose. Most importantly, the parks have kept our history alive and shown off our rich culture; they have acted as the tie to our past. As Rev. Horace Bushnell said *"...an opening in the heart of the city... to which citizens will naturally flow in their walks; ...a place where children play; ...a place for holiday scenes and celebrations; ...where rich and poor will exchange looks and make acquaintance through the eyes; ...a place of life and motion that will make us more completely conscious of being one people."*

Hartford has excelled in the most important aspect of how to keep a community together, so far preserving these lovely parks in town where our citizens can enjoy themselves and unite as a community. This is something we should keep preserving for

the many years to come, keep them clean, in order to show others how a beautiful of a town we are, and most importantly keep our long trail of history alive; the memories of many important people who have contributed much time and effort in bringing to life their beneficial dreams. Just as our Mayor Pedro Segarra has agreed, one of his first initiatives when becoming Mayor of Hartford was to recapture our parks. If we fail to keep our parks at their best for the city of Hartford, we will be the ones to blame for cutting off a part of our rich history, which has survived so long, why allow such thing?

(<http://www.bushnellpark.org/default.asp>) (<http://elizabethpark.org/>)