

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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OCT 4 1983

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Continuation sheet 114

Item number 7

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NAME: Collyer Monument

LOCATION: Mineral Spring Park, bounded by Mineral Spring Avenue,  
Main Street and Conant Street

OWNER: City of Pawtucket  
137 Roosevelt Avenue  
Pawtucket, RI 02860

CONDITION: Good; unaltered; original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Collyer Monument stands near the center of Mineral Spring Park, a small triangular park sandwiched between Mineral Spring Avenue, Main Street, and Conant Street in the Woodlawn section of Pawtucket. The monument is composed of a bronze statue of Captain Samuel S. Collyer mounted atop a square granite pedestal. The statue measures seven feet high by four and a half feet wide and depicts Captain Collyer in full-dress firemen's uniform with his trumpet in hand. The base of the monument measures eight feet high by roughly five feet wide and features, on its front, a low-relief bronze casting depicting the scene of Collyer's fatal accident (showing the overturned hose cart, the fatally injured Chief, and the other injured firemen). On its back, a short, carved inscription reads: "Dedicated to the memory of Samuel S. Collyer/who died July 27, 1884/while in the discharge/of his duty as/chief engineer of the/Pawtucket/Fire Department./ Born May 3, 1832." The only other inscription on the monument appears on the upper portion of the base, between the bronze tablet and the statue itself, where the name "Collyer" is simply carved in an arched form. The monument is enclosed within a metal, double-picket fence, on a granite base, the fenced-in plot measuring 12 feet on a side.

PERIOD: 1800-1899

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Sculpture

DATE: 1890

SCULPTOR: Charles Dowler

SIGNIFICANCE:

Sculpturally, the Collyer Monument is significant as a typical expression of the representational, statically monumental approach favored by most American sculptors in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Socially, the monument is significant as one of the earliest known civic sculptures in Pawtucket. An artistic expression of the community's growing civic awareness and pride, the monument was raised, appropriately enough, to honor a man who had served his native Pawtucket all of his adult life.

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Although the Collyer Monument is a commemorative property and would not, therefore, ordinarily be considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register, its symbolic value as a mark of Pawtucket's emerging civic pride has invested the property with an historical importance of its own.

Samuel Smith Collyer was born in Pawtucket in 1832. By the time he had reached fifteen he had already joined the local fire company, the old Rough and Ready's, eventually becoming their captain. In 1870, Collyer was named chief engineer of the North Providence Fire Department, and when the modern boundaries of Pawtucket were established in 1874, one of the first acts of the new town council was to name Collyer as Pawtucket's first chief-engineer. Collyer retained this position until his death in 1884, when the chief was fatally injured in an accident on the way to a fire. The hose cart in which the Chief and several other firemen were riding, overturned after striking a boundstone on the corner of Mineral Spring Avenue and Lonsdale Avenue. Collyer was caught underneath the cart and all of his ribs were crushed. The chief survived for almost three weeks before he finally succumbed to his injuries.

Chief Collyer was apparently held in almost universal respect by the citizens of Pawtucket. It is of some significance that the earliest known public-supported civic sculpture in the city was raised in his memory--the three Pawtucket monuments to the local heroes of the Civil War not being erected until the late 1890s and early twentieth century. The money to pay for Collyer's monument (\$2,500) was raised by public subscription and the completed monument was dedicated on the last day of Pawtucket's gala Cotton Centenary Celebration in 1890. This week-long festival of parades, exhibitions, dinners, and speeches celebrating Pawtucket's past and present importance as an industrial community was perhaps the largest outpouring of civic pride ever seen in the city. That a monument raised to Chief Samuel S. Collyer, should be publicly dedicated during this week seemed but another appropriate expression of that same civic pride.

The Collyer Monument in Pawtucket is one of the major pieces of sculpture designed by Charles Dowler of Providence. A native of Birmingham, England, Dowler emigrated to Providence in 1863. During the Civil War, the Englishman practiced his trade of gunsmithing but, at the conclusion of the conflict, he turned his hand to sculpture. The Collyer Monument in Pawtucket and the Jared Sparks Monument in Bristol are two of his best known sculpture works. By the turn of the century Dowler was listed in the local directories as a designer of interior and exterior decorations, models for monumental work, and patterns for jewelry. He retired as a designer in 1919, and died in Providence in 1931. The Dowler House (581 Smith Street, Providence) will be nominated to the National Register in the future.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nominated property is that portion of Pawtucket Assessor's Plat 53A, lot 204, enclosed by the fence which surrounds the Collyer Monument. The 12-X-12-foot nominated area is surrounded by a metal picket fence which is part of the original design of the monument.

ACREAGE: less than one  
LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local  
UTM: A 19 301410 4638420

(See Continuation Sheet #117)