


*Historic Property Restoration Project  
Founders' Park - Conway, NH  
In commemoration of the 250th  
anniversary of Conway's founding - 2015*

Summary - The Mountain Garden Club (MGC) was approached by the Mount Washington Valley (MWV) Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Conway to design and plant a garden at the new Founders' Park adjacent to the Conway Police Station. There were two memorial boulders more or less side-by-side that needed landscaping: one recognizing the resting place of the initial settlers, given by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1982, and the other commemorating Conway's founding fathers and the first meeting house that was built in 1773, given by the Pequawket Foundation. On October 1, 2015, state dignitaries, community leaders and local representatives cut the ribbon for the presentation of Founders' Park, as part of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Conway's founding. It was on October 1, 1765 that the town received its colonial charter and was named after English statesman Henry Seymour Conway.

Involvement – The MGC was honored that it was asked to be involved in such an important historical event for the community. Members Ralph Lutjen (master gardener) and Jeanne Ouellette (landscape architect) did an initial assessment of the site. There were many challenges, including remote location, north facing and heavily wooded, making planting opportunities limited. Their recommendation was to clean up the undergrowth around it, cutting saplings under 3" caliber. A neat edge could then be cut against the lawn and vinca ground cover and hostas planted to surround the two memorials. Public Works crew prepped the area and cleaned up the tree debris. A group of MGC members prepared the area around the boulders. The club purchased lime green hostas and Bowles vinca, as well as mums and decorative kale for fall color from McSherry's Nursery and Green Thumb Farms ...an attractive solution for a difficult, north-facing site. Founders' Park will be maintained by the Town of Conway.

Project Expense - The cost of creating the garden was \$200, but the MWV Chamber of Commerce reimbursed the MGC for the full amount. The Town of Conway had a budget to cover the Public Works expenses.



  
**CONWAY'S FIRST CHURCH**

At the annual meeting in 1771, the Town of Conway raised twelve pounds to hire a preacher and to build a church. David Page, James Osgood and Joshua Heath comprised the hiring committee. While there were several temporary pastors, the first was a "Mr." Kelly. The first longtime preacher was Dr. Nathaniel Porter, a Harvard graduate, who began his pastorate on October 28, 1778. There were 106 people who became members of First Church and there were 345 baptized. Dr. Porter continued preaching at the new Conway Centre location after the site was moved until his death on November 10, 1836.

**CONWAY'S FIRST MEETING HOUSE**

The first annual town meeting was held on the second Tuesday of March 1770 by Thomas Merrill and Joshua Heath, who had been elected selectmen by the town proprietors at a Portsmouth meeting.

In 1773 the first meeting house was built by the Town. It was located "as near the geographic centre of the town deemed eligible for a city, on the plains below Pine Hill and the Rattlesnake projection of the Green Hill range."

After a few years this meeting house (which had never been completed) was taken down and moved near the cemetery of Conway Centre.

*History of Carroll County. Georgia Drew Merrill 1889.*  
 Gift of Pequawket Foundation



The site work begins - clearing and cleaning after many years of neglect



The design included just the right plants for the environment of the area



The original site is beautifully restored and is now a lovely public park area

“Founders’ Park” was created to commemorate the founding of Conway and its 250th anniversary

