

Colonial Training Ground

Intersection of Main Street, Rt. 8, and Y.M.C.A. Road

42° 17'04.05"N 73° 03'50.17"W elevation 1588 feet

On May 7, 1760 the original proprietors of Township No. 4 allocated five pounds and ten shillings to Jonathan Wadsworth for land designated for public use; including for common grazing of stock. This land historically called "The Parade" was where "Train Bands" and the Becket Minutemen drilled in preparation for the "alarm list companies of the province." The Lexington alarm was relayed to the Berkshires by couriers or "express riders" at sundown on Friday April 21, 1775. The Becket Town Meeting on April 23, 1775 "granted to ten men that this day have entered into Provincial sarvis (viz) Silas Childs Joseph Foster Silas Linkon John Messenger Bela Messenger John Davis James Allen Abner Bruce Elijah Allford Abel Crane the sum of One Dollar each to be paid out of the Town Treasury." Town Train Bands were supported by the towns to form regular militia companies, these Minute-men had pledged to be ready to march on a moment's notice. Becket's men joined four hundred and ninety-six other Berkshire enlisted men from Lenox and Pittsfield on the march east to Boston. They joined in the Battle at Bunker Hill, the march to Canada and the other battles of the Continental Army.



The **First Meeting House Monument** is located on the western side of the **Colonial Training Ground**, across Y.M.C.A. Road from the [First Congregational Church of Becket](#). This imposing seven-foot high monument, is a rough sculpted granite boulder from the granite quarry off Quarry Road in South Becket. Becket men, led by designer and sculpturer James Burwell Turner, quarried the stone, shaped and set it. The bronze plaque on the face of the **First Meeting House Monument** reads “The First Church of Christ in Becket organized Dec. 28, 1758 Near this Site Was Erected the First Meeting House 1762-1764 Dedicated in Memory of the Founders September 1936.”

Behind the bronze plaque is a bottle containing the names of Becket’s founders and the monument committee; many of them direct descendants of the founders. The Memorial Committee had collected donations and presented the monument to the [First Church](#) and the people of the town “to be safe guarded by you.” The **First Meeting House Monument** represents the faith and determination of the original pioneers in founding a church and township in a rugged New England wilderness.



In 1960, the town voted money to erect five bronze markers, two of which were placed here. One read “The First Settlement in Township No. 4”, and the second “**The Parade – Colonial Training Ground**” unfortunately both were removed by an unknown.

Here in 1987 Becket celebrated its role in the ratification of the federal constitution 200 years earlier. Becket was recognized, along with Lanesboro, as a Constitution Bicentennial town. In 1788 Elisha Carpenter, Becket’s delegate to the state convention was one of six (out of 16) Berkshire delegates who voted for ratification. It passed by a narrow margin making Massachusetts the sixth state to approve the United States Constitution.

On October 3, 1987, a Becket-quarried granite marker, donated by Mrs. Wendell S. Moulthrop and family was dedicated in honor of her father, quarryman James B. Turner. It reads “Colonial Training Ground, [Becket Center Rural Historic District](#), National Register of Historic Places, August 11, 1982.” As a result of its rural nature, Becket’s Historical Commission met with some opposition from the Massachusetts Historical Society to get their necessary approval to obtain the National Register of Historic Places designation. Eventually Becket Center became the first Rural Historic District in Massachusetts.



After years of new growth forestation had taken over this area, (along with most of Becket Center), volunteers along with Richard and Rita Furlong, owners of the First Minister’s Lot, adjacent to the “Parade Grounds” cleared this historic site making it once again an open space.

The Becket 250th Anniversary Committee chose to plant a sugar maple tree to officially commemorate the incorporation of Becket on June 21, 1765. The sugar maple is native to Massachusetts and symbolizes Becket's rich history of forest-based products and the uncommon beauty that makes Becket a very special place. It was the committee's hope that the tree would thrive and offer a place for contemplation and reflection for years to come.



Becket 250th Anniversary

Tree Planting Ceremony on The Parade Ground, June 21, 2015

By 2021 the Becket Historical Commission plans to install a new information sign for the [Becket Center Rural Historic District](#). The sign includes a map of the area, 10 highlights, a sketch of the Brewster House and a QR code. The Quick Response code, consisting of small squares and a black and white pattern, can be scanned by a smartphone to make a quick connection to the [Historical Facts](#) link on the [Historical Commission's](#) page on the Town of Becket website. More in depth information on Becket's historical treasures can be found at the [Historical Facts](#) link.

For further information email the Becket Historical Commission:

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