Joshua Bayley's April 21, 1731, deed giving the Town the Training Field in exchange for Baileys Lane marked our first open space acquisition, creating the civic place perhaps most central to West Newbury's geography, history, and heart.

Initially, this town green would have been used for training our militia and the elite minutemen among them. Sarah Anna Emery's Reminiscences of a Nonagenarian described the patriotic scene in April, 1775: "On the arrival of the 'courier' with news of the Lexington fight, the minute men of the upper parish quickly gathered at the training field on the main road. The company having been formed, boards were thrown over an ox-cart; from this hastily improvised rostrum, Parson Toppan spoke a few words of patriotism and encouragement, then invoked the Divine blessing upon the gallant band. Meantime individuals were going from house to house, collecting food and other necessaries. The news came at midnight, and soon after sunrise the company commenced its march; the rations, baggage, etc., being conveyed by two ox-teams."

Military training continued into the 20th century. According to Mrs. Ronald S. Gibbons' *History of the Training Field*, "[i]t was also used during the War of 1812, the Civil War, and in World War II I saw my husband and other men of the Town drilling on the same field in a State Guard unit."

At various times, the Training Field has housed structures ranging from stocks to one of the Town's earliest post offices to a bandstand. In 1882, the Town voted to develop a well and pump, still visible today. In the 20th century, the Town placed memorials to our veterans on the Training

Field: a boulder and plaque in honor of West Newbury's World War I soldiers was installed as part of the Town's 1919 Centennial celebrations, and a memorial for our veterans of World War II and the Korean War was erected in 1953.

The Training Field has always served as West Newbury's open-air gathering place. Today we think of the annual Christmas tree lighting and caroling, as well as the Garden Club's spring plant sale. Imagine a pleasant fall Wednesday in 1894, when horse-drawn streetcars could deliver merry fair goers to the West Newbury Farmers' Club all-day extravaganza, as reported in the Newburyport Daily News: "West Newbury Sept. 12.—This is a holiday in the usually quiet town of West Newbury. The schools have closed and crowds of people are flocking to the training field, where the 19th exhibition of the West Newbury Farmers' Club is being held. The weather is all that could be desired and several hundred people are already on the grounds. . . . An excellent exhibit of poultry can be found in a small tent at the left of the [Town] hall and the pens for horses, cattle, sheep and pigs are on the green outside. . . . Howard Currier of Newburyport has pitched a large tent on the training field and laid plates for 400 and here dinner will be served at 1 o'clock. The tent will then be cleared for a promenade concert and dance this evening."

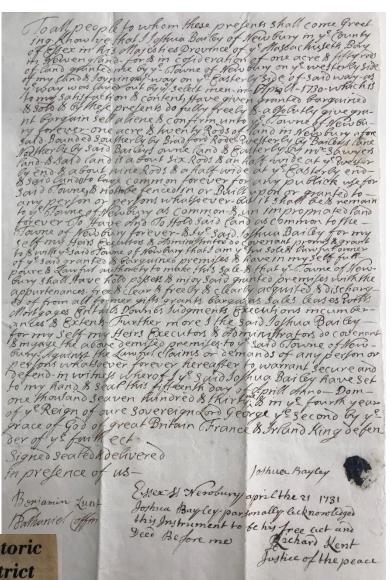
In response to the threat of road widening on Main Street, the Training Field and its surrounds were made a protected local Historic District under Massachusetts law in 1976, and the 2018 Historic Sites Survey recommended it for an additional listing in the National Register of Historic Districts.





Clippings from the Collection of Dot Cavanaugh; Original deed from Assessor's Office; Transliteration by Michael McCarron.

<u>Click here</u> for more images.



Marker Location: 494-506 Main St., West Newbury, MA Latitude: 42.80580 Longitude: -70.97997



Historic district official

WEST NEWBURY — The West Newbory Training Field Historic District was officially established his week with the receipt of a letter of approval from the state attorney general's office, according to Town Clerk Norman H. Böbson. Hobson said the endy training step in formalizing the historic district was to post a copy of the warrant articles and the letter of approval in five locations in course of the state of the state

Townspeople voted their approval of the historic district when the proposal appeared as a warrant article at the special town meeting April s. Since then, there has been "a lot of paperwork involved," according to Hobson, work which cultimated in the receipt of the cletter signed by Attorney

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FIELD.

General Francis Bellotti and Asst. Attorney General Henry F. O'Connell. The historic district will include the Training Field area, 10 houses surrounding it, the GAR Momerical illustry and the West.

The name "Training Field dates back to the revolutional era, when soldiers were traine for the war on that location, was similarly used during the Civil War.