

Militia Parade Ground Site



The parade ground was the field between the church and the brick schoolhouse.

During the colonial period, the Militia trained on a large field next to the church – roughly the area now bounded by Nehoiden Street, Central Avenue, and Bess Road. Because settlements were scattered and there was no regular army, each community had to be ready to defend itself at short notice. Every able-bodied male over the age of 16 was expected to belong to a militia company, unless he was a minister, ship's carpenter, miller or blacksmith, since they were needed to provide the equipment and supplies. They held regular drills on the training ground, usually once per week.

Every militia man had his own gun and was expected to keep it in good working order. When there was an alarm, they met at the Powder House to receive their orders and their powder and shot. One militia company was designated as the Alarm Company (“Minutemen”) – members of the militia chosen by their commanding officer to stand ready at all times. Their job was to respond first to an attack and give the regular militia time to arm and organize. They kept their own ammunition, and their guns were to be kept in good order and loaded. They were also held to a higher standard of readiness and skill than the normal militia, and had to drill three times a week.