

Area AG - Lexington Green

This area form listing refers specifically to the Lexington Green which was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1966. (In addition to being a NHL, the Green is also on the National Register and is part of a local historic district - see also Areas B & AC). The triangular open space is bounded by Massachusetts Avenue, Harrington Road and Bedford Street. It measures 2 1/2 acres and was acquired by the Town of Lexington during the first quarter of the 18th century. It served as common ground and a militia training field. On the morning of April 19, 1775 the Lexington Green was the scene of a brief but historic skirmish between the Lexington Minute Men and British soldiers which marked the beginning of the armed struggle for American independence. Eight Americans were killed and ten were wounded.



Lexington Green

The National Historic Landmark nomination specifically includes the monuments which were later erected on the green. The Revolutionary War Monument is a granite obelisk now surrounded by a simple iron fence. Erected in 1799 at a cost of \$400, it was the first Revolutionary monument in the country. Its position marks the approximate location of the west end of the line formed by the Minute Men on April 19, 1775. Seven of the eight Americans killed that day are interred in the tomb beneath the monument. The bodies were moved here in 1837 from the Old Burying Ground.



1799 Revolutionary War Monument

The east end of the line formed by the Minute Men on April 19th is marked by a low boulder near Bedford Street. Carved on the smooth face are a flintlock musket and powder horn and Captain John Parker's order to his men. The stone weighs twelve to fifteen tons and was brought from the woods on the old Muzzey place in the western part of the town. This was one of several monuments erected by the town committee on historical monuments and tablets in 1884.



Battle Line Boulder

Also erected by the town committee in 1884 is the Meetinghouse Marker, a red granite monument which represents a reading desk with a closed book resting on top. Inscriptions chronicle the dates of the meetinghouses which once stood on the common as well as the pastors.



Meetinghouse Marker

At the southeast corner of the Green, facing the route of the British advance is the commemorative statue of the "Lexington Minute Man", a life-size bronze figure of a colonial farmer with musket by Boston sculptor, Henry H. Kitson. It rests on a native fieldstone base, intended to be symbolic of the sturdiness of our ancestors. Originally a functioning drinking fountain/watering place for men, horses, cattle and dogs, it was unveiled on April 19, 1900, the 125th anniversary of the battle. The sculpture/fountain was funded by a \$10,000 bequest from Francis Brown Hayes.



Minute Man Statue

Near the statue is a bronze plaque mounted on a low boulder marking the site of the wooden belfry which stood on the south side of the Green between 1768 and 1797. It was this belfry that sounded the alarm on April 19, 1775 to warn the Colonists that the British were en route. The marker was placed by the Lexington Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution in 1910.



Belfry Monument