

EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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HISTORIC EXETER ASSOCIATES

Three hundred and fifty-five years after the settlers of Exeter wrote a “combination” establishing an independent republic, three local historical organizations – the American Independence Museum, Exeter Historical Society, and Historic New England – formed a cultural combination to promote an awareness of the town’s rich past.

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38. SWASEY PARKWAY

Industrialist Ambrose Swasey gave this waterfront park to the town. Construction began in 1929 according to a design by the Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts. The parkway replaced the noisome town dump and is situated along the area where most of Exeter's shipbuilding ways were located from the seventeenth through the nineteenth century. A good view of the former Exeter Manufacturing Company cotton mills can be had from here. Swasey's home, Fort Rock Farm, is about a mile distant on Newmarket Road. PARKWAY OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

39. POWDER HOUSE

Exeter's rare 1771 brick Powder House can be seen in a clump of evergreens across the river. Some of the powder captured at Fort William and Mary in nearby New Castle on December 14 and 15, 1774, was stored here. This event is considered the first overt hostile act of the Revolution. Exeter was sympathetic to revolutionary causes in contrast to Portsmouth, whose leading citizens were Loyalists. The building also served as a military storehouse in later wars.

40. PHILLIPS EXETER BOAT HOUSE AND EXETER WATERFRONT PARK

If you walk along the path on the river side of the boat house, you will cross over to the new waterfront park, begun in 1989. From here you can take several routes back to Water Street, which retains much of its nineteenth century commercial architecture.



Looking along Water Street, c. 1883. Town Hall is on the left.

36. WILLIAMS COURT

The back end of the brick building on the left was the Williams' bindery. The Federal style house on the front belonged to Benjamin Williams and is the twin of his brother's house on Front Street (24). Later it was owned by Henry Anderson, wood and coal merchant, whose schooners brought coal up the river to Exeter during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

37. 1 GOVERNOR'S LANE: LADD-GILMAN HOUSE

In 1721, Captain Nathaniel Ladd bought one and a half acres from Eliphalet Coffin, and by 1738, he built a brick house on the site. In 1752, the house was enlarged and covered with clapboards. Nicholas Gilman Sr., served as state treasurer, and the treasury

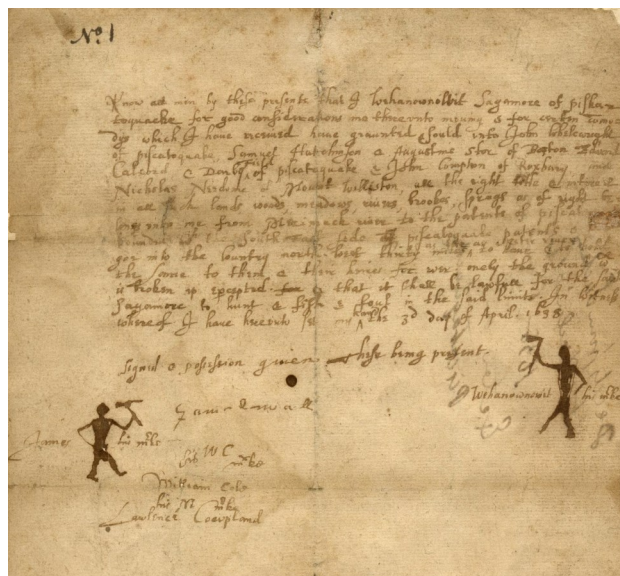


Ladd-Gilman House, c. 1890s

was located here during the Revolution. His eldest son, John Taylor Gilman, inherited the house and became governor, serving fourteen one-year terms. The house remained mostly in the Gilman family until it was purchased by the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of New Hampshire in 1902. A caretaker's wing was added and the structure, known as "Cincinnati Hall," served as the Society's headquarters and museum – the first historic house open to the public in New Hampshire. In 1991, the American Independence Museum was created and now administers the property. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. See website for information and hours: www.independencemuseum.org.

EXETER ON THE SQUAMSCOTT

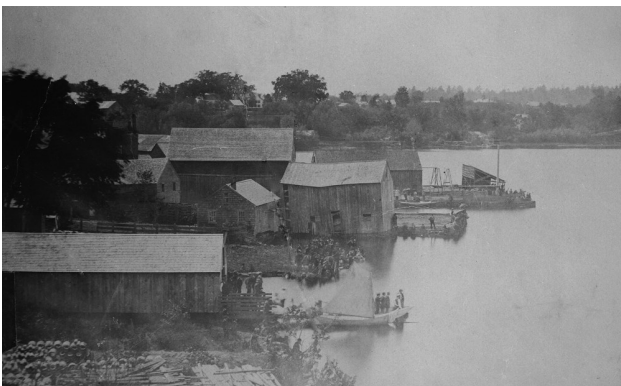
Exeter was settled in 1638 as one of the first four townships of New Hampshire. The town's founder, the Reverend John Wheelwright, purchased territory for the settlement from local Indian sagamores, and in doing so acquired one of the most favorable sites for a village in the coastal region of New Hampshire. The ample waterpower and forest resources of the area, the natural fertility of much of the soil, and the enterprise of the settlers and their progeny earned Exeter a place of distinction during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Exeter's combination of industry, commerce, farming, and learning gave the community a personality that was unique in the region. A short walk through today's Exeter reveals buildings that reflect the town's former history and prosperity. Exeter's retention of so many of its early landmarks has made the town a leader in the historic preservation movement in the twentieth century.



Deed of April 3, 1638, from Piscataquaque Indians granting rights to English settlers to occupy lands that later included Exeter.

GOVERNMENT

Unlike most New Hampshire towns, Exeter has never been officially incorporated or chartered by outside authority. The town started its existence by adopting a “combination” or plan of government, in 1639. Exeter was also unusual in building a special town and court house (13) for public meetings; most New Hampshire towns conducted civic affairs in taverns and in the same meetinghouses they used for religious services.



Wharves on the Squamscott River, behind Water Street stores, c. 1872. This photograph may document one of Exeter's "Grand Regattas" held on the river.

In 1774, Royal Governor John Wentworth dissolved the provincial assembly or house of representatives, which met in Portsmouth, in an attempt to prevent the election of delegates to a continental congress. Thereafter, a series of provincial congresses began to meet in the Exeter town house, which effectively became the seat of New Hampshire's government; the Fourth Provincial Congress ordered the provincial records to be confiscated from royal officials and brought to Exeter for safety in July 1775. New Hampshire's first constitution was adopted in the Exeter town house on January 5, 1776, and here in 1788, the first of New Hampshire's conventions was held for ratification of the United States Constitution. While most buildings associated with Exeter's period as state capital have vanished, the Ladd-Gilman House on Governors Lane (37), home of state treasurer Nicholas Gilman Sr., retains a room used as the treasury.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. See website for information and hours: www.exeter.edu/lamontgallery.

33. 6 TAN LANE: SITE OF THE FIRST ACADEMY BUILDING

This street was once the site of several eighteenth and nineteenth-century tanneries that supplied leather for harness, saddles, shoes, and carriages. Six Tan Lane was the location of the first Academy Building. It has been moved three times and is now located on Elliot Street.

34. 164 WATER STREET: FOLSOM TAVERN (AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE MUSEUM)

Built in 1775 on the corner of Water and Front Streets by Colonel Samuel Folsom, the tavern, which operated until 1805, was a popular meeting place and center of political and social activity. In November 1789, George Washington stopped by the tavern “to partake of a collation” (breakfast) during his tour of New England. During the next two centuries, the building served as the “Old Curiosity Shop,” passenger station for the Exeter, Hampton, and Amesbury Street Railway, a millinery shop, a Chinese laundry, and “Washington's Lunch.” In 1929, the Folsom site was sold to Standard Oil Company, and the tavern was moved to Spring Street. In October 2004, the Folsom Tavern was moved for a third time to its present location on Water Street. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. See website for information and hours: www.independencemuseum.org.

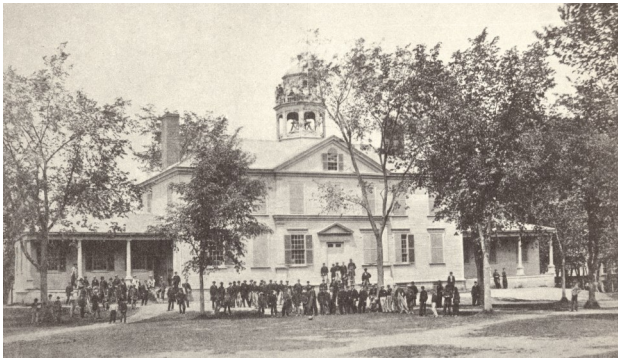
35. 17 SPRING STREET: WILLIAMS HOUSE

Now an academy dormitory, this was once part of the flourishing nineteenth-century book publishing business of the Williams brothers. In this building they practiced the new stereotype printing method (using a cast plate of a hand-set page of type, which enabled the printer to do multiple editions of a book). They printed 50,000 volumes a year and had fifty employees.

education enabling them “to compete in the world with their brothers.” It was merged with Exeter High School in 1955.

30. PHILLIPS CHURCH

Built by the Second Congregational Church in 1899, this Gothic style church was planned by architect Ralph Adams Cram, who designed New York’s St. John the Divine and campus buildings at Princeton University. Phillips Exeter Academy purchased the building in 1922.



The second Academy Building, which burned December 18, 1870.

31. FOURTH ACADEMY BUILDING

Ralph Adams Cram designed this large brick building very much along the lines of the second Academy Building, which had been planned by Ebenezer Clifford and Bradbury Johnson in 1794.

32. LAMONT ART GALLERY AND FREDERICK MAYER ART CENTER

Built in 1903 as Alumni Hall, the building served as a central academy dining hall until 1935, when the Harkness dormitories, which had separate dining halls, were added. In 1953, it was renovated for instruction in art and named in honor of Thomas W. Lamont II, Class of 1942. The Mayer Art Center is located in a modern, below-ground wing between the 1903 hall and the fourth Academy Building.

RELIGION

Exeter was unusual among the first New Hampshire towns in having been established because of religious rather than commercial motivations. The town’s founder, John Wheelwright, was tried and convicted of sedition in 1637. He and his sister-in-law, Anne Hutchinson, had begun to attract widespread attention in Boston through sermons opposing religious and political positions that were held by John Winthrop and the Massachusetts church hierarchy.

Wheelwright and a number of followers chose the falls of the Squamscott River, where tidewater meets fresh, as the site of a new home beyond the jurisdiction of Massachusetts. Wheelwright established a church soon after he and his followers arrived at the Squamscott. This remained Exeter’s only church for more than a century. Beginning in the 1730s, however, some members of the church felt the influence of the Great Awakening. This evangelical movement, led by the English cleric George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards of Massachusetts, introduced New Light preaching, which sought to move listeners to an emotional response that many regarded as a sign of divine grace. The result was the organization of Exeter’s Second Church. Members built their meetinghouse where a dwelling now stands at 75 Front Street, near the Phillips Church.

Another wave of religious enthusiasm swept over New England near the turn of the next century. Sometimes called the Second Great Awakening, this movement gave birth to several new denominations, including Universalist and Christian churches, and strengthened Baptist, Methodist, and other churches that had previously languished in New Hampshire. Although Baptists in Exeter managed to build their own meetinghouse as early as 1805, growth of other churches was slowed by laws that taxed residents of each New Hampshire town to support the minister of the “orthodox” church of that community. In Exeter the First and Second Parish churches were the tax-supported churches until passage of the “Toleration Act” in 1819 freed citizens to support the church of their choice. Freedom from the old church tax allowed Universalists to build their own meetinghouse in 1831,

and Methodists followed in 1834. Later buildings belonging to the Baptist and Methodist churches (17, 19) are seen along Front Street near the fourth meetinghouse (14) of the First Church, built in 1799.

EDUCATION

Beginning with the arrival of a schoolmaster among the first settlers, Exeter has shown an unusually strong commitment to education. In 1847 the town became one of the first in New Hampshire to adopt graded public schools and a high school after state law authorized these innovations.

Long before this, however, Exeter had been chosen as the site of one of two eminent private academies for young men founded by philanthropist John Phillips. Phillips arrived in Exeter in 1741, and grew rich as a merchant. In 1783, twelve years before his death, he organized and endowed Phillips Exeter Academy, overseeing construction of the small first building (33), now on Elliot Street. Phillip's initial gift of \$60,000 was the largest endowment ever provided for an academy in the United States up to that time, and the institution has remained one of the country's most distinguished private secondary schools.

Exeter had two comparable private schools for young women. The first, Exeter Female Academy, was founded in 1826, and survived until 1864. The second, Robinson Female Seminary, was established in 1865, under the will of Exeter native William Robinson, and by September 1869, had 241 students. Its imposing building, set within a sixteen-acre tract landscaped in a natural garden style (29), opened in 1869. Male and female education at the high school remained separated in Exeter until 1955. In 1961, the old seminary building, then empty, was destroyed by fire; only the gateposts remain to mark the school's site.

Exeter's stature as a seat of learning was reinforced by its prominence as a printing center. Since the arrival of the first printing press about 1774, the town has seldom been without one or more newspapers. Exeter earned a high reputation as a center for printing and binding books after the Revolution, beginning in 1780 with Zechariah Fowle's publication of a book of laws of

26. GALE PARK

This park at the intersection of Front and Linden Streets was given by Mrs. Alice Gale Hobson, daughter of Stephen H. Gale, co-owner of Gale Brothers Shoe Company (active for a century in Exeter starting in the 1880s). The bronze World War I memorial of "Mother Town" and "Soldier Son" is by Exeter-born Daniel Chester French, who sculpted the seated Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.

27. SAINT MICHAEL CHURCH

Saint Michael Parish was organized as the first Catholic parish in Exeter in 1853. This 1958 building replaced an 1888 parish church on Center Street.

28. 89 FRONT STREET: TUCK HOUSE

This Italianate house was built in 1853 for lawyer Amos Tuck, ardent abolitionist and one of the founders of the Republican Party.



Robinson Seminary viewed from Main Street, 1890s

29. ENTRANCE TO THE ROBINSON FEMALE SEMINARY

The granite gateposts flanking the lane beyond 87 Front Street mark the entrance to the Robinson Female Seminary, which opened in 1869. It was founded by Exeter-born cotton merchant William Robinson as a school where girls could get an

23. 76 FRONT STREET: THING-LOVERING HOUSE

Built circa 1730, this house is an example of a farm built before the town expanded. It was being used as a tavern on September 28, 1770, when noted evangelist George Whitefield preached his last sermon here, before going to preach in Newburyport where he died the next day. A carved granite block on the adjacent property commemorates the minister.

24. 80 FRONT STREET: WILLIAMS-WINSLOW HOUSE

Printers John J. and Benjamin Williams had a prosperous publishing business in Exeter for more than twenty years. John built this house in 1828. Readers of John Irving's novels should note this is the 80 Front Street of *A Prayer for Owen Meany*. (See site 35)



Moses-Kent House

25. 1 PINE STREET: MOSES-KENT HOUSE

Architect Rufus Sargent designed this house in 1868 for Deacon Henry C. Moses, a wool merchant. The grounds were laid out by Robert Morris Copeland. The house was later bought by George Kent, owner of the Exeter Manufacturing Company, who established this residence away from the din of his downtown mill.

the new state of New Hampshire. Exeter's achievements continued in 1795 with publication by Henry Ranlet of a music book printed with movable type, and in 1796, with the first New Testament published in the state. The Exeter firm of J. and B. Williams, founded in 1818, later included a stereotype foundry (35) and bindery (36), which enabled the partners to reduce the cost and increase the production of their volumes.

MANUFACTURING AND COMMERCE

Exeter's productivity as a publishing center was matched by an astonishing range of other manufactures. The lower falls of the Squamscott River (2) were harnessed shortly after 1638 for a grist mill; sawmills were established at the upper falls (5) in the late 1640s by Edward Gilman and others. Thereafter, the power of Exeter's several streams never ceased to produce wealth for the community until the twentieth century. By 1795 the two waterfalls at the heart of the town powered four grist mills, four sawmills, two mills for pressing linseed oil from flax seed, and a fulling mill for cleaning woolen cloth. During his visit in 1789, President Washington noted that a snuff mill was in operation here. An iron slitting mill mentioned by Washington had been replaced by Simeon Folsom's factory for producing the newly introduced machine-cut nail by 1802. In 1824, local physician William Perry began to use the upper falls to power a factory for making starch, essential in cotton manufacture, from locally grown potatoes. At various times, other waterpower sites in Exeter sustained New Hampshire's first gunpowder factory, paper mills, chocolate mills, and a number of other grist and saw mills.

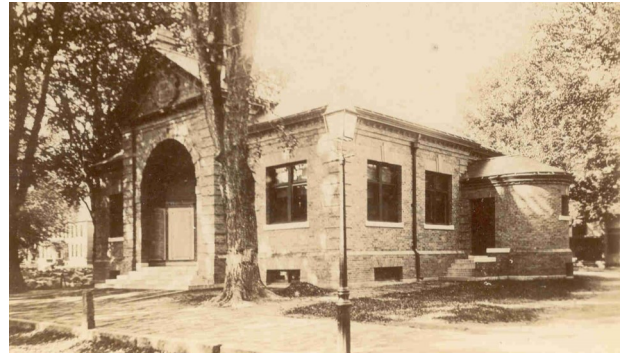
In 1803, Nicholas Gilman built a carding mill to comb wool fibers for yarn at the upper falls in the village. This beginning of mechanized textile production was followed in 1827 by the incorporation of the Exeter Manufacturing Company (2), which built large brick factories for the production of cotton cloth. By the early 1880s these mills contained 20,000 spindles and 452 looms and produced 4 million yards of cloth each year.



Oxen hauling a portable sawmill down Water Street, c. 1892

Exeter was renowned for its hand trades as well as for mechanized production. Clay deposits on the Squamscott gave rise to extensive brickmaking and redware pottery production. The skill of local tanners (memorialized in the name of Tan Lane in the center of town) encouraged saddle production that surpassed that of any place north of Philadelphia in 1795. Saddlery encouraged the allied trades of harness making and carriage building. Leather-working skills made the town a noted center of shoemaking from the eighteenth into the twentieth century. Exeter excelled in the manufacture of men's hats, which were made by hand in small shops owned by four or five Exeter families. For a while in the 1790s, Exeter boasted New Hampshire's first duck or canvas factory where eight spinners and eight weavers made much-needed sailcloth. At about the same time, John Ward Gilman worked as a silversmith; his younger brother, Benjamin Clark Gilman, became equally skilled as a maker of clocks and surveyor's instruments.

The broad tidal basin below the lower falls (2) provided access for seagoing vessels to and from Exeter, and it was the means by which the town's early production of sawn lumber was carried to market. The same section of the Squamscott River proved to be a good site for building ships as large as 500 tons; as many as twenty-two vessels are said to have been built here in a single season. Locally built vessels and other arriving from elsewhere in the British Empire made Exeter a busy port during the eighteenth century, giving rise to fortunes like that of merchant John Phillips. River traffic continued to convey bulk cargoes, especially coal, to Exeter until the 1930s. Early



Exeter Public Library (now Exeter Historical Society), c. 1930

20. 47 FRONT STREET: THE EXETER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This yellow brick classical revival building was designed by the prominent Boston firm of Rotch and Tilden in 1894 as Exeter's Public Library and Civil War Memorial. Rotch was an influential architect and professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1989, the building was restored as the Exeter Historical Society and now contains exhibition rooms, a library and archives on Exeter area history. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. See website for information and hours. www.exeterhistory.org.

21. 46 FRONT STREET: NATHANIEL GILMAN HOUSE

This gambrel roof house, built about 1735, is one of Exeter's oldest remaining houses. It was the home of Nathaniel Gilman, whose brother, Nicholas Jr., a signer of the United States Constitution, stayed here when in Exeter. Nathaniel's son-in-law, Governor Charles H. Bell, wrote the 1888 *History of Exeter, New Hampshire* and also lived here. The house is now the advancement office for Phillips Exeter Academy.

22. PHILLIPS EXETER ACADEMY LIBRARY

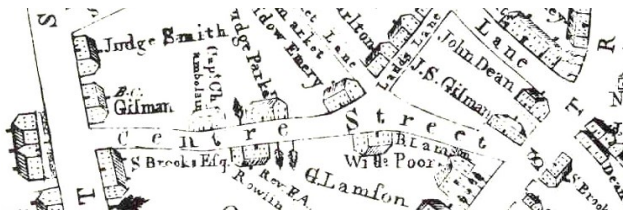
The 1971 prizewinning library building by Louis I. Kahn looms to the right of the elegant 1912 Davis Library, designed by Ralph Adams Cram and given by Benjamin Price Davis (Class of 1862). The neoclassical style of the older building is typical of library designs from the early twentieth century. Cram's ancestors were among the first settlers of Exeter. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR TOURS BY APPOINTMENT.

17. SITE OF THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH: DEACON SAMUEL BROOKS HOUSE

Built in 1845 as the Universalist church, the building was sold to the Unitarians in 1854, to Methodists in 1870, and finally to the Presbyterians in 1996. It is on the site of Deacon Samuel Brooks's house, where the Committee of Safety frequently met during the Revolutionary War. This committee served as the executive for the provincial government, which decided local affairs after the departure of the royal governor and before the creation of New Hampshire as a state on January 5, 1776. The church building burned in November 2003.

18. 39 FRONT STREET

This dwelling house of about 1763 was the home of "ingenious" Benjamin Clark Gilman. He made clocks, navigation tools, and surveyors instruments and worked as a silversmith and engraver. In 1797, he proposed building the Exeter aqueduct and was later involved in building water systems in Portsmouth; Boston; Salem, Massachusetts; and New London, Connecticut. Exeter attracted many exceptional inventors and mechanical craftsmen during this period, as indicated by the profusion of local clockmakers.



Detail, P. Merrill, 1802 Exeter map, showing Front Street

19. THE BAPTIST CHURCH

Constructed in 1875 on Front Street, this Gothic revival brick church was designed by Peabody and Stearns of Boston. The Exeter Baptist Church, the first non-Congregational church in town, was organized in 1800, with ten members who built a framed, clapboarded meetinghouse on the corner of Water and Spring Streets in 1805. Their second, larger meetinghouse on Water Street replaced the first in 1833. By 1875, they had expanded and moved into this building.

industries have been revived in the 1990s – a chocolate factory and leather goods factory – and the Academy remains a premier center for education. Newcomers to local business, such as an electronics plant and a toner cartridge recycling company, parallel the diversity of early enterprise on the Squamscott.

*James L. Garvin
Architectural Historian
State of New Hampshire*



Coal Schooner Lizzie J. Call under tow on the Squamscott River, c. 1900. The Horne family, toll collectors at the drawbridge in Stratham, documented many three-masted schooners and river traffic during the early 1900s.

THE WALKING TOUR

1. 7 FRONT STREET: TOWN HALL

The Town Hall, designed by Boston architectural critic and designer Arthur Gilman, was constructed in 1855 as both a courthouse and town hall where fairs, dances, elections, and town meetings were held. The wooden statue of Justice on the cupola is believed to be the only figure of a person atop a New Hampshire building. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.



String Bridge and view of Exeter Manufacturing Company, 1870s

2. STRING BRIDGE

The name comes from an earlier log, or stringer, bridge. The island on the left is the site of Exeter's first mill, a 1640 gristmill. The stretch of the river from the island to the vicinity of Great Bridge was the site of many water powered mills before the mid-nineteenth century, when there were two saw mills, a fulling mill, a nail mill, a starch mill and the Exeter Manufacturing Company, a cotton mill that was eventually powered by steam. The cotton mill's main buildings still stand and were converted to apartments in 1987. On the hill opposite the mill buildings is a large brick house that was the home of the mill agent, built there at a time when mill executives lived near their businesses. Later you will see a house occupied by a mill owner (25) when the fashion was to live far from the noise of the factory. Farther upriver were other sawmills, a gunpowder mill and a paper mill.



Squamscott House Receipt Letterhead, c. late 19th century

15. 24 FRONT STREET: SQUAMSCOTT HOTEL

The large brick building across the street was built in 1851 as a hotel called the Squamscott House. Here, in 1853, it is believed Amos Tuck convened a meeting of free-state politicians from several political parties to discuss forming a new antislavery party. Since 1929, the site has been proclaimed as the location where the Republican Party was founded. The building has served as a hotel, a Phillips Exeter Academy dormitory, and now an office building.

16. 27 FRONT STREET

This Federal style building was erected in 1831 as the Granite Bank, which included living quarters for a cashier on the second floor. The town's first bank, the old Exeter Bank, was established nearly thirty years earlier. Brick construction gained popularity over wood-frame buildings early in the 1800s, after major fires struck nearby towns.



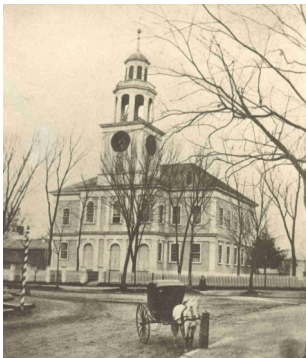
Granite State Bank, 1860s

12. 14 FRONT STREET: PERRY-DUDLEY HOUSE

These three Federal-style houses, along with the 1892 probate office and county records building, form one of Exeter's best architectural ensembles. The earliest structure, the 1809 Sullivan-Sleeper House, was built for George Sullivan, a lawyer and politician. The 1826 Gardner House was the home of hardware merchant John Gardner, and the circa 1815 Perry-Dudley House was home to two generations of doctors. The elder, William Perry, was a pioneer in the humane treatment of mental disease.

13. SITE OF THE TOWN HOUSE

Built in 1732 for town meetings, the Town House was flanked by stocks and a whipping post. During the Revolution, it served as New Hampshire's State House. Here, on January 5, 1776, the first state constitution of the original thirteen states was signed; six months later, on July 16, the Declaration of Independence was read to the citizens of Exeter from the Town House steps by a young John Taylor Gilman. A new Town House was built in 1793, where the Swasey Pavilion now stands.



*Congregational Church,
c. 1865*

14. 21 FRONT STREET: CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF EXETER

This, the Congregational Church's fourth meeting-house, was begun in 1798, from designs by local builder architects Ebenezer Clifford and Bradbury Johnson. The facade retains its original Palladian features, but the

interior was radically altered in 1838, when the lofty auditorium was divided into two floors.

3. EXETER PUBLIC LIBRARY

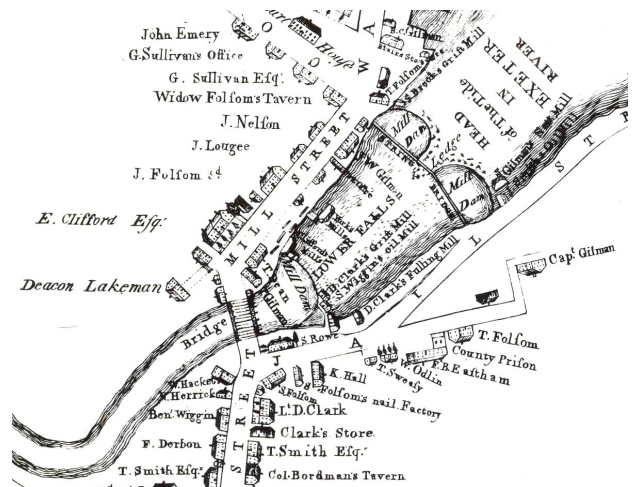
Completed in 1987, the town's new library sits in Founders Park, established to commemorate Exeter's 350th anniversary. A bronze plaque on Founders Gate quotes from the 1639 Exeter Combination, a compact written by the Reverend John Wheelwright that declared Exeter's right to make laws and form its own government. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. See website for information and hours: www.exeterpl.org.

4. 11 PLEASANT STREET: SIMEON FOLSOM HOUSE

Robert Lincoln lived in the second-floor room at the left end of this building while attending Phillips Exeter Academy. His father, Abraham Lincoln, visited him here in 1860. The curved end of the building was built by Captain Simeon Folsom in 1816. His nail factory was on the riverbank nearby.

5. GREAT BRIDGE

This is the site of Exeter's first bridge. The seventeenth century Gilman sawmills were located near the bridge, one on each bank. On the left is the restored Long Block, built about 1822, as a rooming house for mill workers.



Detail, P. Merrill, 1802 map of Exeter showing Great Bridge at lower left.



Gilman Garrison, 1860s.

6. 12 WATER STREET: GILMAN GARRISON HOUSE (HISTORIC NEW ENGLAND)

The massive, square-sawn logs used to build the Gilman Garrison are found only in early log construction in New Hampshire and Maine. Two sawmills owned by the Gilman family were operating across the street from the garrison site after 1648, and must have supplied timbers for the house. The thick log walls, now clapboarded over, may have been a response to the threat of Indian attack, which was strong in the Exeter area until 1723. The first written mention of the garrison is in 1719, when the “loghouse by the bridge” was licensed as a tavern by John Gilman Jr. the great wing abutting Water Street, with its elegant interior paneling, was added in the mid-eighteenth century; a century later the first floor had become a milliner’s shop. In 1966, the house was willed to Historic New England, which opens the house for tours reflecting 300 years of Exeter’s commercial and social life. See website for information and hours: www.historicnewengland.org

7. IOKA THEATER

This theater, with its classical façade, was built in 1915 for Judge Edward D. Mayer and opened with the epic civil War film, *The Birth of a Nation*. Mayer went bankrupt the following year and left Exeter.



Swasey Pavilion, around 1920. (Building on right is the Folsom Tavern, before it was moved in 1929)

8. SWASEY PAVILION

This handsome bandstand was given to the town in 1916 by Ambrose Swasey, inventor of the turret lathe, which revolutionized the production of machine tools. Designed by Henry Bacon, architect of the Lincoln Memorial, the pavilion replaced an earlier seasonal wooden bandstand. The Exeter Brass Band was founded in 1847, and continues to perform each summer beneath the fine copper roof and elaborate mosaics in the ceiling. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

9. 4 FRONT STREET: SULLIVAN-SLEEPER HOUSE (INN BY THE BANDSTAND)

10. 10 FRONT STREET: TOWN OFFICES

11. 12 FRONT STREET: GARDNER HOUSE



Turn-of-the-century view of Front Street. From left to right: Sullivan-Sleeper House, County Record Building (now Town Offices) and Gardner House.