



[History of Exeter, New Hampshire.](#)

The Gilman Garrison House, a National Historic Landmark, and the American Independence Museum were both former homes of the Gilman family. The Gilman family also donated the land on which Phillips Exeter Academy stands, including the Academy's original Yard, the oldest part of campus. The Gilmans of Exeter also furnished America with one of its founding fathers, Nicholas Gilman, and the state of New Hampshire with treasurers, a governor, representatives to the General Assembly and judges to the General Court.

The Gilman family began trading as far as the West Indies with ships they owned out of Portsmouth. It was a high-stakes business. In an 1803 voyage, for instance, the 180-ton clipper 'Oliver Peabody,' owned by Gov. John Taylor Gilman, Oliver Peabody, Col. Gilman Leavitt and others, was boarded by brigs belonging to the Royal Navy under command of Admiral Horatio Nelson. Enforcing a blockade against the French, Nelson offered ship Captain Stephen Gilman of Exeter a glass of wine and paid him for his cargo in Spanish dollars. The trip demonstrates how far afield the ambitious merchants of Exeter reached in their trading forays. For more information about hotel rooms and suites in Exeter NH click here [Rooms and Suites.](#)