

[Back to list](#)

## BLOG: AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE MUSEUM, EXETER

01 Jun 2018 7:30 AM | [Kelly Bryer \(Administrator\)](#)

*Thank you GSA Sue Greenbaum for putting together with feedback from Violet Anderson, Margaret Minnon, Ruth Dabrowski, Rosemarie Cusson, and Marie Nickerson*

The weather cooperated for the 24 GSAs (always sunny in NH!) attending the Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce/American Independence Museum tour on April 20, 2018. It was a fun group and we met several of the recently graduated new GSAs.



Our first stop was to the Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce's new visitor center on Water Street, which by the way, is NHGSA's newest member center. It was built in an old court room, complete with the judges old desk. What a beautiful office space with the nicest people!



From there, we took a short walk down to the American Independence Museum.



The American Independence Museum is a historic house museum located in Exeter. The campus consists of two buildings, the Ladd-Gilman House, which is the main building of the American Independence Museum, and the Folsom Tavern. The museum offers popular year-round programming and special events. It houses many artifacts, including a rare first official copy of the Declaration of Independence, found by an electrician in 1985 in the attic floorboards of the Ladd-Gilman House.



Also included in the museum's collection were two rare draft copies of the U.S. Constitution and a Badge of Military Merit (the original Purple Heart), awarded by General George Washington to soldiers demonstrating extraordinary bravery. From letters and documents we know that George Washington had excellent penmanship! It was awesome to be in the presence of so many historical treasures.

Another thing that stood out for me was the state treasury room with a sample of NH currency. I never gave it much thought and was surprised to learn that each colony had their own currency with different values. How complicated that would have been for travelers!



We also visited the Folsom Tavern, built in 1775, when Exeter was the capital of New Hampshire. It has been moved three times in the past 200 years, the last time in October 2004. Our first president once ate breakfast there, and I found it humbling to be eating in the same room where George Washington once ate. Thank you Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce for a wonderful lunch provided by your member, Hannafords!



What intrigued me very much were the fun activities that Exeter plans for their waterfront area. The Swasey Parkway is a beautiful public park which runs along the Squamscott River, a 6 mile long tidal river. On Saturday, July 14, more than 4,000 people are expected to visit for the 28th American Independence Festival, presented by the American Independence Museum. Main Street will be closed down so they can feature historic battle re-enactments, colonial demonstrations, cannons that fire throughout the day, crafts, music, food, children's activities, a splendid ending with night-time fireworks!

Our presenters, Executive Director Emma Bray of the American Independence Museum, and Member Services Director Bobbi Vandenbulcke of the Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce were both welcoming and very knowledgeable. Thank you both so very much!

The American Independence Museum  
One Governors Lane, Exeter, NH 03833  
603-772-2622  
[www.independencemuseum.org](http://www.independencemuseum.org)

Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce  
120 Water Street, Suite B  
Exeter, NH 03833  
603-772-2411  
[www.exeterarea.org](http://www.exeterarea.org)

View all our photos: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/Z4JwOqvigDymonGu2>

[Add comment](#)