

COUNTY NEWS



Maine County Commissioners Association Newsletter

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The Future of Work

The gig economy is made up of three main components: the independent workers paid by the gig (i.e., a task or a project) as opposed to those workers who receive a salary or hourly wage; the consumers who need a specific service, for example, a ride to their next destination, or a particular item delivered; and the companies that connect the worker to the consumer in a direct manner, including app-based technology platforms. Companies such as Uber, Airbnb, Lyft, Etsy or TaskRabbit act as the medium through which the worker is connected to – and ultimately paid by – the consumer. These companies make it easier for workers to find a quick, temporary job (i.e., a gig), which can include any kind of work, from a musical performance to fixing a leaky faucet. One of the main differences between a gig and traditional work arrangements, however, is that a gig is a temporary work engagement, and the worker is paid only for that specific job. The gig economy is by no means a new concept, but this past decade has seen it expand greatly. The share of the U.S. workforce in the gig economy rose from 10.1 percent in 2005 to 15.8 percent in 2015. In 2016, 24 percent of Americans reported earning some money from the “digital platform economy” during the previous year. The gig economy is a category of work that is still largely undefined and unrecognized by U.S. policy, from the local up to the federal level. Nevertheless, the gig economy is growing and influencing the way that Americans view work, which poses challenges for counties. Counties can embrace the gig economy and learn to harness the benefits, while also tackling the challenges and disruptive effects associate with it. [~Click here to read the full article by NACo’s Dr. Emilia Istrate & Jonathan Harris.](#)



Washington County, Maine



Washington County Museum & Heritage Center

The Washington County Court House complex was the location of an addition to the building that doubled in size when the State of Maine completed its court system addition in 2015. When the staff moved into their new quarters, the county reclaimed real estate that meant moving several offices. The administration and treasurer’s offices moved across the hall, leaving space for the Washington County Museum and Heritage Center.

The Museum houses artifacts contributed by a number of county residents. Now it is the home of an extensive basket collection from Pleasant Point and a number of arrowheads found along the Machias River; photos from across the county; a scale model of the Little River Lighthouse in Cutler Harbor; a 4-pound cannon ball found following the American Revolution; and an iron rod reported to have been fired from the cannon on the Margareta. The Heritage Center houses an extensive collected of genealogical materials of county families. This collection is comprised of over 400 books and over 60 notebooks of vital records of towns all over the county. The Heritage Center is open Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 9:30 to 3 and is staffed by knowledgeable researchers. [~Please click here for more info.](#)



Washington County celebrated the holidays with pot luck brunch on November 21st. Looks good!

The First Naval Battle of the American Revolution



Two hundred and forty-two years ago the residents of Washington County stood up against what was then the greatest naval power in the world. Although dependent upon ships for supplies, when the cargo vessel in 1775 arrived, it was accompanied by the British armed schooner, Margareta and its commander, Lt. Moor. He was tasked with seeing that lumber was loaded upon the cargo ship and transported back to Boston.

News of the battles fought at Lexington and Concord had reached Washington County and the residents were not keen on their lumber going to aid the British. After the initial contact and having been advised of the “temperament” of the local population, Moor gave the residents several days to decide if they would exchange lumber of the needed supplies. Numerous meetings, both public and private, were held and it was finally determined not to give the lumber to the British. Instead, the residents devised a plan to capture Lt. Moor and his crew while they were in church. Runners were sent to the outlying settlements asking for men to come and help. All this was done with the knowledge that Washington County was “on its own” – being too far away for any help to come in time. If the residents were not successful, they would face the gallows, the settlements would be burned, and the families left in the wilderness to fend for themselves.

Sunday, June 11, 1775 arrived. Lt. Moor and his men were in church; they saw armed men heading for them and, guessing the intentions, jumped out the window and headed for the ship. Sailing down the river, shots were exchanged from both sides. Early the next morning the residents commandeered the Unity and the Polly, followed Lt. Moor down the river and into Machias Bay. The Unity caught up to the Margareta, and battle ensued, and Lt. Moor was mortally wounded. The Margareta was captured, sailed back up the river and hidden in the underbrush. In his History of the United States Navy, James Fenimore Cooper called the event the “Lexington of the Sea.”

June 16, 2018 will see the celebration of the Battle of the Margareta on the campus of the University of Maine, Machias. Re-enactors will relate the story of the battle; the exploits of Hannah Weston and her sister-in-law walking through the woods with lead and powder from Chandler’s River (now Jonesboro); and a preview of the story of the Battle of the Rim, celebrated in early August. The campus will be alive with encampments, children’s games, period authentic food and music. [~Click here for more information.](#)



The History of Unorganized Territories in Washington County

Washington County is known for its rugged coastline and beautiful scenery, but it is also a place with a long history and a proud heritage. Visit the events and locations highlighted to the right or join and explore the resources of the Washington County Historical & Genealogical Society.

The Washington County Historical and Genealogical Society is a group dedicated to historical preservation and genealogical research in Washington County, Maine. By working together historical societies, genealogists, and researchers can pool their limited resources, collaborate on larger scale projects, and promote each other’s work. In March 2017, John Dudley prepared a story of the history of unorganized territories for Washington County Government officials. Following is an excerpt from his writing with a link to the full 118 pages of data and pictures collected.

“The story of the past of any place or people is a history, but this story is so brief and incomplete, I gave the title of ‘A Story’. Another person could have written quite a different story based on other facts. Our limited knowledge of the past tells us that the Passamaquoddy or their forebears were the first to live in this place we call Washington County. Their knowledge and skills allowed them to live on the resources the land and waters provided. These nomadic people had no need of the concept of land ownership. The concept of land ownership came first with the Europeans who explored the Maine coast when they claimed the land for the king for whom they sailed. This concept was further solidified by the Europeans who attempted to settle here in 1604 and 1607. Successful settlement by Europeans and their descendants codified land ownership as given by Stanley Attwood in his Length and Breadth of Maine, Private land titles in Maine are derived from six sources according to a note attached to the 1883 revision of Maine Statutes.”

[~Click here to read the entire document.](#)

