

THE USGEBWEB PROJECT

The MEGenWeb Project is the collaborative effort of many individuals. Among them are our County Coordinators and County Archive File Managers who spend countless hours placing information on-line for our visitors.

Our team is among the very best within the USGenWeb Project. Although we all live near and far from the counties we host, we all bring with us a wealth of information and a deep commitment to providing free genealogical data online to the public. We work together! Many of us have teams of contributors working in the background bringing life and information to the pages you visit.

Please take a moment to visit our county pages listed at

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~megenweb/counties.html>

The county is the intermediate organization between the state government and the cities and towns. The boundaries of a county are determined by law, and every portion of the state is in some county. A town or city is chosen as the shire town or county seat, and here are erected the buildings necessary for the conduct of county business, the court house and the jail. The administrative functions are exercised by the county commissioners, three in number, who are elected for a term of six years. These commissioners make assessments, levy taxes, have charge of the county roads, and supervise the receipts and expenditures of county money. The clerk of courts is also the clerk of this body. The sheriff, who is elected for two years, is charged with the enforcement of the laws, has charge of the jail and appoints deputies in the larger towns. The county treasurer has charge of the money which comes, not from individuals, but from towns and from the fees and fines received by the sheriff and the clerk of courts. The office of the register of deeds is an important one. Here are kept the records of deeds, mortgages and attachments.

In Maine the law does not require a minimum population before a town can be incorporated as a city, and consequently, the fact that a place is a city does not indicate its size. Cities are incorporated under special charters with usually a mayor as chief executive, with a board of aldermen and common council. Cities are divided into districts called wards and each citizen must vote in his own ward. The government is representative and minor officials are chosen by the city council. One city in Maine has the commission plan of government. Each member of the commission is in charge of one of the departments, such as police, public works and so on. Together they form a board which makes ordinances and carries on the business of the city. Another city is under the commission manager plan. The government is in the hands of one man, who is an expert, selected for his abilities in this line

The towns are all incorporated under uniform state laws for the town form of organization. The town meeting, at which all citizens with a voting residence have a voice, is the legislative body and is an example of the purest form of democratic government. At the town meeting are chosen the officers of the town, money is raised and appropriated for town business. The chief officials are the selectmen, whose number may be from three, five or seven, the town clerk, treasurer, collector of taxes, the road commissioner, school committee, superintendent of schools, who serves several towns, and the board of health.

Plantations. The plantation is a rudimentary town and has all the essential machinery that towns possess, but in a simplified form. Plantations may be organized for school purposes alone. The officials are the same as for towns except that three assessors that the place of selectmen.

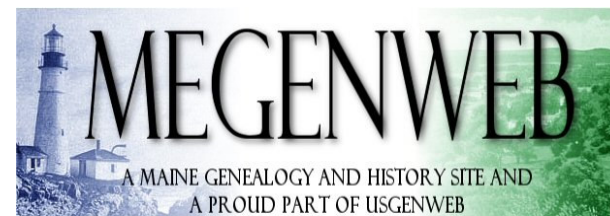
Unorganized Townships. There is in Maine in addition to cities, towns and plantations another local unit called an unorganized township, which is sometimes confused in the popular mind with the plantation. It is however, entirely distinct as the name suggests is without a local form of government and consequently with no local officials and no local taxation. Many of these townships have a population of considerable size and have schools and roads. The schools come under the direct supervision of the State Department of Education while the roads are under the direction of the county commissioners. The unorganized townships occupy about one-half of the area of the state, or to be more exact forty-seven per cent.

MEGenWeb Project

**A proud part of the
USGenWeb Project**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~megenweb/>

<http://www.usgenweb.org/>



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VISIT THE COUNTIES

Androscoggin. Incorporated March 18, 1854.

Aroostook. Incorporated March 16, 1839.

Cumberland. Incorporated 1760.

Franklin. Incorporated March 20, 1838.

Hancock. Originally a part of Lincoln County. Portions taken in 1816 to form Penobscot, and in 1827 to form Waldo.

Kennebec. Incorporated February 20, 1799.

Knox. Incorporated in 1860.

Lincoln. Incorporated June 19, 1760.

Oxford. Incorporated March 4, 1805.

Penobscot. Incorporated February 15, 1816.

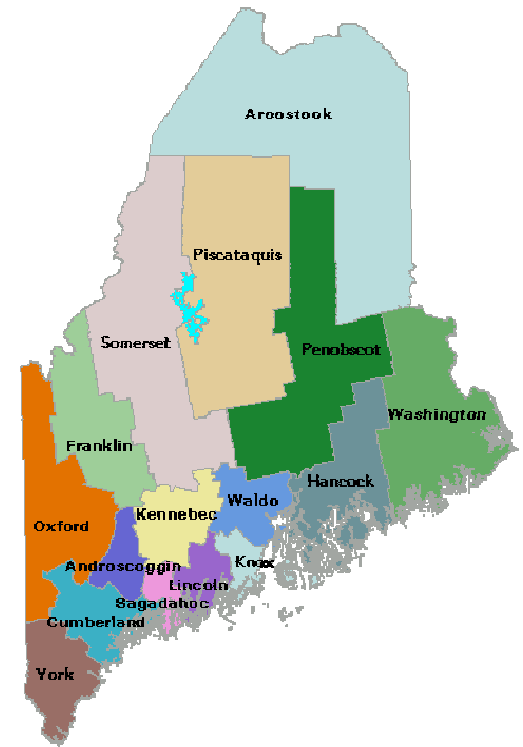
Piscataquis. Incorporated March 23, 1838.

Somerset. Incorporated March 1, 1809.

Waldo. Named in honor of General Samuel Waldo. Incorporated February 7, 1827.

Washington. Incorporated June 25, 1789.

York. [Sir Ferdinando] Gorges named what is now York County and all of his other Maine possessions, New Somersetshire. In 1658 when the inhabitants of Maine submitted to the rule of Massachusetts, she gave it the name of Yorkshire. It then extended to the western limit of North Yarmouth in Casco Bay. In 1760 the Counties of Cumberland and Lincoln were taken from it.



1820. Maine separated from Massachusetts and was admitted into the Union as a sovereign state, entering upon the fourth period of her government, with which we are all familiar.