A Bear Story – February 2001 by Jane Rice

Here is an incident from Moultonboro's history that was related by Rev. Jeremy Belknap in his history of New Hampshire, published in 1792:

"An affecting instance of a child falling a prey to one of them, (bears) happened at Moultonborough, in the month of August, 1784. A boy of eight years old, son of a Mr. Leach, was sent to a pasture, toward the close of the day, to put out a horse, and bring home the cows. His father being in a neighboring field, heard a cry of distress, and running to the fence, saw his child lying on the ground, and a bear standing by him. He seized a stake, and crept along, with a view to get between the bear and the child. The bear took the child by the throat, and drew him into the bushes. The father pursued till he came up, and aiming a stroke at the bear, the stake broke in his hand; and the bear, leaving his prey, turned upon the parent, who, in the anguish of his soul, was obliged to retreat, and call for help. Before any sufficient help could be obtained, the evening was so far advanced, that a search was impracticable. The night was passed by the family in the utmost distress. The neighbours assembled, and at break of day, renewed the pursuit. The child's hat, and the bridle, which he had dropped, were found, and they tracked his blood about forty rods, when they discovered the mangled corps. The throat was torn, and one thigh devoured. Whilst they were standing round the body, the bear rose from behind a log. Three guns were fired at the same instant, which dis-patched him; and a fire was immediately kindled, in which he was consumed. This was a male bear, of about three years old".

We are very fortunate that the worst we can say of Moultonboro's bear population at the present time is that they will tear down birdfeeders to get at the seeds, but there have been no humans harmed by bears since that time.