

Historical Research – Granite State News 1887 – November 2000

by Jane Rice

I have started looking over old newspapers on microfilm at various libraries, in search of items concerning Moultonboro. The following is an excerpt from a column that appeared in the Granite State News of September 26, 1887, written by Jeremiah Blake, who was then 87 years of age. He has described how the first settlers came up from Hampton and reached Alton Bay by way of a blazed trail through the woods. Under the direction of a ship carpenter, the men in the company cut down white oak lumber and built a large, flat-bottomed boat, and a smaller boat, to transport themselves up the lakeshore to Moultonboro, where they eventually arrived at Clark's Landing.

" As they proceeded up the lake, they discovered a large bear swimming from one island to another. They at once detailed a crew to man the small boat and give him chase. They overtook him just as he reached the rocks on the shore of the island for which he was bound. Seizing him by the tail they drove him under water until he was partially drowned. They then cut his throat and dragged him by the tail to the large boat, where he was hoisted on board and dressed. As the bear was very large and fat, the company had plenty of fresh meat for several days."

The article goes on to tell of a boy who became quite homesick, and one winter day started out to walk down the lake on the ice and go back to Hampton. He was overtaken by darkness and a snowstorm, and when his brothers found him, his feet were frozen. An amputation was deemed necessary to save his life, and his two brothers pulled him all the way to Portsmouth on a hand sled for the operation, as well as on the return journey after he had recovered.

He was later able to ride horseback, saw and split wood and break flax, and other farm chores, and even traveled to Maine to preach the Gospel.

Another researcher who has been busy is Marion Goodwin, who is going through old records of the Methodist Church to bring their history together. She has also obtained a list of the postmasters who have served in Moultonboro, and is also on the trail of the postmasters who were appointed at Lakeview, Winnepesaukee, Red Hill, East Moultonboro, all of which were once post offices within the town. The first postmaster, George Freeze, was appointed in 1804, followed by eighteen

others down to the present day, including some who had more than one term in the job, depending on the political appointments of the day. The list also sheds some light on the question of the spelling of our town's name. It was s c h a n g e d from "Moultonborough" to "Moultonboro" in 1892, at least in the eyes of the post office, though not approved by the State of New Hampshire. It was also spelled "Moultonburgh" between about 1827 and 1830.

The Moultonboro Library has had a collection of Moultonboro maps, pictures, and historical pamphlets on display during the month of October, in hopes of attracting more workers and more contributions from local residents that can be added to our database. Most of the written records from the Historical Society building that were not already found in the library's town history files have been copied and placed in the library files so that researchers can access them during the winter months, when our Town House is closed.