

A Little Controversy in Moultonborough

by Jane Rice

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The great controversy of early Moultonboro political history was the choice of a minister to be “settled” over the town, as was required by law. Every town had to support a minister of the gospel, and a lot for the use and support of the church and parsonage was set aside when the lots and ranges of the town were first laid out. One party supported Rev. Samuel Perley, and their votes appeared to carry the day at several meetings, but those who did not wish Rev. Perley to become the town’s minister eventually prevailed, and on February 15, 1779, with 47 voters present, a majority of seven voters agreed that he was not legally and fairly settled in the town. They were obliged to “settle” with him for the expenses he had incurred, at a sum not to exceed \$16.00 per Sabbath for the time he had been preaching in town. At a meeting in September, 1779, an official call was given to Rev. Jeremiah Shaw to be the minister, at a salary of 55 pounds per year, with raises as more people settled in the town, and 30 cords of good fire wood annually. He remained the minister of the gospel for many years and performed marriages for most of the early settlers. Later, the town had a lawsuit with one John Marston, who refused to pay his tax to support the minister.