

## **CHARLES HENRY GREENLEAF**

**Born July 23, 1841 at Danville, Vermont**

**“Colonel” Charles Greenleaf began a long and prominent career in the hotel business as a bellboy at the Profile House in Franconia Notch in 1857. Except for one summer spent as bellboy at the Crawford House, young Greenleaf spent his summers at the Profile House working for Richard Taft, whom he greatly admired.**

**During the winter of 1856 when Greenleaf worked as a clerk at the American House in Boston, Richard Taft offered him an interest in his hotel business. At age 24 Greenleaf accepted the offer and moved to the region he loved, as a member of the hotel company of Taft, Tyler and Greenleaf. When Tyler dropped out of the company, Greenleaf and Taft became partners. Greenleaf saw and participated in many developments at the Profile House. He helped first with a large addition to the hotel and then with the addition of 29 cottages. He witnessed the addition of such things as gas lamps, post and telegraph offices, gift and barbershops, private baths, a 100 X 50 foot parlor, billiard halls and bowling alleys and a private golf course.**

**When Richard Taft died in 1881, Charles Greenleaf became the sole owner of the Profile House and many acres of land in Franconia Notch. The hotel again could not handle all the business available, so “Col.” Greenleaf decided to tear the building down in the fall of 1905. He personally supervised the crew of 300 who worked through the winter and spring so that the new, larger, more luxurious four story frame building with 400 rooms opened as the Profile House on July 1, 1906.**

**“Col.” Greenleaf had many interests simultaneously with the Profile House. He was connected with prominent hotels in Washington, D.C. and New York City. He was proprietor of the Vendome Hotel in Boston for 55 years. He made his home in Franconia and entered into life in the town as well as being treasurer and manager of the Profile and Franconia Notch Railroad, New Hampshire delegate to the 1888 Republican National Convention and an active member of the New England Hotel Association. He gained the rank of colonel when serving as staff member of Governor Benjamin F. Prescott. In 1912 “Col.” Greenleaf had the Abbie Greenleaf Library built. He gave the building and an acre of land to the Town in honor of his first wife.**

**Greenleaf loved the mountains and hiked them often. He was intimately involved with and responsible for the first repairs to the “Great Stone Face.” He discovered the slippage of the forehead stone. For many years he thought there was nothing that could be done to keep the whole profile together. However, after talking with Reverend Guy Roberts of Whitefield in 1916, Greenleaf enlisted the help of Governor Roland H. Spaulding and his council. They agreed that Guy Roberts should work to repair the profile according to his plan and said they would assume part of the expense if “Col.” Greenleaf would “undertake entire charge of the work**

necessary to be done.” So, in 1916, “Col.” Greenleaf was instrumental in the beginnings of the great efforts that have been made to save the “Great Stone Face.”

In 1922, when he sold the Profile House to Frank P. Abbott, Charles Greenleaf retired from the hotel business. In 1923 he wrote and published a small book entitled History of the Old Man of the Mountain, The Flume 1857-1920. In 1924 at the age of 83, “Col.” Greenleaf died at Pinehurst, NJ. He left \$10,000 to the Appalachian Mountain club, \$5,000 to the Dartmouth Outing Club, and \$10,000 to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.

Source:

Hancock, Frances Ann Johnson. Saving the Great Stone Face: The Chronicle of the Old Man of the Mountain. Canaan, NH: Phoenix, 1984.

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