



Charles Henry Greenleaf



Charles Henry Greenleaf was born 23 July, 1841, in Danville, Vermont, to Seth Greenleaf and Lydia Hall Burnham. In 1867, he married Abbie Francis Burnham, born 17 January 1841 in Newbury, Vermont to Denison Rogers Burnham and Abigail Hopkinson Carleton.

In 1857, Charles began a long and prominent career in the hotel business as a bellboy working for Richard Taft at the Profile House, a hotel complex once situated at the foot of Cannon Mountain in Franconia Notch. At age 24, Greenleaf accepted an interest in this hotel business and oversaw many of the developments at the Profile House, including the construction of a large addition to the hotel and 29 cottages. He witnessed the introduction of gas lamps, post and telegraph offices, private baths, and the construction of gift and barber shops, an enormous parlor, billiard halls, bowling alleys, and a private golf course. When Richard Taft died in 1881, Greenleaf became the sole owner of the Profile House and its many acres of land in Franconia Notch. In 1905, as part of an expansion plan, the hotel was demolished and a larger, more luxurious four-story frame building with 400 rooms was constructed. By 1921, Greenleaf had decided to retire and sold the entire enterprise. And then, in 1923, the hotel and all of the surrounding buildings burned to the ground. After this tragic event, a citizens' movement came together to ensure that the land of Franconia Notch (Cannon Mountain, The Basin, The Flume, Echo Lake, etc.) would not be handed over to logging interests, and ultimately this led to the creation of Franconia Notch State Park.

Charles H. Greenleaf loved the White Mountains and hiked them often. He made his home in Franconia and in addition to his interest in the Profile House and his leadership in preserving The Old Man of the Mountain, he was the treasurer and manager of the Profile and Franconia Notch Railroad. He was a 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 a staff member to Governor Benjamin F. Prescott. In 1912, Greenleaf ordered the construction of the Abbie Greenleaf Library and gave the building and an acre of land to the Town of Franconia in memory of his first wife.

He died on 8 April 1924, in Moore, North Carolina, at the age of 82, and was buried in Holderness, New Hampshire.