

[Greenleaf, Halbert S.]

Although Halbert S. Greenleaf passed away in August, 1906, his memory is yet cherished by many who knew him because of his personal qualities and his worth in business life. He belonged to that class of men who by a genial nature shed around them much of the sunshine of life and few hold a warmer place in the affection of their friends than did Mr. Greenleaf. He, moreover, gained distinction in connection with public interests bearing upon the welfare of his city and state and at all times his devotion to the public good was above question.

A native of Vermont, Mr. Greenleaf was born in Guilford, April 12, 1827, and was a son of Jeremiah and Eunice Elvira (Stevens) Greenleaf, the latter a daughter of Dr. Simon and Susanna (Greenleaf) Stevens. The father of our subject was born in Brattleboro, Vermont, December 7, 1791, and died in Guilford, April 4, 1864. He was an author and teacher and published *Grammar Simplified*, *Greenleaf's Gazetteer* and *Greenleaf's Atlas*.

The family was founded in America by Edmund Greenleaf, who came from Ipswich, Suffolk county, England, in 1635, and settled in Newbury, Massachusetts, but later removed to Boston. He bore a high reputation for probity and saw active service as captain of militia. His son, Stephen Greenleaf, served as ensign in King Phillip's War and rose to the rank of lieutenant. He was born in England in 1628 and died in 1696 in Newbury. His wife was Elizabeth Coffin, of Newbury. Their son, Stephen Greenleaf (2d), was born in 1652 and died in Newbury in 1743. He married Elizabeth Gerrish, of Newbury, and he served as ensign in a regiment raised for the reduction of Canada. His son, Rev. Daniel Greenleaf, who was born in 1680, married Elizabeth Gookin and died in Newbury in 1763. Their son, Dr. Daniel Greenleaf, served as a surgeon at the siege of Lewisburg. He was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1702, and died in 1795. His wife bore the maiden name of Silence Marsh. Their son, Stephen Greenleaf, married Eunice Fairbanks, of Boston. He was born in Boston in 1735 and died in Brattleboro, Vermont, in 1802. His son, Daniel Greenleaf, the paternal grandfather of our subject, was born in Boston in 1764 and died in Bernardston, Massachusetts, in 1845. He married Huldah Hopkins. They were the parents of Jeremiah Greenleaf, our subject's father, who entered the army as a private in the war of 1812 and was made lieutenant at the battle of Plattsburg.

Halbert S. Greenleaf attended the common schools of Guilford, Vermont, and Greenfield, Massachusetts, and later was a student in the seminary at Brattleboro, Vermont. He taught school for a time in Guilford and Greenfield and was afterward with Sargent & Foster in business at Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts. For a time he was engaged in the lock manufacturing business at that place as a member of the firm of Yale & Greenleaf, and in the manufacture of bits and gimlets as a member of the firm of Miller & Greenleaf. He was superintendent of salt mines at Avery Island, Louisiana, from 1865 to 1867. During the Civil war, however, he put aside his business interests in order to respond to the country's call for aid, becoming Colonel of the Fifty-second Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry in September, 1862, and he participated in the battle of Indian Ridge and the siege of Port Hudson. He commanded that regiment until August 14, 1863, and later was captain of the *Colonel Benedict*, a steamer on the Mississippi river in the government service until 1865.

On leaving the south in 1867, Mr. Greenleaf came to Rochester and joined James Sargent in the manufacture of bank, safe and key locks, under the name of Sargent & Greenleaf, which was changed in 1896 to the Sargent & Greenleaf Company, with Mr. Sargent as president and Mr. Greenleaf as vice president. They built up an extensive business and our subject continued in that line throughout his remaining days. Their plant

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was located at No. 178 Court street, and a constantly increasing trade gave them prominence in industrial circles. Mr. Greenleaf was also a trustee of the Rochester Savings Bank.

In his political views he was a Democrat and was much interested in the political situation of the country. His fellow townsmen, recognizing his worth and ability, called him to public office and honors, and he represented his district in the forty-eighth and fifty-second congresses, taking an active part in the councils of the law-making body of the nation. He ever stood firm in support of his honest convictions, neither fear nor favor swerving him from a course which he believed to be right. In community affairs he was also deeply interested and became a charter member of the board of park commissioners of Rochester in 1888 and served until his death. He was also a charter member of the Mechanics' Institute of Rochester, with which he was connected for twelve years from 1885. No public trust reposed in him was ever betrayed in the slightest degree, and he stood for all that is honorable in man's relations with his fellowmen, his home locality and to his country. He belonged to the Masonic fraternity and to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows for many years and was likewise a member of the Genesee Valley Club and active in the Universalist church, contributing liberally to its support and doing all in his power to advance its interests.

On the 24th of June, 1852, in Wilmington, Vermont, Mr. Greenleaf married Miss Jean Frances Brooks, who was born in Bernardston, Massachusetts, a daughter of Dr. John Brooks and a sister of Mrs. Yale. Mr. and Mrs. Greenleaf traveled life's journey happily together as man and wife for fifty-four years, their mutual love and confidence increasing as the years passed by. They bore together the joys and sorrows, the adversity and prosperity which checker the career of all. Mrs. Greenleaf still occupies the home at No. 196 North Goodman street, Rochester, which her husband built for her thirty-six years ago. His personal characteristics were those which everywhere win friends. He possessed a most cheerful, genial nature and kindly spirit. It is doubtful if he ever did anything in his life as a matter of policy and yet he was always doing kind things for others out of the goodness of his heart. He did not seek notoriety and his public service was ever performed from a sense of conscientious obligation. He loved his fellowmen because of his broad humanitarianism and his interest in everything that pertained to the public welfare was deep and sincere. He had the happy faculty of not only winning friends but also retaining them, and his death came with a sense of great personal bereavement to the great majority of all with whom he had come in contact through an active, useful and honorable career.

William F. Peck, *History of Rochester and Monroe County New York from the Earliest Historic Times to the Beginning of 1907* (1908), pages 870 & 873

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