



# Old Man of the Mountain: Sources in this Set

**Object** Engraving, by N. and S.S. Jocelyn, 1828      Courtesy of New Hampshire State Library

There are several conflicting accounts about the discovery of the Old Man of the Mountain, the earliest known dating from 1844. However, most of the accounts agree that the granite profile was first seen—other than presumably by Native Americans—around 1805 and that it was first noticed by members of a surveying party working and camping in Franconia Notch near Ferrin’s Pond (later renamed Profile Lake) and that just one or two members of the party happened to be in just the right spot, looking in just the right direction to see the remarkable face. In 1828, this engraving based on a sketch by “a gentleman of Boston” is the first known image of the natural profile. It was published in the *American Journal of Science and Arts*, making the natural wonder more widely known.

**Object** *Old Man of the Mountain*, by Edward Hill, 1879      New Hampshire Historical Society  
1925.007.01

The White Mountains tourism boom of the nineteenth century came along with a demand from visitors for images that captured the places they had seen. During the 19th century, more than 400 artists painted White Mountain landscape scenes. Among them was Edward Hill (1843–1923), who immigrated to New Hampshire from England as a child, bought land in Lancaster, NH, in the 1870s and established a reputation as a landscape painter. For 15 years he was the artist-in-residence at the famed Profile House, and it was during that time that he painted the Old Man of the Mountain. Hill’s painting was printed on ceramic plates, tea cups, and creamers—a new type of souvenir for 19th-century tourists.



**Object** Profile House pitcher New Hampshire Historical Society  
1908.055

By the 1840s the Old Man of the Mountain had become a major tourist attraction. It was the most unusual of the many natural features for which the White Mountains became known. It gave its name to Profile Lake, Profile Mountain (now Cannon Mountain), and the Profile House. The Profile House opened in 1853, one of the first grand resorts in the White Mountains, and welcomed guests until 1923. This porcelain pitcher, decorated with red and gold enamel, was made in England for use in the hotel.

**Photograph** Carte de visite New Hampshire Historical Society

Carte de visite photographs were a 19th-century innovation for sharing photographs. Small photographic prints were mounted on heavy paper cards that typically measured 2 inches by 4 inches. They were inexpensive and could safely travel through the mail.

**Photograph** Profile steam locomotive New Hampshire Historical Society  
1908.055

The steam locomotive in this photograph ran on the Profile & Franconia Notch Railroad, which opened in 1879. Construction of railroads in New Hampshire began in the 1830s, and lines did not reach the White Mountain region until the 1850s. Prior to the opening of the Profile & Franconia Notch line, tourists had to take a stagecoach from a station in Plymouth or Littleton to reach the Profile House or see the Old Man of the Mountain.

**Object** License plate New Hampshire Historical Society  
2012.043.016

This 1926 steel license plate, its raised text, numbers, and image in white on a green background, was among the first New Hampshire plates to include a graphic image. In 1924 the Old Man of the Mountain was chosen by the New Hampshire Department of Motor Vehicles to be that graphic image and the first plates were released at the end of 1925. The *Christian Science Monitor* reported that “The idea originated in a desire to provide the plates with a little more distinction than was afforded by the color scheme and the initials of the name of the State and to call attention to one of New Hampshire’s outstanding attractions.” The graphic plates were discontinued after only one year due to weakness of the thin steel necessary to create the detail of the profile.

**Object** Stamp New Hampshire Historical Society  
1988.05

In 1945, the Old Man of the Mountain was approved as part of the official state emblem. On June 21, 1988, the U.S. Postal Service issued this commemorative stamp to mark the 200th anniversary of New Hampshire’s ratification of the U.S. Constitution. New Hampshire was the ninth, and deciding, state to ratify the Constitution. This 25-cent stamp was first issued in the state capital, Concord. The original painting for the stamp was done by Massachusetts artist, Thomas Szumowski.

**Object** Coin New Hampshire Historical Society  
2016.043

The U.S. Mint ran its 50 State Quarters program from 1999 to 2008. The quarters were released in the order that the states joined the union. New Hampshire’s quarter was first minted in 2000, three years before the Old Man of the Mountain fell.

**Object**      Milk Bottle      New Hampshire Historical Society  
2003.023.04

New Hampshire’s history of dairy farming extends back to the mid-1700s. Family-owned and operated Hatchland Farm in North Haverill produces its own milk and ice cream from a herd of 400 cows. It supplies milk to other dairies in the region. It began bottling milk in 1992. Hatchland still bottles in glass but offers plastic containers as well. The logo and slogan featured on this bottle continue to be used today.

**Document**      Resolution, 2003      New Hampshire Historical Society  
2003-019(M)

On May 16, 2003, less than two weeks after the Old Man of the Mountain collapsed, the Vermont State Senate issued this resolution offering its condolences to the people of New Hampshire for the loss of their beloved state icon. The Old Man of the Mountain had taken on such a familial role in the New Hampshire landscape that the resolution uses the words “untimely death” to describe the collapse.

**Photograph**      Cannon Mountain, 2003      Courtesy of Dick Hamilton

At 7:30 in the morning on May 3, 2003, two Franconia Notch State Park workers glanced up at Cannon Mountain during their morning rounds and discovered that the iconic symbol of New Hampshire, the Old Man of the Mountain, had disappeared. A couple of rock climbers, who had stayed overnight in the area, reported having heard “a loud roar followed by a long rumble” sometime between midnight and 2 a.m. in the direction of the cliff where the Old Man stood. No sign remained of the huge boulders that comprised the 40-foot tall, 25-foot-wide rock formation. This photograph was taken by Dick Hamilton the day the profile fell. Hamilton, the former president of White Mountain Attractions, was appointed by Governor Craig Benson to the Old Man of the Mountain Revitalization Task Force that year and soon after became a founding board member of the Old Man of the Mountain Legacy Fund.

Following the collapse, dismay ran so high that people left flowers in tribute at the profile viewing site. Although there was talk at first of replacing the missing natural visage with a replica, a task force headed by former Governor Steve Merrill decided against that idea. By the first anniversary of the profile's disappearance, the Old Man of the Mountain Legacy Fund made possible the installation of coin-operated viewfinders, allowing visitors to compare the mountainside's appearance before and after the fall. Currently at the former Old Man of the Mountain viewing site there stands a series of "steel profilers," which when correctly aligned simulate the appearance of the historic profile on the cliff above.

