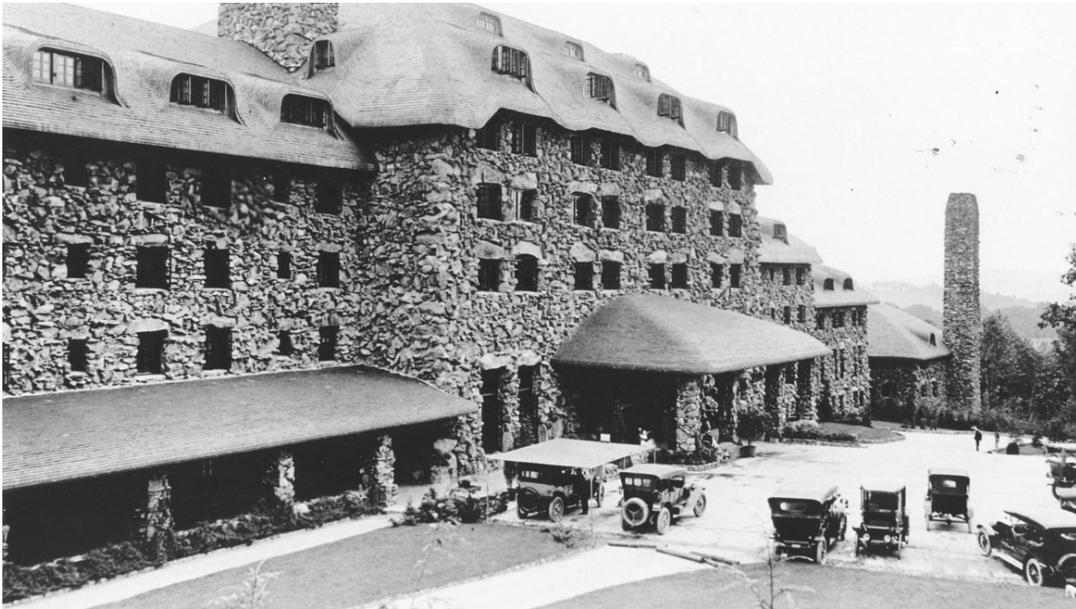


THE GROVE PARK INN STORY

Celebrating over 100 years of excellence



Edwin Wiley Grove, known as the “Father of Modern Asheville” was born in 1850 on a small farm in Tennessee. After serving in the Civil War he developed a very definite plan for his life and career. Grove set out to establish himself in the pharmaceutical world and was determined to rise from his early poverty to great wealth and success.

Grove purchased a pharmacy in Paris, Tennessee in his mid-twenties and put all of his energy into formulating a “tasteless” quinine product to prevent and treat malaria, a life-threatening disease that permeated the South in the 19th century. After many years of experimentation, Grove introduced Grove’s Tasteless Chill Tonic and success soon followed. In the late 1890’s Grove’s Tasteless Chill Tonic had become a household staple and even outsold Coca-Cola. Eventually over 1.5 million bottles of the Chill Tonic were sold.

Grove himself was often ill, afflicted with periods of bronchitis and chronic hiccups. He followed his physician, Dr. S. Westray Battle to Asheville, NC in order to convalesce in the clean healing mountain air of Asheville, NC. In 1898 Grove established a residence in Asheville and began to envision his next big adventure.

While still pursuing pharmaceutical inventions, Grove met Fred Seely in Detroit, who was beginning to make a name for himself in the pharmaceutical business. Grove invited Seely to his home in Asheville and after one week Seely left his position in Detroit to work for Grove at the Paris Medicine Company. Business, however, was not the only thing that interested Seely. Grove introduced his daughter, Evelyn, to the bachelor, and within 24 hours Grove had given Seely permission to wed her. The couple married by the fall of 1898.

Grove began to purchase property in Asheville in the early 1900’s following his successful real estate developments in Atlanta. In 1909 Grove purchased 408 acres in north Asheville, including what would become The Omni Grove Park Inn, but he would concentrate on establishing residential neighborhoods before ever considering building the hotel.

In 1911 Grove began to plan the development of a grand hotel on his beloved Sunset Mountain. Grove reviewed hundreds of proposed plans from prominent architects from all over the country but none of them were satisfactory. Instead, it was his own son in law, Fred Seely who created the sketch, the tangible articulation of Grove’s vision, The Grove Park Inn. Grove accepted the plans and gave Seely the enormous task of constructing the hotel with only one requirement; it had to be built in one year.

Four-hundred men worked 10-hour shifts six days a week. With only the use of mules, wagons and ropes, massive granite boulders were unearthed from Sunset Mountain to build the hotel. Three days shy of one year from its ground breaking, The Grove Park Inn opened on July 12, 1913. Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, delivered the keynote address to four hundred of the most distinguished men of the South who gathered for the opening banquet. He had no idea of how true his words would become when he proclaimed that The Grove Park Inn “was built for the ages.”

To learn more about the history of The Omni Grove Park Inn, we invite you to take part in our [guided history tour](#).

<http://www.omnihotels.com/hotels/asheville-grove-park/things-to-do/tours>