



Mount Rushmore

The Shrine of Democracy

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The mightiest sculptures ever carved by man are the four colossal heads emerging from the rugged heights of Mount Rushmore in South Dakota. And they symbolize the mightiest principles that man has evolved for the good of mankind, the dignity, equality, and happiness of everybody. They turn the Black Hills into a Mecca of pilgrimage, a shrine of Americanism. The heads are not the heads of gods or kings or mighty conquerors, but of four plain men, four Americans who rose by their own efforts to high places and fought good fights that won them immortality as benefactors of humanity.

It has been flippantly said that sculpture is the easiest of all arts: "You merely take a block of stone and knock off what you don't want." Gutzon Borglum chose a mountain and knocked off four hundred thousand tons of granite at an expense of nine hundred thousand dollars.

The result is the most colossal work of art on earth. The famous full-length statue of the Egyptian Rameses II was ninety feet high, while Washington's bust is larger than the whole figure of the Pharaoh. The Egyptian Sphinx is not as tall as George Washington's nose is long. The Colossus of Rhodes, a single figure, was only one hundred and five feet high. The Statue of Liberty, also a single figure, is one hundred and fifty-one feet high.

The site of this supreme masterpiece of American sculpture was once a proverb of difficult approach, savage danger and wilderness hardship. It has seen gold rushes, Indian wars, frontier tragedy and crime. Today it is accessible by railway and airplane, while highways of the best quality for motorists reach it from many directions, with Rapid City or Custer as the focal points. Thousands of visitors throng to the Memorial and depart better and prouder Americans than before they came.

The four giants of our history were chosen for reasons easily understood. Washington was the father of his country, the commander-in-chief of the armies that won our freedom, the president of the convention that created the Constitution, and the first President under the Constitution. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, gave his life to upholding the doctrines of equality; while President he authorized the Louisiana Purchase, which added the Midwest to our nation. Lincoln saved the union and wrote the Emancipa-

tion Proclamation. Theodore Roosevelt was the builder of the Panama Canal, also the historian and spokesman of the West, the creator and leader of the Rough Riders in the war that freed Cuba and other lands from Spanish tyranny.

The sculptor of this tremendous work, Gutzon Borglum, was an American, born in Idaho of Danish parentage. As a sculptor he poured forth a dazzling series of artistic creations from the smallest statuettes to heroic battle groups. He found time for patriotic activity and statesmanship. The Rushmore Monument is itself a miracle of patriotism.

It is also a mechanical miracle. The engineering and stone-cutting difficulties, the riddles of the projection of the images, the penetration and removal of the granite, the almost impossibilities of approach and inspection, the overcoming of the flaws encountered in the stone, the dangers to life and limb that threatened the sculptor and the workers dangling from ropes, or working on precarious scaffolding with electric drills . . . these and countless daily problems were met by the versatile genius and patience of the sculptor. Yet the outcome was a triumph of the noblest art and it places the name of Borglum on an equality at least with those of Phidias, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and other masters of form.

Borglum's physical power was as rugged as his artistic power. Every day for years he accomplished feats of strength that would have taxed an athlete. Yet he was seventy years old when in March, 1941, the gruelling toil in the high altitudes . . . six thousand feet above sea level . . . put a stop to his great heart.

The memorial was all but finished, and he left a devoted wife and son to preside over the completion of the last details.

He had chosen Rushmore Mountain for its granite and for the natural illumination. The face of Washington receives the salute of every dawn and the benediction of every sunset. The other faces seem to live and breathe in the shifting lights. They have the brooding serenity of Grecian art, and they inspire the same ideals that lifted them high in history.

The spiritual grandeur of the Rushmore Memorial is even more sublime than its physical majesty. It is an epic poem of sonorous eloquence. The four portraits are one portrait of the restless American soul, striving forever upward, for all its failures, toward the highest peaks of the human dream.

Rupert Hughes
RUPERT HUGHES · JANUARY, 1942



Mount Rushmore, South Dakota

Facts about Mount Rushmore and vicinity

Known as "The Shrine of Democracy." Located 25 miles southwest of Rapid City, South Dakota, via U. S. Highway No. 16 and connections; 20 miles northeast of Custer via U. S. Highway No. 85-A and connections.

The group of four figures occupies an area of more than an acre and a half on the face of a perpendicular granite cliff cresting a mountain 6,040 feet high. They are visible from a distance of 60 miles.

The busts are proportionate to men 465 feet tall. Washington could wade the Hudson without getting his knees wet. The gleam in Lincoln's eye is 16 feet wide. The Capitol Dome in Washington would look like a skull cap on Roosevelt's head.

In 1927 work on Mount Rushmore started. For fourteen years a crew of workmen, with dynamite, steam shovels and compressed air drills chipped the features of the four presidents into the mountain's rocky face. Scientists estimate that wind, rain, freezes and thaws will wear them back into the stone mountain from which they emerge . . . in 108,000,000 (108 million) years.

Before work started Mount Rushmore was miles from any road. Since 1927 the State of South Dakota has spent more than \$500,000 on the construction of the scenic highway leading to and around the mountain, making the National Memorial as easy to visit as it is inspiring to view.

CUSTER STATE PARK

Stretches southward from the vicinity of Mount Rushmore for some twenty-five miles.

Named after General George Armstrong Custer of "Last Stand" fame, whose exploration party discovered gold on the Park's French Creek in 1876.

One of the largest State Parks in the nation. Contains 130,000 acres of some of the most imposing scenery of the spectacular Black Hills region. A large part is fenced to conserve, under natural conditions, the numbers of buffalo, elk, deer, Rocky Mountain goats and sheep whose home it has been since time immemorial.

One of the earth's oldest regions. Scientists claim that the two distinct upheavals which made this mountain area occurred millions of years before the Rockies were made. Some of the Black Hills were once snow-capped peaks towering above Mt. Everest.

Features of the Park are the rocky "Needles," beautiful Sylvan Lake and 7,242-foot Harney Peak—highest point in the United States east of the Rockies.



WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK

Approximately forty miles from Mount Rushmore via U. S. Highway No. 85-A and connections.

Created by an act of Congress January 9, 1903, now includes an area of 12,639.71 acres. The cavern itself is approximately 10 miles in extent but has not been fully explored.

Formations in these caves differ radically from those in most caverns. Stalactites and stalagmites are practically non-existent, a feature that adds to its interest. Here the formations are of the unusual boxwork and frostwork type.

The Park is open all year. In addition to the Cave and other attractions of the Black Hills region it features the thrill of seeing wild animals in the open, in their natural habitat, rather than from behind fences or bars. Visitors usually can get close, unobstructed views of a large herd of buffalo from the main highway.

BADLANDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Approximately ninety miles from Mount Rushmore via U. S. Highway No. 16 and connections.

Fifty thousand acres of fantastically carved erosion forms, some 150 to 300 feet high; tinted with all shades of buff, cream, pale green, gold and rose.

Ancient fossil deposits exposed by erosion in the Badlands tell a tale of prehistoric alligators, rhinoceroses, three-toed horses, and other long-extinct animals.

DEADWOOD AND LEAD

Fifty-four miles from Mount Rushmore via U. S. Highway No. 85-A and connections.

On a mountain overlooking Deadwood lie the bodies of Wild Bill Hickok, Calamity Jane, Deadwood Dick and Preacher Smith. Nearby, overlooking sections of three states, is the first monument erected in the United States to President Theodore Roosevelt, who loved the Black Hills and came to Deadwood frequently.

At Lead is the famed Home Stake Mine, the largest gold mine in the United States. In 1933 almost one-fourth of the gold production of the United States came from the Black Hills. Since production began in 1875, gold totaling approximately \$300,000,000 in value has been mined in this region.

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

Jewel Cave National Monument . . . a series of passages and small rooms lined with calcite crystals. Approximately 35 miles from Mount Rushmore via U. S. Highways Nos. 85-A and 16 and connections.

Fossil Cycad National Monument . . . created in 1922 to preserve large deposits of fossil remains of fernlike plants that grew many million years ago in the Mesozoic period. The monument lies several miles from the highway and is not accessible to cars except through private property. About 65 miles from Mount Rushmore via U. S. Highways Nos. 16 and 85-A and connections.

Photographic Data: 5x7 view camera; 12-inch focal length, convertible anastigmat lens; professional color film, daylight type; exposure, 1 second at f:45. Cloudy-bright day; 9:30 a.m.

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