



# Rushmore

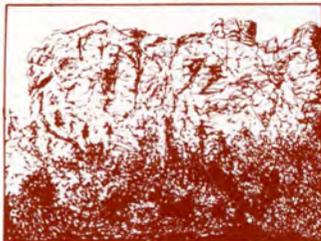


## MONUMENT TO AMERICA

**The Concept** High on Mount Rushmore, the likenesses of four American Presidents are carved in ageless granite as a memorial to America's first century and a quarter as a Nation. The memorial serves to remind all Americans of this country's noble achievements of the past and the hope a democratic society offers for the future.

The original concept of the memorial was that of Doane Robinson, the State Historian of South Dakota. He proposed the carving of several romantic western figures of American history. Gutzon Borglum--the American born artist and sculptor, commissioned to execute the project--felt the memorial should be of national significance instead of regional interest and suggested Presidents as appropriate subjects.

The selection of Mount Rushmore as the location for the memorial was a logical choice since it offered several advantages over the other sites under consideration. The massive granite cap of this mountain was of the desired texture and large enough to permit a sculpture of a scale consistent with Borglum's purpose. Mount Rushmore's southeast face had the advantage of good sunlight to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the sculpture.



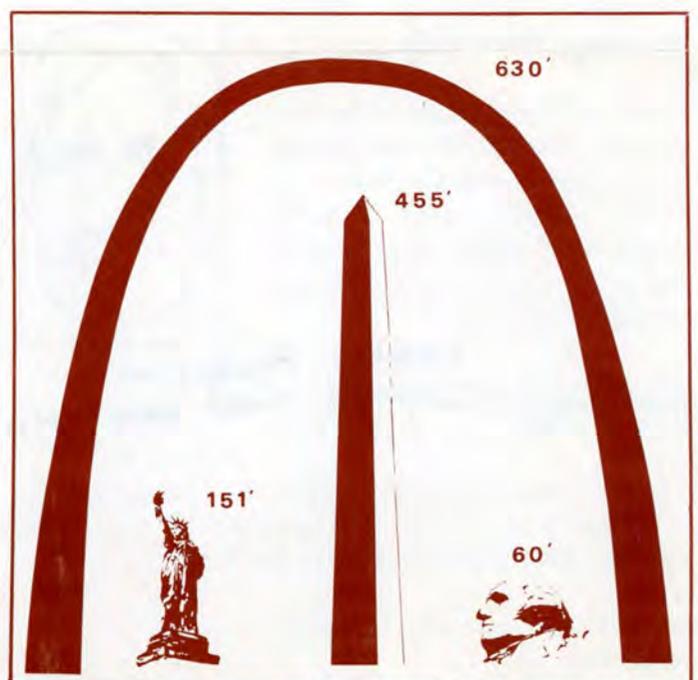
**Carving a Mountain** Construction began August 10, 1927, the day President Calvin Coolidge officially dedicated the National Memorial. Because of inclement weather and lack of funds, 14 years were required to reveal the sculpture as we now see it. The actual time spent in construction of the memorial was 6½ years. In the early construction years, private donations supported the work. Later, however, as more funds were required, the Federal Government assumed financial responsibility for the memorial. When completed, federal appropriations accounted for over 80% of the approximately one million dollars spent on the sculpture. Gutzon Borglum died in March of 1941. All work on Mount Rushmore ceased later the same year and no additional carving has been done on the mountain since. There are no plans to add other Presidents to the group.

The forming of the faces was accomplished by skilled drillers, powdermen, hoist operators, and blacksmiths working under the supervision of Sculptor Gutzon Borglum. A sizable crew, sometimes numbering more than 35 men, was engaged during full-scale operations. Good safety practices and precautions resulted in few injuries and no fatalities during the construction.

The first step in the construction of the memorial was to blast away the surface rock to reach solid granite. This was accomplished by the powdermen using measured amounts of dynamite to remove the unwanted rock. In time the powdermen became so skilled at their work they could blast to within inches of the desired surface. Once solid granite was reached, carvers suspended over the side of the mountain in harnesses or bosun chairs used jackhammers to give general shape to the faces.

With a small airhammer in a process known as "bumping" the workmen brought the sculpture to its finished appearance. Over 400,000 tons of rock were removed from the mountain and most of it still lies where it fell below the faces.

**Dimensions** The heads measure 60 feet from the chin to the top of the head; each nose is 20 feet long; each mouth, 18 feet wide; and the eyes are 11 feet across. The sculpture is carved to the scale of men 465 feet tall, but the carving was not intended as a memorial to be known only for its gigantic proportions. Borglum once said, "A monument's dimensions should be determined by the importance to civilization of the events commemorated." Mount Rushmore's importance as a memorial is as lofty in meaning as it is in size. The sculpture is not a memorial to the four Presidents who appear here, rather they are symbolic of the establishment and growth of this great Nation.



**The Presidents** George Washington represents independence, liberty, an inspired vision of the Nation's future, and the dignity of the Presidency.

Thomas Jefferson insured the newly formed Nation would be self-governed; entrusted only to a government by the people.

Abraham Lincoln typifies the permanency of our Nation, preserving that which Washington and Jefferson began. His hand guided the destiny of our country in its darkest hour and pointed the way to freedom and tolerance for all its people.

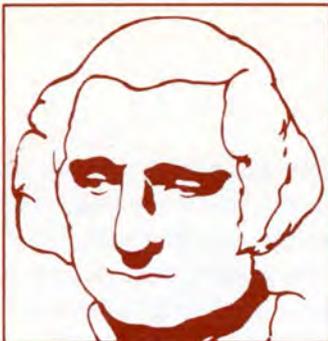
To this political freedom, Theodore Roosevelt extended economic freedom. He was the "trust buster," the conservationist, and the friend of the common man. His leadership inspired a march toward new frontiers; the forging of new connecting links that bound the West and the East.

**Significance of the Memorial** The memorial is decidedly American in its magnitude, and in its meaning. The sculptor with rare discernment transmitted to the carved faces of these four Americans the high ideals, the calm judgment, and the resolute courage that are the qualities of great statesmen; qualities that drive visionaries on to high endeavor, that compel them to scale the heights of unparalleled achievement.

These values express themselves in the love of freedom, compassion for humanity, and a willingness to sacrifice life and possessions to achieve noble aims. These are the intangibles that live in the hearts of great men and women. They are eternal and endure forever. These are some of the unseen values that give meaning and purpose to this symbolic memorial, this Shrine of Democracy.

#### **George Washington, First President 1789-1797**

"...the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the Republican model of government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people."



First Inaugural Address  
April 30, 1789

"Believing that a representative government, responsible at short periods of election, is that which produces the greatest sum of happiness to mankind, I feel it a duty to do no act which shall essentially impair that principle..."

#### **Thomas Jefferson, Third President 1801-1809**

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."



Declaration of Independence  
July 4, 1776

"I carry with me the consolation of a firm persuasion that Heaven has in store for our beloved country long ages to come of prosperity and happiness."

8th Annual Message to Congress  
November 1808

#### **Abraham Lincoln, Sixteenth President 1861-1865**

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in..."



Second Inaugural Address  
March 4, 1865

"Let us have faith that right makes might and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

Address at Cooper Union  
February 27, 1860

#### **Theodore Roosevelt, Twenty-Sixth President 1901-1909**

"We, here in America, hold in our hands the hopes of the world, the fate of the coming years; and shame and disgrace will be ours if in our eyes the light of high resolve is dimmed, if we trail in the dust the golden hopes of men."



Address at Carnegie Hall  
New York City  
March 30, 1912

"Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat."

Speech before the Hamilton Club  
Chicago  
April 10, 1899

#### **Gutzon Borglum, Sculptor of Mount Rushmore**

"A monument's dimensions shall be determined by the importance to civilization of the events commemorated...let us place there, carved high, as close to heaven as we can, our leaders, their faces, to show posterity what manner of men they were. Then breathe a prayer that these records will endure until the wind and rain alone shall wear them away."



Mount Rushmore Dedication  
August 10, 1927