

Mount Rushmore National Memorial

"A monument's dimensions should be determined by the importance to civilization of the events commemorated. We are not here trying to carve an epic, portray a moonlight scene, or write a sonnet; neither are we dealing with mystery or tragedy, but rather the constructive and dramatic moments or crises in our amazing history." Gutzon Borglum

Did You Know?

Over 90% of Mount Rushmore was carved by using dynamite. Dynamite blasts removed approximately 450,000 tons of rock from the mountain.

This epic sculpture features the faces of four exalted American presidents: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln. South Dakota's Black Hills provide the backdrop for Mount Rushmore, the world's greatest mountain carving. These 60-foot high faces, 500 feet up, look out over a setting of pine, spruce, birch, and aspen in the clear western air.

Sculptor Gutzon Borglum began drilling into the 5,725-foot mountain in 1927. Creation of the Shrine of Democracy took 14 years and cost a mere \$1 million, though it's now deemed priceless.

The Avenue of Flags leads from the Concession Building to the Grandview Terrace. The flags of the 56 states and territories fly below the memorial. Here, the avenue provides direct and easy access to the Grandview Terrace and Presidential Trail, a half-mile walking trail that offers spectacular views of the mountain sculpture.

The memorial offers interpretive programs, exhibits and a film at the Lincoln Borglum Museum. Rangers provide interpretive walks and talks, including the Evening Sculpture Lighting Ceremony. The lighting program takes place at approximately 9 p.m. nightly (May-September) in the park's amphitheater. The amphitheater is fully accessible via the Avenue of Flags to elevators at the museum.

Other programs being offered include guided walks to the Sculptor's Studio, Presidential Trail walks, talks on the Grandview Terrace, afternoon children's activities and studio talks.

"Until the wind and the rain alone shall wear them away." Those are the famous words Sculptor Gutzon Borglum used to describe the length of time his most famous work, Mt. Rushmore, will endure.

The mountain itself was originally named after Charles E. Rushmore, a New York lawyer investigating mining claims in the Black Hills in 1885. Gutzon Borglum chose this mountain due to its height (5700' above sea level), the soft grainy consistency of the granite, and the fact that it catches the sun for the greatest part of the day.

The presidents were selected on the basis of what each symbolized. George Washington represents the struggle for independence, Thomas Jefferson the idea of government by the people. Abraham Lincoln for his ideas on equality and the permanent union of the states, and Theodore Roosevelt for the 20th century role of the United States in world affairs. The carving of Mt. Rushmore actually began on August 10, 1927,

and spanned a length of 14 years. Only about six and a half years were spent actually carving the mountain, with the rest of the time being spent on weather delays and Borglum's greatest enemy - the lack of funding. The total cost of the project was \$900,000. Work continued on the project until the death of Gutzon Borglum in 1941. No carving has been done on the mountain since that time and none is planned in the future.

The granite faces of four American presidents' are scaled to men who would stand 465 feet tall! President Calvin Coolidge believed Mount Rushmore was "decidedly American in its conception, magnitude and meaning. It is altogether worthy of our country," Coolidge proclaimed at the dedication of the project in 1927.

A \$56 million redevelopment was completed in 1998 with the addition of a new parking structure, amphitheater, museum/theater complex, Visitor Orientation Center, Presidential Trail, gift shop, bookstore, and dining facilities.