

Visit Mount Rushmore



photos courtesy National Park Service

In the 1920s, South Dakota state historian Doane Robinson got the idea that carving a sculpture in the Black Hills would attract visitors to the remote and thinly populated state — and bring in money, too. He was right.

Today about 2.5 million visitors travel to Mount Rushmore each year.

A monumental project

Mount Rushmore, a giant sculpture of four presidents, is at the top of a mountain towering about a quarter mile above the main viewing area.

The sculptor, Gutzon Borglum (GUT-son BOR-glum), sculpted the faces of the four presidents he thought did the most to make our country great: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. Work began in 1927 and continued for 14 years. When Borglum died suddenly in early 1941, his son, Lincoln, took over and finished the project.

Carving the sculpture

Before he began the mountain sculpture, Borglum made smaller plaster models. Then he marked the mountain in red paint to show how many inches of rock workers needed to remove. The workers then blasted it away.

About 90 percent of the sculpture was carved by using dynamite. About 450,000 tons of rock were removed.

Workers next drilled to get to the final face, putting on the last touches with a

hammer and chisel. The rock was then smoothed over.

About 400 workers helped carve the mountain. Most were miners, ranchers, farmers and teachers who lived in the area. They worked, dangling from harnesses, in weather ranging from hot 90-degree summers to days of 25 to 30 degrees below zero in winter. No worker was seriously injured during the whole project.



A National Park Service worker dangles in a safety harness to power-wash George Washington's head. Each fall, park employees inspect and repair cracks with a special sealing mixture. Water collects in cracks in the mountain. Each cold South Dakota winter, the water freezes. In spring, the ice melts. This cycle of freezing and thawing causes the cracks to get bigger.

Choosing faces

Borglum first planned to carve three presidents: Lincoln, Washington and Jefferson. When he realized there was room for one more president, Roosevelt was chosen because Borglum thought he helped working people and the environment.

Mini Fact:

Each of the presidents' heads is 60 feet high from the chin to the top of the head and 40 feet wide.

Native people

Native Americans in the area considered the Black Hills sacred ground. Mount Rushmore was one of seven sites in the Black Hills that they thought was especially holy.

In 1868, the U.S. government forced the Lakota people out of the Black Hills and onto reservations. These people considered the carving of their sacred mountain into sculptures of white leaders' faces to be an insult.

Today the National Park Service seeks to honor all cultures visiting the monument. Near the visitors' center, Lakota interpreters talk about their life and the Black Hills.

A private group is currently carving a memorial of the Indian leader Crazy Horse on land about 17 miles from Mount Rushmore.



photos by Mike Tigas

This model shows what Crazy Horse Memorial will look like when it is finished. You can see the actual sculpture, still underway, in the background.

Resources



On the Web:

- nps.gov/moru
- crazyhorsememorial.org

At the library:

- "Mount Rushmore" by R.J. Bailey

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of mountain sculptures are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

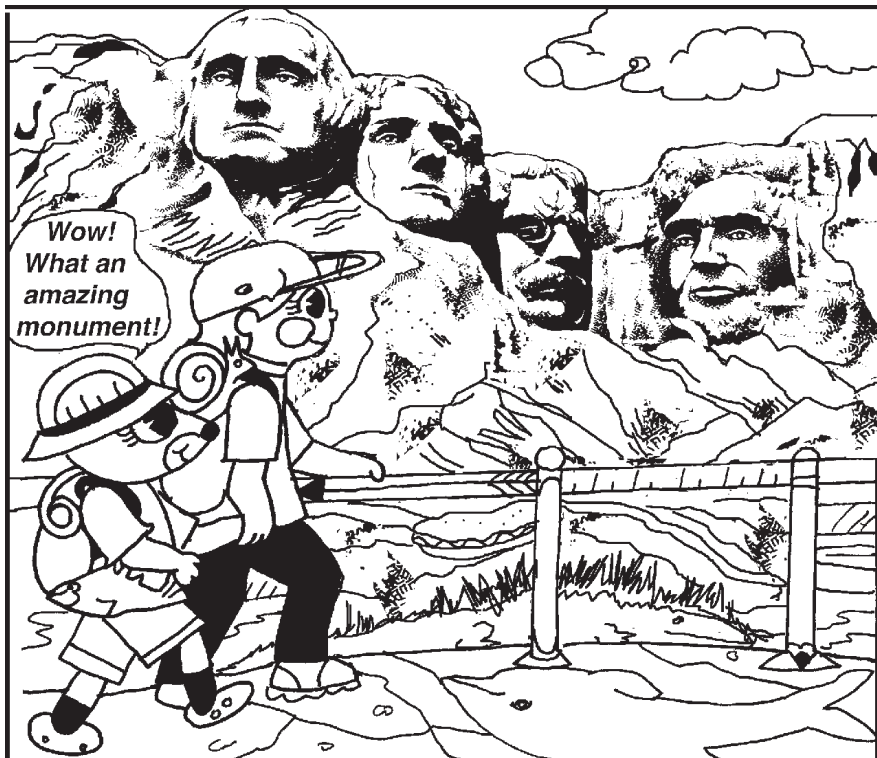


BORGLUM, CRAZY HORSE, DYNAMITE, HARNESS, JEFFERSON, LINCOLN, MELT, MEMORIAL, MODEL, MOUNT, NATIVE, PLASTER, ROCK, ROOSEVELT, RUSHMORE, SCULPTURE, SOUTH DAKOTA, WASHINGTON.

Z W A S H I N G T O N R J N D
N D R O O S E V E L T B E L Y
R K A K M E M O R I A L F O N
E H C E R O M H S U R T F C A
T A T O K A D H T U O S E N M
S R T A R A M O D E L Z R I I
A N C R A Z Y H O R S E S L T
L E E R U T P L U C S B O X E
P S T L E M N A T I V E N V D
C S M U L G R O B X T N U O M

Mini Spy Classics

Mini Spy and Alpha Betty are visiting Mount Rushmore. See if you can find the hidden pictures. Then color the picture.



Mini Spy Classics appear in the first issue of each month.

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- exclamation mark
- letter A
- lima bean
- man in the moon
- word MINI
- dolphin
- mushroom
- number 6
- ruler
- bell
- pencil
- snail
- tooth
- arrow
- sub sandwich
- dog face
- fish
- snake
- alligator
- question mark

Mini Jokes



Randy: What happens when you put a lightbulb in a suit of armor?
Rose: You get a knight-light!

Eco Note



The population of hybrid wild pigs has exploded across several Canadian provinces during the past 30 years, according to a new study by the University of Saskatchewan. The porcine pests are a cross between domestic pigs and wild boar that were imported from Europe in the late 1980s to diversify Canadian livestock. Others were imported for sport hunting. Those that escaped into the wild have become the most productive invasive mammal species in Canada.

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For later:

Look in your newspaper for items about other popular summer vacation spots.

Teachers: For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bit.ly/MPstandards. And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!



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