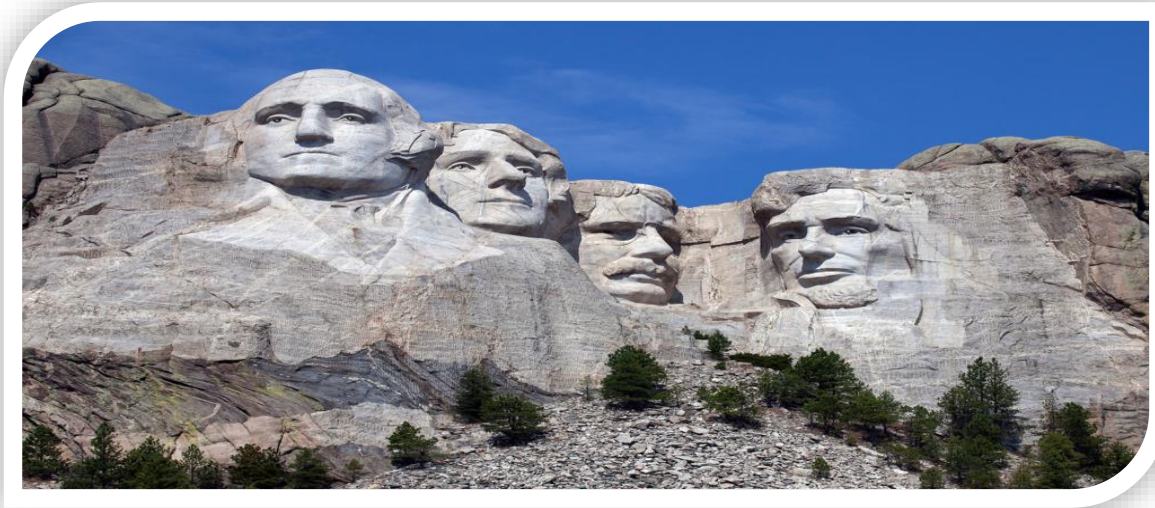


# Mount Rushmore



The Mount Rushmore National Memorial is a national memorial centered on a colossal sculpture carved into the granite face of Mount Rushmore (Lakota: Tǰuŋkášila Šákpe, or Six Grandfathers) in the Black Hills near Keystone, South Dakota, United States. Sculptor Gutzon Borglum designed the sculpture, called Shrine of Democracy,[2] and oversaw the project's execution from 1927 to 1941 with the help of his son, Lincoln Borglum.[3][4] The sculpture features the 60-foot-tall (18 m) heads of four United States presidents: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln,[5] chosen to represent the nation's birth, growth, development, and preservation, respectively.[6] Mount Rushmore attracts more than two million visitors annually[1] to the memorial park which covers 1,278 acres (2.00 sq mi; 5.17 km<sup>2</sup>).[7] The mountain's elevation is 5,725 feet (1,745 m) above sea level.[8]

## SIX GRANDFATHERS TO MOUNT RUSHMORE

## History

Mount Rushmore and the surrounding Black Hills (Pahá Sápa) are considered sacred by Plains Indians such as the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Lakota Sioux, who used the area for centuries as a place to pray and gather food, building materials, and medicine.[16] The Lakota called the mountain "Six Grandfathers" (Tǰuŋkášila Šákpe),[17] symbolizing ancestral deities personified as the six directions: north, south, east, west, above (sky), and below (earth).[18] In the latter half of the 19th century, expansion by the United States into the Black Hills led to the Sioux

Wars. In the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie, the U.S. government granted exclusive use of all of the Black Hills, including Six Grandfathers, to the Sioux in perpetuity.[16][18]

Six Grandfathers was a significant part of the spiritual journey taken in the early 1870s by Lakota leader Black Elk (Heñáka Sápa, also known as "The Sixth Grandfather"),[19] that culminated at the nearby Black Elk Peak,[17] (Hinjánj Káğa, "Making of Owls") [20][21] U.S. general George Armstrong Custer summited Black Elk Peak a few years later in 1874 during the Black Hills Expedition, which triggered the Black Hills Gold Rush and Great Sioux War of 1876.[22] In 1877, the U.S. broke the Treaty of Fort Laramie and asserted control over the area, leading to an influx of settlers and prospectors.[16][18]

## Concept, design and funding

By the 1920s, South Dakota had become a U.S. state, and was a popular destination for road trippers visiting the Black Hills National Forest, Wind Cave National Park, and Needles Highway.[16] In 1923,[27][28] the Secretary of the South Dakota State Historical Society, Doane Robinson, who would come to be known as the "Father of Mount Rushmore", [18][29] learned about the "Shrine to the Confederacy", a project to carve the likenesses of Confederate generals into the side of Stone Mountain, Georgia, that had been underway since 1915.[16] Seeking to boost tourism to South Dakota, Robinson began promoting the idea of a similar monument in the Black Hills,[18] representing "not only the wild grandeur of its local geography but also the triumph of western civilization over that geography through its anthropomorphic representation." [30]

Robinson initially approached sculptor Lorado Taft, but Taft was ill at the time and uninterested in Robinson's project. Robinson next sought the help of then-U.S. Senator Peter Norbeck, who had established Custer State Park when he was Governor in 1919. Norbeck cautiously supported Robinson's plan, and Robinson began campaigning for it publicly. Some in the local community also supported Robinson's plan, but many opposed it vigorously.[27]

On August 20, 1924, Robinson wrote to Gutzon Borglum, the sculptor of "Shrine to the Confederacy", asking him to travel to the Black Hills region to determine whether the carving could be accomplished.[27][31] Borglum, who had involved himself with the Ku Klux Klan, one of the Stone Mountain memorial's funders, had been having disagreements with the Stone Mountain Memorial Association, and on September 24, 1924, travelled to South Dakota to meet Robinson.

### CONSTRUCTION OF MOUNT RUSHMORE

## Construction

Between October 4, 1927, and October 31, 1941, Gutzon Borglum and 400 workers<sup>[40]</sup> sculpted the colossal 60-foot-high (18 m) carvings of United States Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln to represent the first 150 years of American history. These presidents were selected by Borglum because of their role in preserving the Republic and expanding its territory.<sup>[31]</sup><sup>[30]</sup> The carving of Mount Rushmore involved the use of dynamite, followed by the process of "honeycombing", where workers drill holes close together, allowing small pieces to be removed by hand.<sup>[41]</sup> In total, about 450,000 short tons (410,000 t) of rock were blasted off the mountainside.<sup>[42]</sup> The image of Thomas Jefferson was originally intended to appear in the area at Washington's right, but after the work there was begun, the rock was found to be unsuitable, so the work on Jefferson's figure was dynamited, and a new figure was sculpted to Washington's left.<sup>[31]</sup>

The chief carver of the mountain was Luigi Del Bianco, an artisan and stonemason who emigrated to the U.S. from Friuli in Italy and was chosen to work on this project because of his understanding of sculptural language and ability to imbue emotion in the carved portraits.<sup>[3]</sup><sup>[4]</sup>

## LATER DEVELOPMENTS

### Later

Harold Spitznagel and Cecil Doty designed the original visitor center, finished in 1957, as part of the Mission 66 effort to improve visitors' facilities at national parks and monuments across the country.<sup>[48]</sup><sup>[49]</sup> Ten years of redevelopment work culminated with the completion of extensive visitor facilities and sidewalks in 1998, such as a Visitor Center, the Lincoln Borglum Museum, and the Presidential Trail.

On October 15, 1966, Mount Rushmore was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A 500-word essay giving the history of the United States by Nebraska student William Andrew Burkett was selected as the college-age group winner in a 1934 competition, and that essay was placed on the Entablature on a bronze plate in 1973.<sup>[43]</sup><sup>[50]</sup> In 1991, President George H. W. Bush officially dedicated Mount Rushmore.<sup>[51]</sup>