



Mount Rushmore: The History and Legacy of America's Most Unique Monument

Charles River Editors

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*Includes pictures *Includes accounts of the work by supervisors and workers *Includes a bibliography for further reading *Includes a table of contents “America loves the representation of its heroes to be not just larger than life, but stupendously, awesomely bigger than anything else. If blue whales built statues to each other they'd be smaller than these.” – Simon Hoggart In the 1920s, plans were made to carve the figures of America's greatest presidents into Mount Rushmore, the tallest spot in the Black Hills of the Dakotas, and by 1939, the faces of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt had been carved into the rock. With that, one of America's greatest national monuments was born. The four men were certainly worthy of being immortalized in granite, and Mount Rushmore poignantly symbolizes the legacies and legends of the four presidents (which often overshadow the actual men themselves). Every American is taught a pristine narrative of the life and legacy of George Washington and can easily recite the highlights and myths of Washington's life. Thomas Jefferson was instrumental in authoring the Declaration of Independence, laying out the ideological groundwork of the notion of states' rights, leading one of the first political parties, and overseeing the expansion of the United States during his presidency. Schoolchildren can recite the life story of Lincoln, the “Westerner” who educated himself and became a self made man, rising from lawyer to leader of the new Republican Party before becoming the 16th President of the United States and saving the Union. And at the turn of the 20th century, Theodore Roosevelt came to be recognized as the quintessential American, remembered for being a president, explorer, hunter, author, soldier, president, and safari adventurer, all of which combine into one unique reputation. Given the sheer size and scope of the project, it's no surprise that Mount Rushmore was a gargantuan undertaking in every conceivable way. Originally envisioned as a monument that would help spur tourism to South Dakota, it took hundreds of workers nearly 15 years to laboriously dynamite and carve the likenesses of the four presidents' faces into the side of Mount Rushmore about 60 feet up. As if the final product wasn't ambitious enough, the supervisors originally envisioned carving all the way down to each president's waist, and including a commemoration of achievements like the Declaration of Independence alongside the figures. Amazingly, the entire project cost less than \$1 million and there were no fatalities. Mount Rushmore: The History and Legacy of America's Most Unique Monument chronicles the construction of the national monument that commemorates some of America's most famous individuals. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Mount Rushmore like never before, in no time at all.

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