



Memorials to the Sioux Indians [Part 2]

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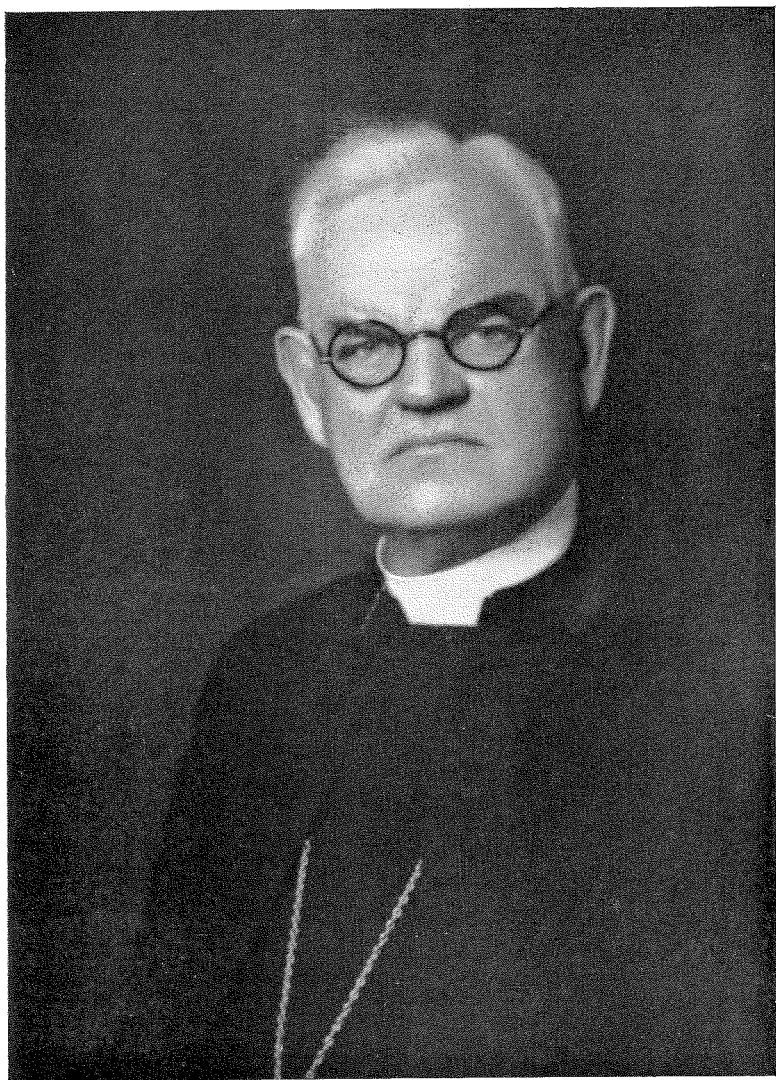
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BISHOP BEECHER

Why Remember The Indian?

BY RT. REV. GEORGE A. BEECHER, D. D.

In the process of preserving a record of historical events we often fail to realize that the events themselves are inseparably associated with persons. Monuments constitute an objective element in the process of memorializing both persons and events. Veneration for a historic site is intensified by the association between the events which took place at that site, and the men and women there commemorated as its heroes.

Approximately ninety miles north of the spot selected for the erection of a monument to the Sioux Indian here in north-western Nebraska, is a carving in granite by a world-famous sculptor immortalizing four of our greatest national leaders: Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. It is the work of Gutzon Borglum, our honored friend and co-worker in this enterprise. This majestic sculpture at Mount Rushmore, South Dakota, is a concrete illustration of the world-wide influence of these historical characters. Sculpture speaks to eye and mind, more eloquently than words, the story of the development of our civilization in the Western Hemisphere.

Not all great men are thus honored in the imperishable records of our country, and one might naturally ask: "Why honor the Indian?" The famous chief Geronimo is remembered for his brutality and for his cunning in escaping from his enemies when in the power of a superior force. Geronimo, however, is not the type of Indian we plan to memorialize here. There were tribes of Indians in the Sioux Nation who roamed these plains with the freedom of the wild game they hunted. They possessed much the same characteristics in the home and family and cultural life peculiar to their native endowments and ideals, as those we honor in the record of the white race. The discovery of this art in their handiwork with beads, brush, and implements of skin, bone and stone, bears witness to the

fact. These ancient treasures have become priceless to historians and archeologists for the story they tell.

The Indian Campaigns from the sixties to the nineties constitute a vital part of the history of the Great West. The names and deeds of the conquering Whites have long been celebrated. Little has been said or done to perpetuate the memory of those who made the great sacrifice in a lost cause. It is fitting and proper, therefore — indeed, it is true sportsmanship — that at this time and in this territory we should erect a suitable memorial for the deeds of valor, endurance and heroism which have become an Indian tradition rapidly fading from memory.

The Indian, born on the bosom of Mother Earth, nurtured on the milk of strong and fearless motherhood, imbibed the love of adventure and resistance until he could eagerly invite and anticipate the type of combat which his ancestors had experienced and cherished through many generations. We should not infer, however, that because of this birth and training, the Indian in whose memory we propose to erect a fitting monument was devoid of sympathy and affection for his own.

Physical suffering was for the Indian only a means to an end. His belief in the Great Spirit was deeply anchored, and was symbolized in his religious ceremonies. Much of the so-called "history" of the Indian is prejudicial and misleading. The Indian regarded his hunting grounds as a sacred heritage, and ultimately fought and died in the hope of preserving them for his children. There were really great heroes among these Indians who fought for the preservation of their liberty, and yet their final resting place is not even marked. While in action on the field of battle, Chief Crazy Horse inspired his warriors by his own dauntless courage and was always in the thickest of the fight. On many occasions he is said to have rallied his men with the slogan:

"This is a great day to die! All Braves follow me! All cowards to the rear!!"

Toward the close of their campaigns Spotted Tail and Red Cloud, realizing the fate of their race, advised their people as follows:

We dwellers of the open plains, with the sky for our roof, and the earth for our buffalo and deer to graze

upon, must either make our last united stand and perish in our own blood, or peacefully submit to the terms of the conqueror. Our old men and women, the sick and helpless, and every mounted warrior will be lying dead like the game we have hunted in these valleys and hills. The white men, like the ants, lay by store for their winter supply. They have food, shelter and protection, while we perish of hunger! It is better to live with the remnant of our race than to shed more blood in a helpless cause.

Let us build a fitting monument to commemorate these splendid examples of faith, fortitude and self-sacrifice. The time can never be more appropriate. "The Noble Red Man" was in truth nobler than we are often willing to admit. Let us honor that nobility in the fallen.

Excerpts from *A Century of Dishonor*, by Helen Hunt Jackson:

"What does the Bishop want? If he came here to tell us that our Indian system is a sink of iniquity, tell him we know it. Tell him the United States never cures a wrong until the people demand it; and when the hearts of the people are reached the Indian will be saved."—Secretary Stanton, answering appeal by Bishop Whipple.

* * *

The Indian owns no telegraph, employs no press reporter, and his side of the story is unknown to the people. . . The inexorable has no tears or pity at the cries of anguish of the doomed race. Ahab never speaks of Naboth, whom he has robbed of his vineyard. It soothes conscience to cast mud on the character of the one whom we have wronged.—Bishop Whipple.

* * *

When Hendrik Hudson anchored his ship off New York Island in 1609, the Delaware in great numbers stood on the shore to receive him, exclaiming in their innocence, "Behold, the gods have come to visit us!"

* * *

Red Cloud, parting from friends in the Black Hills, hoped that, if they did not meet again on earth, they might meet beyond the grave "in a land where white men cease to be liars."

* * *

Sitting Bull (on the Black Hills invasion): "Tell them at Washington if they have one man who speaks the truth to send him to me, and I will listen to what he has to say."



ADDISON E. SHELDON
(Photo in 1927)

A Memorial to the Sioux Nation

by

ADDISON E. SHELDON

Two great Indian peoples stand out above all others in the story of the white man's progress across the American Continent — the Iroquois of New York and the Sioux of the Great Plains. In numbers, in organization, in courage and discipline, in great leadership, in great events and crises, these two sections of the Indian population of the present United States excel. The story of the Iroquois, or Six Nations, is vitally interwoven with the early settlement of the Apalachian and Lakes Region of the eastern states. All the historians, statesmen and novelists of the struggle between France and England for possession of this continent, of the struggle between the Colonists and England for an independent nation, and of the struggle between the white settlers and the Indian occupants of the lake and mountain region of the eastern United States, find the Iroquois to be the center of influence and literary interest.

The Sioux Nation (with their allies, the Cheyenne and Arapahoe) occupy the center of historical interest in the Great Plains Region, in the vast empire stretching from Lake Superior and Lake of the Woods west and southwest to the Rocky Mountains and the Republican River. As the Iroquois Nation was the chief obstacle to white occupation east of the Alleghanies, so the Sioux Nation and allies were in the Trans-Mississippi Region and to the great white migration across the plains and mountains to the Pacific Ocean. The final focus of the conflict for the possession of the Plains, the Rocky Mountains, and the great highways of travel over which the American flag was carried to the California and Oregon country, was in northwestern Nebraska. The center of the conflict and conference was in the region characterized by the Pine Ridge hills of Nebraska and South Dakota. Here the last great councils between the Indians and the white

men were held. Here the great Indian chiefs whose names are forever famous in frontier history made the last stand of the Indian against the onward tide of white migration.

This Pine Ridge Region has been chosen by events and by historians as the site of a great memorial to the Sioux Nation and to their allies, the Cheyenne and the Arapahoe. It is the purpose of the organization which sponsors this publication to promote world-wide knowledge of the great events in the history of the human race upon these plains; to mark with a monument of notable size, beauty and inscription, a central location for such a memorial upon our most traveled highways. As superintendent of the Nebraska State Historical Society, I am joining with my colleagues of the great Panhandle Plains and the region around them in promotion of this memorial.

In the years 1884 to 1903 the writer was in continuing contact with the Sioux Indians as editor of country newspapers in Madison and Antelope counties; as homesteader and clerk in an Indian trading store in Cherry County; as editor and student of Indian life at Chadron and the Pine Ridge Agency region in South Dakota. In these later years it was my privilege to publish a Sioux Indian column in my weekly newspaper with a circulation among the half-breed and Sioux families along the border; to be in contact with the principal events in the last great war between the Sioux Indians and United States Army; to spend some months of several years as a visitor and guest in Sioux Indian families upon the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Indian Reservations, and to enjoy the personal friendship of the leading mixed-blood families in their homes where white blood, Indian blood and mixed blood met at a common table to discuss the changing conditions of the frontier in which all of us were vitally interested. It is this stimulus of intensely fascinating experience during my years of early manhood which has been an impelling motive through all the years since and filled me with a desire to contribute the best energy and knowledge of these later years to an adequate historical record of the great human events which characterize the relations of the Sioux nation with the migrant European peoples who have formed the new American nation out of their experience in conquering a continent. I must here add a tribute

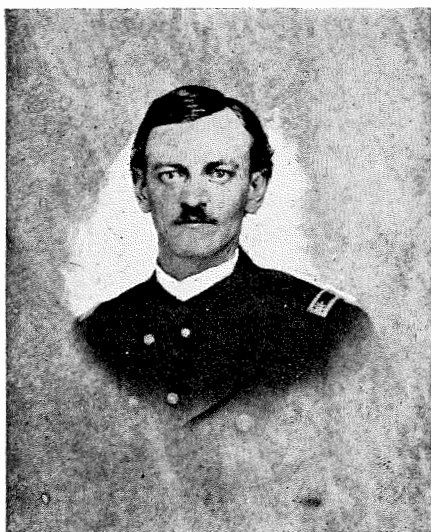
to the memory of one of my colleagues on the Nebraska-Indian frontier.

Judge E. S. Ricker was born in Maine on September 29, 1843. He enlisted as a Union soldier in the 102nd Illinois Infantry Regiment. He served more than three years in the army, taking part in some of the greatest battles, marching with Sherman from Atlanta to the sea, and up through the southern states to Washington, there taking part in the grand review which



JUDGE E. S. RICKER

marked the close of the war. He was admitted to the bar in 1884, and in 1885 located on a homestead in Dawes County. He was a firm Democrat, but joined the Populist movement in 1890, served three terms as county judge, and then for a number of years engaged in the newspaper business. He became fascinated with the history of the Plains Indian tribes; gave a large part of his time while in the newspaper business to gathering first-hand



MAJOR FRANK NORTH

Born March 10, 1840, in Tompkins County, New York. Died March 14, 1885, at Columbus, Nebraska. Organized Pawnee Scouts for the United States Army, 1864-1877. Defender of Nebraska frontier from hostile Sioux and Cheyenne.

CAPTAIN LUTHER H. NORTH

Born in Richland County, Ohio, March 6, 1846. Died April 18, 1935, at Columbus, Nebraska. Commanded company of Pawnee Scouts, 1867-1877. Co-defender of Nebraska frontier with his brother Frank.



information by personal interviews with Indians and white men, and put them in pen-and-ink in bound notebooks.

Finally Judge Ricker sold his newspaper and secured a position in the Indian Bureau at Washington, where he spent the last ten years of his life devoting all his time and energy to the collection of material for a great master work which he entitled "The Last Conflict Between the White Race and the Indian Tribes of America." He died at the home of his son in Grand Junction, Colorado, May 17, 1926. At the request of his family the writer met them in their home at Grand Junction after his death, assembled the manuscripts and more important parts of his library, and shipped them to the State Historical Society at Lincoln, where they now constitute one of its most important original sources for study of the Plains Indians.

Judge Ricker was a close personal friend of the writer through all the years of our frontiering in Nebraska and in his subsequent career as a student of Indian history. We campaigned together in many of the hard-fought political campaigns which marked the rise of the new Populist movement. We corresponded continuously through many years. With him I shared the fascinating study which he made in the public documents of the Indian Bureau and the War Department at Washington. His personal friendship and the inspiration of his life constitute the impelling forces which have continued my own interest in the story of the Plains Indians.

This is the place also for a brief tribute to the memory of Captain Luther M. North of Columbus, the last great scout of the frontier wars between the Sioux, the Pawnee, and the advancing white American people. Captain North and his brother, Major Frank North, were the most noted defenders of the white frontier in the wars with the Sioux Nation and their allies. They were the leaders of the Pawnee Scouts in the United States Army, which became the most efficient unit in the army in the wars against the Sioux and Cheyenne. Captain North died at Columbus, April 18, 1935. During the last thirty years of his life he was the intelligent guide and instructor of all students of the wars on the Great Plains. The most important records and documents of the two famous North scouts are among the treasured

possessions of the Nebraska State Historical Society. In the very last year of his life, Captain North met the leading representatives of the Sioux Nation, in my presence and under the sponsorship of the State Historical Society, upon the historic camping grounds of the Indians in the Pine Ridge Region and especially at the treaty grounds and camps of Red Cloud and Red Leaf near Chadron. Thus, interwoven in the plan for a splendid memorial to the Sioux Nation, stand the lives of the two greatest leaders of Indians in their conflict with the hostile Sioux and Cheyenne.

The memorial to the Sioux Nation and their allies in the Chadron Creek Valley on the Black Hills Highway No. 19, near to its crossing at Chadron with the splendid Wyoming-Yellowstone Highway No. 20, ought to be one of the notable memorials of the West, designed by a genius in sculpture and executed with strict fidelity to the outstanding events and dauntless leaders that have shaped history. Tourists from all parts of the world will visit the region and read the literature arising from the inspiration of heroic events which centered here. School children will find fresh impetus to patriotism in the true stories of the American frontier to which this memorial will give visible form and artistic beauty. To make the Old West live for the present and for all future generations — this is our objective.

Already in the Republican Valley, on Nebraska's southern border, stands a fitting memorial to the Plains Indians — the Massacre Canyon Memorial near Trenton. This monument was achieved by the oratorical genius and political strategy of Governor (and Congressman) A. C. Shallenberger. It marks the last battle between the Sioux and Pawnee Nations on August 3, 1873 — the last battle between rival and hostile Indian peoples on these plains. At the Canyon Crossing on Denver Highway No. 6 stands this granite and marble witness of the Frontier. It is at once an attraction to the tourist, a reminder of thrilling events, and a challenge to the great Pine Ridge Region to produce a worthy memorial to the heroic Past which is represented here.

After Wounded Knee

— A Recollection

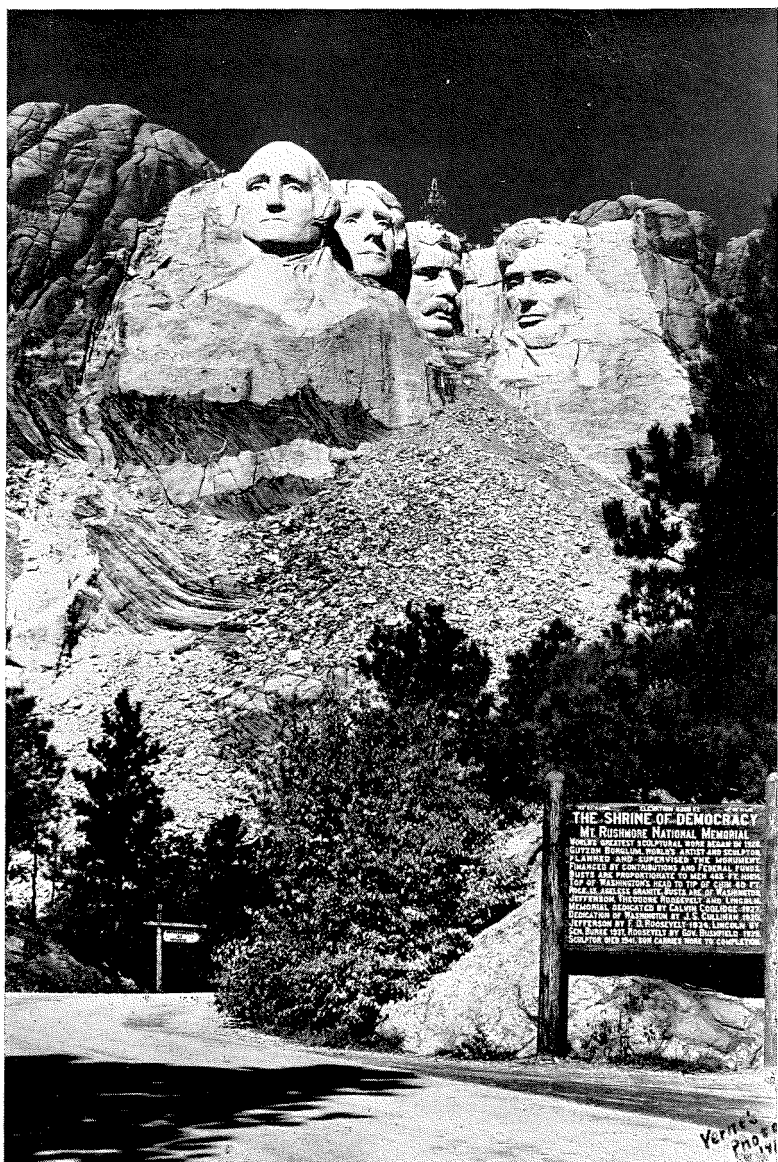
I STILL SEE THEM — the defeated, dejected Big Foot Sioux who were prisoners at Pine Ridge December 31, 1890. It was near two o'clock in a gray, grimy morning as we drove — six of us — from Chadron in a stage coach with Winchester rifles in our hands, watching the shadows of the pine trees on the hills; drove on across White Clay Creek into the big yard in front of the Pine Ridge Agency. A band of men, women and children (mostly women and children) occupied the center of that yard. Some of them were prostrate on the ground. Some were sitting cross-legged, rocking to and fro in silent suffering. Some sat upon their ponies stiff and straight, but yet suffering.

In a circle around this band of Indians were other Indians in blue uniforms of the United States, with rifles. Even in the darkness the situation interpreted itself. One of us said to the others in the coach: "Those Indians are captured from the Big Foot band on the Wounded Knee battlefield."

It was true. Their distress was so much deeper than the darkness that it told its own story. Their guards were the Pine Ridge police, famous, efficient, obedient Sioux warriors, transformed by the discipline and drill of a United States officer — and the force of necessity — into United States soldiers. They were standing guard over their own cousins, for the Big Foot band was closely related to the Pine Ridge Sioux. Not a word was spoken on either side. There was nothing but silence and dumb suffering.

Later we saw the mangled and dying brought in from the battlefield — about sixty of them. Women with legs broken by canister shot; little children torn and disfigured by rifle bullets. The Presbyterian Church and Episcopal Chapel were quickly converted into hospital rooms, and with incredible speed doctors and extemporized nurses organized the last hospital service for the last Indian battlefield in America.

— By Addison E. Sheldon



MOUNT RUSHMORE NATIONAL MEMORIAL
The Shrine of Democracy

People's Memorials – and Their Monuments

BY GUTZON BORGLUM*

In this country we don't often realize how important is the difference between a memorial and a monument. A monument records an event in the life of a people that has passed . . . Unless it commemorates the spirit back of that great event and tells the story for all time, it is not a memorial. You can fill the roadways with monuments telling the public that this or that has taken place there, but those are not memorials.

General Pershing was asked to select a design for a memorial commemorating certain heroic battles in the World War and the part our boys played in those battles. He wanted my advice. I said, "General, an architect can do nothing to help you live out the story of the boys that were taken out of this home or that home and brought over there to sacrifice for their country and the world. He cannot picture the boy who went two or three or ten thousand miles to kill his fellow-men on the theory he was saving homes. You must design the spirit of sacrifice as performed by the American boy, drafted by his republic, to show it to possess a purpose that did not really exist even in Europe where the struggle was at hand. . .

"Here in America we had worked up the boys who were the children of the men and women who had left that Old World in disgust with its political and economic life and its social conditions. We stopped our business, mortgaged our resources, went without sugar, beef and gasoline, that we might send our boys into the trenches—English, French, Belgian and Italian alike. We sacrificed all this that they might have some decent things over there. It was right that we should do so. Then, I said, they would have you go back there and stick up on that battlefield (excuse me!) the damnedest lot of rot as a memorial to

* Excerpts from address delivered at annual meeting, State Historical Society, January 7, 1930.

what this great Western world really did in the crisis of civilization, thru this boy and that boy. It amounts to that! That boy and that boy and that boy didn't go to Europe as a boy. America went to Europe — the youth of the western hemisphere went over there. The most free-born creature that has existed in the history of the world stopped his business, stopped his government, — stopped everything and went to Europe to stay the hand of destruction that threatened his civilization. And now we talk of sticking up a slab of marble with the name of John Jones or Samuel Smith or Gutzon Borglum on it! It doesn't amount to a thing! The American nation, in all of its grandeur and greatness, went over to fight a war with which we had nothing to do. That in itself is a monument (whether ever sculptured or not) that has no precedent in history. . . ."

I said to Pershing: "America, not you or I, built a monument the world must look on for ten thousand years. Dig into the files and find the record of every man, boy or girl who remained there, and there you find the story of what this young world did. After it had tried to forget the old world, it came back to save its Fatherland. That is the memorial! Names carved in stone mean nothing. Hard as it is, we must somehow bring into the medium we are working with a something that conveys the heart and spirit of the boys who died. That will be the memorial."

I was born out here in the West. My grandmother, a Danish woman, told me the story of the Norsemen. It is a wonderful story. . . . And because I played with Indians as a boy, I was brought up on the tales of those old chiefs. I believed in the Indian. I still believe in him — I believe in his integrity. . .

Yes, I am still cognizant tonight that the old story of the Norse gods had a great influence upon me. I think always in the terms of the heroic. We must do that in our contact with the greater things in people — in fact, even in the little things. You can do everything in a big way. I am perfectly sure that if there is anything in our civilization that lifts us out of the common run of European civilization it is the attitude of our nation — a great, broad realm from the Pacific to the Atlantic. It is that our nation was founded by pioneers — that we are descended from pioneers

who came here to gain freedom of thought and freedom of action.

And we are still young pioneers. Our opportunities are so great! Those opportunities still exist in our thought; the frontier is still there for all kinds of expression; our progress is constant.

. . . When I went to Europe and began to study the ancient peoples of Egypt, Greece and Rome, I was disappointed to find that all this fine heroism, the background of all these fine lives — in fact, our whole civilization was built into the cheap imitation, submerged in the culture of the dead sons of Europe. I think this is an important issue. It was not physical Europe that bothered me, it was mental Europe — the dogmatism of European governments, the lack of vitality in European ideals; and you can imagine my horror when I returned and found Philadelphia, New York and Washington saturated with the same thing . . . I found that the strong, virile something that built us up as a country, that represented the spirit of our people, that had come out of the Renaissance, was missing . . . So you can understand how it hurts me to see this young nation . . . still fumbling and mumbling over the repetition of ancient arts. And I don't hesitate to say to you that most of the American art is poor, poor — unplanned, unthought, unsympathetic; a reproduction of poor classical art. When men like Kenyon Cox lend themselves to such stuff and contend that you can adapt yourself to the Greek and draw as they drew — why, hell! what can we expect? You can never draw as the Greeks drew because you are not Greek. Your God is not their God. . .

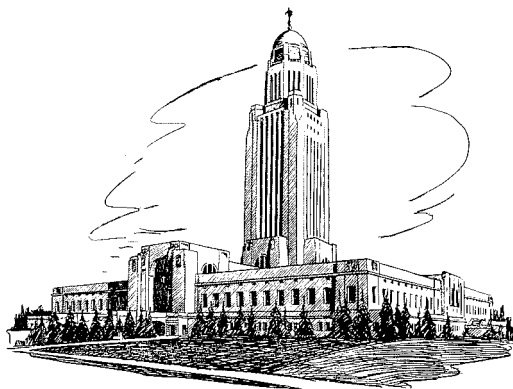
I am referring to all of this for a purpose. The big lesson of it is that the United States should study out a program, build for herself, stop this repetition of European bunk and take up the history of the men who dared to say to England, "Get out!" We would like to be free, to be happy, . . . but our men of this day can't do these Greek things. "You can't build for Athens unless you were born there" was another rule they had.

Apply that to American intellectual life and where do you get? We must emancipate ourselves if we are to build for ourselves. . . The greatest gift of the modern age is America herself, standing on one side with this something in her heart that cares for the world without question. America's greatest duty

is to look into her own heart and thus to serve the other nations of the world. Most of us seem to have forgotten that there is something in living: this carrying life's lantern in the hand and keeping the race free. We should get back on the right road.

* * *

Swept by sixty years of struggle and development, you are modern and young. You don't know how valuable that is! You don't know what a magnificent piece of true expression — what a wonderful piece of work you have in your city here, given you by Goodhue who is probably one of the greatest geniuses who ever lived in America. If I should say that I think there is not another building to rank with it, you might call it exaggeration. I don't think so when we reckon the taste, culture and courage shown by this man — a great courage hardly equalled. You can scarcely realize how that capitol will bring distinction to this city and to the people of the state.



Indian Tribe in Granite is Next Plan of Gutzon Borglum, Sculptor of Mount Rushmore*

Gutzon Borglum, sculptor who is hewing the Mount Rushmore memorial in South Dakota's Black Hills, has offered his services in creating a granite memorial to the Sioux Indians in the Pine Ridge foothills near Chadron.

He has proposed to the Pine Ridge historical society the reproduction of an entire tribe of Indians, using huge granite boulders from the Mount Rushmore memorial one hundred miles north of here.

"We've robbed the Sioux of their hunting grounds and now fail to provide for them," Borglum told members of the society at a meeting here. "Today, for the first time in two years of planning a Sioux Indian memorial with you Nebraskans, here in your meeting I got mad about it.

"I'm not so young as I was, and I don't like to take on new fights and planning battles. But now, I want to build a monument, not from cement and sand, but from granite boulders. We'll take this monument out of Rushmore granite, hauled down here in pieces of thirty, sixty and eighty tons.

We'll make a whole tribe of Indians. We'll make them fourteen to sixteen feet tall and reproduce them as our forefathers first knew and saw them — wild and carefree."

Borglum said Sioux leaders have asked him many times to carve a monument of a lone Indian near the "great white faces" on the Mount Rushmore memorial. "Their requests," he said, "have been as pathetic as anything I know."

In addition to the Indian tribal scene in granite on a hill "where the sun strikes it best the most hours of every day," several historical markers to memorialize Indian events in Dawes, Sheridan, Sioux and Box Butte counties are contemplated.

*AP from Chadron in *Nebraska State Journal*, November 22, 1938.



LINCOLN BORGLUM AT WORK

Swinging high above the rocky forest, half hidden by a cloud of granite dust, the son of Gutzon completes the sculpturing on Mount Rushmore. Beyond is the roadway up the mountain which Mr. Borglum, answering an objection that the site was hopelessly inaccessible, declared would be built.

They Who Create

The building of a noble memorial to the Indian was near to the heart of Gutzon Borglum, and it had been his purpose to write a special article for this Pine Ridge issue of NEBRASKA HISTORY. Now, since that is forever impossible, and the paragraphs in his notebook which his devoted wife wove into the article on page 253 are too few, it seems fitting to make this a Borglum Number also, paying tribute to the genius of Solon son of the old Danish wood-carver, to Gutzon the brother of Solon, and to Lincoln the son of Gutzon, upon whom we have strong reason to believe the mantle has fallen and will yet be revealed.

Lorado Taft, in his "History of American Sculpture," wrote a sympathetic story of the work of *Solon Hannibal Borglum* as one of the group of "nature worshippers, . . . who unites in his creations the untamed freedom of the frontier with the tenderness of a true artist. . . . They are a new and enthusiastic manifestation of the myriad-sided life of this vast country, and couched in terms so sculptured as to seem at first uncouth, yet having by birthright more of nature and more of art than it is often given to a sculptor to put into similar efforts. . . . All of his groups have significance; all have a rude primitive strength and a kind of impressionistic generalization which subordinates details to the intense expression of the artist's one thought. . . . In his tiny Burial on the Plains there is a mysterious emotional note which has been touched by few indeed of our sculptors, a sentiment that might easily have been dissipated by a more insistent technic."

The story of *Gutzon Borglum* is inseparable from the story of Mount Rushmore and the transfiguration that has come to it thru his hand. Let us look at that mountain, at its background and its destiny.

"Tracing the history of the Black Hills from the time the

area they occupy was covered with sea water, the geologist¹ said this region is one of the oldest on the American continent.

“‘No one knows how many millions of years since Rushmore first rose above the plains,’ he said, ‘but of this we are sure — that at that time the Alps had not yet taken shape, nor had the Appenines, the Pyrenees or the Caucasus; and, incomprehensible as it may seem, the region now occupied by the unmatched Himalayas was little more than a great brackish marsh. . . Rushmore’s massive shoulders have braved the storms of millions of years.’”²

“This mountain is in the heart of a rugged, strikingly scenic and beautiful range rising to a height of over 7,000 feet,” stated Hon. Peter Norbeck in the U. S. Senate, and then read into the record an address delivered at Mount Rushmore by President Coolidge, whose words are peculiarly appropriate to these pages:

“We have come here to dedicate a cornerstone that was laid by the hand of the Almighty. . . Its location will be significant. Here in the heart of the continent, on the side of a mountain which probably no white man had ever beheld in the days of Washington, in territory which was acquired by the action of Jefferson, which remained an almost unbroken wilderness beyond the days of Lincoln, which was especially beloved by Roosevelt, the people of the future will see history and art combined to portray the spirit of patriotism. They will know that the figures of these Presidents have been placed here because by following the truth they built for posterity. The fundamental principles which they represented have been wrought into the very being of our country. They are steadfast as these ancient hills. . .

“The progress of America has been due to the spirit of its people. It is in no small degree due to that spirit that we have been able to produce such great leaders. If coming generations are to maintain a like spirit, it will be because they continue to study the lives and times of the great men who have been the leaders in our history, and continue to support the principles which these men represented. It is for that purpose that we erect memorials. We cannot hold our admiration for the historic

¹ Dr. C. O. O’Harra, President State School of Mines.

² *Rapid City Journal*, July 5, 1930.

figures which we shall see here without growing stronger in our determination to perpetuate the institutions which their lives revealed and established.

"The fact that this enterprise is being begun in one of our new States not yet great in population, not largely developed in its resources, discloses that the old American spirit still goes where our people go, still dominates their lives, still inspires them to deeds of devotion and sacrifice. It is but another illustration of the determination of our people to use their material resources to minister to their spiritual life. This memorial will be another national shrine to which future generations will repair to declare their continuing allegiance to independence, to self-government, to freedom, and to economic justice.

"It is an inspiring phase of American life that men are willing to devote their energies to the erection of a memorial of this nature. Money spent for such a purpose is certain of adequate returns in the nature of increased public welfare.

"The people of South Dakota are taking the lead in the preparation of this memorial out of their meager resources because the American spirit is strong among them. . . They realize fully that they have no means of succeeding in the development of their State except by a reliance upon American institutions. They do not fail to appreciate their value. There is no power that can stay the progress of such a people."

Mr. Borglum himself described this sculpturing as "a monument not to men but to the aspirations of a great people. Comparing it to records of ancient civilizations found in Assyria and Babylon, he said the memorial was destined to remind future centuries of the ideals and achievements of men who were responsible for the conception, preservation and growth of the nation. . . He declared that Rushmore's granite will retain the memorial figures for more than half a million years."¹

The wholly mechanical phase of this stupendous undertaking, the engineering on a scale and of a character never before conceived by man, was done under the personal direction of Borglum and his son. A fascinating account is given by David Perlman in

¹ *Rapid City Journal*, July 5, 1930.

an interview¹ which also reveals, in Borglum's own words, his conception of the spiritual magnitude of this memorial.

" . . not far from the site of Custer's last stand, Gutzon Borglum is nearing the end of a gigantic task. The major part of his monument to the building of America, a fourfold sculpture so huge it covers an acre and a half of granite mountainside, is all but finished. After thirteen years of persistent drilling, blasting and chiseling, the heads of four great Americans now peer out, white and smooth, across the Dakota prairie.

"Four hundred thousand tons of rock has been stripped away in the carvings. . . They are visible from miles away. The monument as a whole is undoubtedly the biggest sculptural project ever carried out. . . Completion of the memorial as a shrine to American democracy remains his great dream. . .

"Only three tools have been used on the job thus far — air drills, dynamite and hand chisels. In blocking out the huge masses of rock it was first necessary, of course, to study the composition of the granite, the direction of the grain, the existence of faults, depth of the rock. When this was established, the rough form of each of the heads was achieved by careful blasting with minute charges of dynamite.

"To carve the figures Mr. Borglum devised a unique method. With his plaster models as a guide, he went over the whole granite face and marked spots a few inches apart for the drill to bite. Each spot was marked by a cross, and each cross had its number, indicating the depth of the hole to be drilled. The whole rock surface was so marked; then the drilling began. When the holes were finished their bottoms represented, within a fraction of an inch, the final contours of the face.

"Again, tiny dynamite charges were set off, and chisels went into action to break away the rock between the drill holes. Thus, slowly, the faces appeared under the hands of miners who had no training in such precise work, but who were under the constant direction of the sculptor himself.

"Out of the cable car, . . we went out on the scaffolding to inspect the freshly cut granite. Here was where the sculptor was doing his finish job, taking off his final quarter-inches.

¹ *New York Times Magazine*, August 25, 1940.

"‘This is the work,’ he said, ‘that I love most, this intimate contact with the four men. As I become engrossed in the features and personality of each man, I feel myself growing in stature, just as they did when their characters grew and developed. It’s an experience, I think, that is shared by the thousands of visitors who come here every year. The very size of the sculpture impresses them with the magnitude of the concepts these men symbolized. Democracy can become something big and immediate to them.’

"Which of the figures — which of the characters — does the sculptor prefer? It was a difficult question, but Borglum said he thinks first of Lincoln.

"‘Who can think of him,’ he asked, ‘and not think of the Garden of Gethsemane? The nation of Washington and Jefferson needed Lincoln. Note how carefully, how ably and how tenderly he filled that need. He is at once the heart and soul of Mount Rushmore. I have deliberately turned his face full toward Washington and Jefferson, two men he almost worshipped.’

"In the figure of Washington the sculptor has tried to recreate a character he believes never has been successfully reproduced.

"‘Washington,’ he said, ‘was a gentleman of strong British antecedents. He lived a strong, normal life and the splendid existence of a fine, physically well-organized man. Back of all this we have the man who became a leader in his early forties, a master of guerrilla warfare who baffled and defeated the British. For seven long years he labored and suffered, weary, without help. Analyze him as you like, study him as you will. At the end you will be shocked as you return to the Stuart portraits and the Houdon statue. Stuart was of that school of thought determined to reduce Washington to a perfect formula. And Houdon’s whole portrait is an utterly false interpretation.

"‘I have gone into the study of Jefferson in much the same way,’ he continued. ‘The portraits and data we have of him are honest, and we see the young man, the torch-bearer, the artist, the architect, musician and builder, the creator in all his varied moods. I am sorry I have only one portrait to make of him.

"‘Theodore Roosevelt,’ he said, turning to the last of the

four, 'comes to us with an entirely different note. President Coolidge once asked me, in discussing these men, what was my estimate of Roosevelt. "Well," I answered, "I happen to know that Mr. Roosevelt said the cutting of the Panama canal was the greatest and most important service he rendered to the nation." Mr. Coolidge jumped to his feet and, with his index finger pointing upward, he said, "Have you forgotten that he was the only president who dared tell big business, "Thus far you can go, and no farther, for the safety of our country?" "

" 'I was stunned. Not at the reminder but that it came from Coolidge and in that phrase: "the only president." Then he added, "Those words must be cut on that mountain." ' ' . . .

"Stone Mountain was the scene of Mr. Borglum's first venture into mammoth sculpture. It was a tempestuous highlight in a career marked by tempest. . . These two projects are the biggest sculptural jobs ever undertaken.

" 'There is something in sheer volume,' he says, 'that awes and terrifies, lifts us out of ourselves. Something that relates us to God and to what is greatest in our evolving universe. But there's still another motive in my mind in building this super-memorial.'

"He turns and looks at the four huge sculptured faces.

" 'I feel,' he says, 'that the supreme accomplishments of men should be cut into, built into, the crust of this earth so that these records will have to be worn to dust and blown away before the record of the nation's greatness shall perish.' "

Of *Lincoln the son of Gutzon* the records have little to say because little has been given them. The young man's ability as a sculptor of great promise is acknowledged but never asserted because of his devotion to his father with whom he was closely associated from boyhood, watching him, helping him in every phase of the work in the studio and on the mountain. Inevitably this has developed his natural talent, and for the past year he has carried on this work alone. Mr. Borglum often spoke of the boy's sense of form, so important in sculpture, and how it had helped him at Rushmore. Lincoln has just finished a portrait, the legacy of a commission from his father, which is said to be remarkable.

He is very sympathetic to the Indians and was made a brother and son in the Oglala Tribe at Pine Ridge when his father was made a chief.

In the editorial exchanges we find the following items of interest.

"Lincoln Borglum first saw Mount Rushmore from the back of a pony while accompanying his sculptor-father on a week-long tour of the Black Hills seventeen years ago. Today at the age of twenty-eight he surveys the heights of Rushmore from scaffolds and swinging chairs as he directs the final touches to the gigantic mountain memorial his father decided upon as a result of that early horseback trip. Mr. Borglum found his son an eager pupil, not only in the art of mountain carving but in the whole field of sculpture. 'Little remains to be done to finish the work as father planned it,' he said. 'I want only to carry on as he wished.'"¹

"Comparatively little has been said of this young man who was his father's assistant for several years and active in the work of carving the memorial from the start. Lincoln Borglum is an engineer and designer. The task of translating the model of the four famous faces to the mountain has been in his competent hands.

"There was a close comradeship between father and son. What seemed insurmountable problems, both physically and financially, found the elder man the fighter, fearless, outspoken and adroit.

"In Lincoln Borglum, who has devoted most of his youth to assisting in the sculpturing of this great memorial, there is less of the fire and the flair for the dramatic, and more of the quiet, persistent skill. . . Those who know are sure the son will be able to finish the work, . and it will be completed under expert and understanding direction."²

¹ *Omaha World-Herald*, April 20, 1941.

² *Christian Science Monitor*, April 23, 1941.

Some there be which have no memorial who are perished as though they had never been. — *Ecclesiasticus*, XLIV.