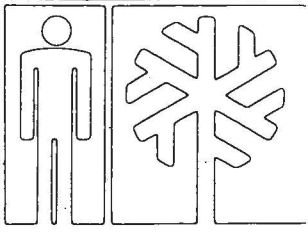
special history study D-543

MOUNT RUSHMORE

GUTZON BORGLUM'S CONCEPT OF THE HALL OF RECORDS



NATIONAL MEMORIAL / SOUTH DAKOTA

SPECIAL HISTORY STUDY

GUTZON BORGLUM'S CONCEPT OF THE HALL OF RECORDS

MOUNT RUSHMORE NATIONAL MEMORIAL

SOUTH DAKOTA

by

Enid T. Thompson

DENVER SERVICE CENTER
HISTORIC PRESERVATION TEAM
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
DENVER, COLORADO

June 1975

PREFACE

This study of the Hall of Records at Mount Rushmore National Memorial was commissioned to provide a documented and detailed history of Gutzon Borglum's proposed "Hall of Records" at Mount Rushmore, based upon information gathered from documents found at Mount Rushmore, Rapid City and vicinity, Washington D. C., Kansas City, and Denver. Material in Gilbert Fite's book Mount Rushmore will be the "point of departure" for this study.

In carrying out this commission it was discovered that the records previously located at the memorial and in the Federal Records Center at Kansas City had all been sent to the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C., and that some of the papers of the Second Mount Rushmore Commission along with the papers of the Mount Rushmore National Memorial Society, formerly in the possession of Hoadley Dean of Rapid City, have been deposited at the Black Hills State College in Spearfish, South Dakota. Following close and intense study of Filbert Fite's book, all of these papers were traced and examined, and interviews were arranged with persons knowledgeable about the history of Mount Rushmore. Fite's papers are included in the collection at Spearfish.

Within the 238-page text of Fite's definitive history of Mount Rushmore there are only seven references to the Hall of Records. One of these, the description he gives of the hall, is reported verbatim in the present study, and all others are mentioned. On the other hand, the general history of the memorial delineated in the book is mentioned in this study only as it pertains to the history of the Hall of Records. An earlier Borglum mountain-carving project at Stone Mountain, Georgia, is mentioned because it illuminates Gutzon Borglum's concept of a memorial hall as an integral part of mountain carving as early as 1920.

The history of the Hall of Records is presented chronologically in the development of the memorial, and almost every document in which the hall is mentioned is quoted verbatim. Borglum's dream of the memorial was a growing, changing concept, and the changes are presented here in Borglum's words, showing his alterations, inconsistencies, evasions, and persistence. Borglum brought the dream of a memorial hall to Mount Rushmore from Stone Mountain and expanded and embellished it. Russel Arundel commented in an interview that the original plans for the Hall of Records were very simple, but that Gutzon Borglum's imagination was endless--his plans could go on forever.

In addition to the documented and detailed reporting in chronological order of Borglum's concept of the Hall of Records, this study also contains some explanatory data making repeated reference to Fite's book unnecessary. Included are, very briefly:

1. A chronology of the Hall of Records within the framework of the chronology of the entire memorial (Appendix A).

2. A roster of persons chiefly involved in the construction of the memorial, including the commissions and administrative groups, to assist in evaluating the documents used to illustrate points in the study (Appendix B).

3. A list of enabling legislation that provided for construction of the memorial but that do not mention the Hall of Records (Appendix C).

4. A bibliography and list of interviewees.

5. Photos and slides of the Hall of Records, the canyon in which it is situated, and access routes to it in October 1974.

Copies of the quoted documents are all available for examination at the Denver Service Center, Denver, Colorado. The plans and details have been secured from Lincoln Borglum for insertion in this report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE iii

GUTZON BORGLUM'S CONCEPT OF THE HALL OF RECORDS 1

SUMMARY 71

ADDENDUM 75

APPENDICES 81

A. Chronology 83
B. Persons Involved in Development of Mount Rushmore National Memorial 85
C. Federal Legislation Concerning Mount Rushmore 87

BIBLIOGRAPHY 89

ILLUSTRATIONS 93

1. Plan of Grand Staircase 94
2. Plan of Hall of Records 96
3. Original Model, Hall of Records 98
4. Original Model, Hall of Records 98

GUTZON BORGLUM'S CONCEPT OF THE HALL OF RECORDS

One aspect of the design and construction of the memorial that Dr. Fite mentioned but did not explore in depth in his history of Mount Rushmore is the Hall of Records. This hall, or archives, with the Grand Stairway leading to it was one of Gutzon Borglum's dreams. He designed and started work on it contrary to both memorial commission instructions and Park Service policy.

This study of Borglum's dream is an attempt to determine and record the inception, development, and final status of the plan for the hall and the stairway and to define their importance to the completed memorial as envisaged by Borglum. According to Fite:

> Gradually the image of an incomparable national shrine took form in the artist's mind. Two elements dominated his thoughts. First of all, the monument must be large. . . . Borglum had reached the stage in life where he wanted to engage in the largest type of art work in the world and leave behind him a monument that would stand for all time as a record of supreme achievement. . . . It was equally important to Borglum that the memorial represent the spirit and ideals of American geographical expansion and political development. Borglum was proud of his country's growth and he gloried in its democratic ideals and institutions.[1]

Even before 1924 when he presented his proposal to the people of South Dakota and the Mount Harney Memorial Association, Gutzon Borglum had planned a memorial hall as part of his project for mountain sculpture at Stone Mountain, Georgia, and had described it in detail. He discussed his plans and the concept for the Confederate memorial very openly with the South Dakota people in the early stages of discussing Mt. Rushmore. In an article in the Rapid City Daily Journal in 1924, he explained his conception of Stone Mountain. This was while he was still working in Georgia and before he had even visited the Black Hills site, although he had been in contact with Doane Robinson of

---

1. Gilbert C. Fite, Mount Rushmore (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), pp. 46-47.

South Dakota in September 1924. He explained the scope of the carving of the Confederates--seven figures of the Confederate high command and sixty-five individual likenesses in the panorama of generals. The choice of individuals was to be made by the individual States of the Confederacy. These carved figures would range in depth of carving from 4 to 20 feet. Lee's figure, mounted on his horse, was to be 150 feet from head to horse's knee. The figures were to be 300 feet below the summit of Stone Mountain and 300 feet above the plain. He wrote in the article:

> Besides these figures, any one of which would in itself constitute an unusual and tremendous monument, are Memorial Hall, to be quarried out of the solid granite of Stone Mountain, and the amphitheatre, a structure rivalling the Coliseum of Ancient Rome. The amphitheatre is to be built of the granite removed from the mountain in excavating for Memorial Hall. . . .
>
> Since Memorial Hall is to be immediately below the central group [of figures], it will not be possible to begin its excavation until the seven members of the high command have been completed. At the present time there is a continual cascade of granite down the face of the mountain across the very frontage where the incisions of Memorial Hall are to be made.
>
> Thirteen incisions will be made for removing the granite in the creation of Memorial Hall, and when finished these incisions will form the windows and central entrance, each opening being dedicated to a Confederate State. Running for a distance of 320 feet parallel to the face of the precipice, the hall will be 60 feet deep and 40 feet in height from floor to ceiling. No building material of any description will be introduced except immense bronze frames and stained glass in the windows. A broad granite esplanade will sweep across the front, and being formed by cutting into the mountain the length of the wall. Ascending to the entrance from the plain will be a majestic granite stairway. To the right of the Memorial Hall and at the base of the mountain where a recess in the face of the Precipice forms a natural sounding board of tremendous power will be built the amphitheatre. Back of a gigantic stage, in an incision in the natural recess, will be constructed the greatest pipe organ in the world. . . .

> A "Founder's Roll" subscription [to the Stone Mountain Memorial] carries with it a bronze tablet to be permanently bolted to the wall inside of Memorial Hall . . . and a great "Book of Memory" made of the most enduring parchment science can devise will carry the "Children's Founder's Roll" down through the ages.[2]

A slightly differing description of this Stone Mountain memorial hall appears in Give The Man Room, a history of the Stone Mountain project:

> Something more than a tremendous picture of the Confederate Army was to be left here, Gutzon decided. He needed a studio in this area; so he would build one at the foot of the mountain--a huge one built of permanent materials. And when the project was finished this building could be converted into a vast art school of a sort much needed in the South. The student, he declared, would be able to learn about sculpture by looking at it, by being part of a great work as they did in medieval Italy.
>
> He designed a great hall to be cut into the rock below the marching statues. This was to be a memorial to the women of the South and a depository for their records. In addition to that he was planning an open air amphitheatre at the base of the mountain. . . . This will be a shrine to gladden the soul, said Gutzon. And it looked as if it might be.[3]

In 1927, in an article written for the Washington Star, Borglum stated his philosophy of carving history in and on mountains. He first expressed his feeling that the 20th century was to be the "Colossal Age," that Americans had been given a new standard of measurement for the material and the living and were developing new dimensions. He said he carved mountains to express these dimensions, but that the reader

---

2. Rapid City Daily Journal, Wednesday, July 16, 1924.

3. Robert J. Casey and Mary Borglum, Give The Man Room: The Story of Gutzon Borglum (Indianapolis: Bobbs, 1952), p. 183.

must go beyond the bigness of just bulk to the field of spirit. I had four great schemes for the great Confederate memorials. The first of these was treating the entire mountain as a modern Acropolis, and carving memorial buildings and statues in place, terracing the whole with a flight of 2000 steps . . . but I abandoned it because of the reminiscent character and its utter unsuitability to the Western Spirit. My second plan was to point the rounded top of the mountain into a great pyramid, stopping 400 feet from the ground, there have dropped a sheer wall with an ellipse. This wall would have been 2000 feet in length, and the face of it would have carried the whole history of the founding of the Anglo-Saxon western world by Raleigh down to and including the war between the states over the interpretation of the Constitution. . . . My third plan contemplated taking the entire mountain as a single mass and dealing with it much as I did with the "Mares of Diomedes." This plan was probably the most daring, and more nearly fitted the character of the supermen who have founded and have had so much to do with the direction of the spirit of the great Western Hemisphere. These plans were all abandoned for the one I finally adopted, that of placing an Army with Lee and his associates 1700 feet in length, marching northward across the northeast wall of the great cliff. . . . The monument had come to belong to the world as the colossal art production of modern times. . . . The ten years of building have taught a Nation what can be done and should be done with the story of our fathers; the story of her people. In the great Northwest we are carving on the granite peaks of the Rockies the empire builders of our great Republic. The Black Hills work is completely laid out; models are made and my entire Stone Mountain staff under contract for the life of the Western Work.[4]

By 1927, when this article was written, Borglum had left Stone Mountain and was working in South Dakota. As originally planned for the Mount Harney Memorial Association, the Black Hills work was to be completed in 5 years, during 1925-30. This schedule would allow one season for each face, and one season for the entablature. Fite noted that

---

4. Gutzon Borglum, in the Washington D. C. Sunday Star, Aug. 21, 1927, part 5, p. 1. The section, surprisingly, is labeled on one side "Illustrated Features," and on the other "Fiction and Humor." In the article Borglum attributes the original idea of Stone Mountain to Franklin K. Lane in 1919, when Lane was Secretary of the Interior.

> Borglum said nothing in this report about the hall of records, sometimes referred to as a museum, or the grand stairway which were to be part of the overall plan developed later.[5]

Several other articles on the memorial appeared at this time, one of which, found in manuscript form in the Borglum Papers, was published in the Rapid City Daily Journal. The author of the manuscript was given as G. G. Behrens, and the article in the newspaper carried the headline:

> TWO FIGURES PLEDGED: RUSHMORE COMMISSION

It went on to say:

> The memorial is to consist of four figures; Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson and Roosevelt, designed to a scale of men 465 feet tall. The first two figures will extend to the waistline, the latter two not being portrayed so fully. All figures will fade into the mountain below. After completing the four figures Gutzon Borglum will produce an entablature on the outside of the peak, an illustrated history of the United States in Stone.[6]

This was the original plan of the Mount Harney Memorial Association, and was widely publicized. All work, however, depended upon sufficient financing; hence the association's caution in promising only two figures. The figures were to be carved in order of importance to the sculptor. The entablature came last, but was discussed often and widely between 1925 and 1938. The first text for the inscription was written by President Calvin Coolidge. He had been asked to write it at the time he dedicated the mountain to the memorial in 1927, and he had agreed. This provision was written into the first Federal law that provided funding for the memorial in 1927.

It was not until 1930 that Coolidge was ready to write the 500-word history. Borglum had chosen the events to be recorded and listed them first in the 1928 report addressed to the Mount Harney Memorial Association. He was engaged, he reported to Congress,

---

5. Fite, Mount Rushmore, p. 64.

6. Rapid City Daily Journal, files, clipping dated March 1927. The text by G. G. Behrens is a signed typescript in the Borglum Collection, Container 102, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. (All subsequent Borglum Collection references with container numbers refer to documents in the Library of Congress.)

in work on colossal sculptured figures, Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt, together with a tablet of approximately 80 by 120 feet on which should be a record of the
Founding of the Independent States
Establishment of the Republic
Purchase of the Louisiana Territory
Admission of the Republic of Texas
Acquisition of California
Acquisition of Oregon
Acquisition of Florida
Acquisition of Alaska
Acquisition of Panama[7]

As Mr. Fite makes clear in his discussion of the entablature text, Mr. Borglum edited the material submitted by Mr. Coolidge, amid a great uproar.[8] Coolidge submitted his text in 1930. By this time the Mount Harney Memorial Association had been succeeded by the First Mount Rushmore Memorial Association, which backed the provision in the 1927 Borglum contract stating that the sculptor had "full freedom to make minor changes in the contemplated design as the work goes forward . . . as will best effectuate the Sculptor's conception and purpose with respect to every phase of the art features."[9] Mr. Borglum felt that the changes he made were minor and within his rights, but there were some legal problems raised and some differing opinions, that stirred up a fuss. During the ensuing uproar, Mr. Coolidge gave up any attempt to complete writing of the inscription, and so Mr. Borglum gave his attention to the figures after carving only the date "1776" on the site of the inscription. This was later removed.[10] The most valuable result of all the publicity generated was wider knowledge of the memorial and of the fact that it did deal with American history.

---

7. Borglum Collection, Container 102. During the discussion in Congress on the financing of Mt. Rushmore, Loring M. Black, Jr., Representative from New York, made two comments on the Coolidge inscription that were reported in the Congressional Record of June 4, 1928. He suggested for the Coolidge inscription: "The farmers asked [of Coolidge] for bread and he gave them this stone." He also commented that "a very fitting Memorial to Cal would be a blank spot on stone."

8. Fite, Mount Rushmore, pp. 99-104.

9. Contract, Mar. 1, 1927, between Mount Harney Memorial Association and Gutzon Borglum, Borglum Collection, Container 102.

10. Borglum Collection, Container 102.

During the depression period after 1928, financing of the memorial became a real problem, but Borglum had hopes. On May 21, 1928, he had written to Peter Norbeck:

> I had in mind that if the Rockefeller request turned out favorably and we got half a million dollars from him we could extend the development around the Memorial into possibly very fine buildings which I have always thought should be built for the purpose of the historical record, bearing directly upon the matters the Memorial commemorates.

To which Norbeck replied on June 2:

> I have been hoping we could find a man in New York, or New England, who would undertake the $50,000 necessary for the entablature. There must be hundreds of good men who will like this Presidential appointment (and have their names on the eternal rocks as members of the Presidential Commission). Let us select carefully those who will get results.[11]

Still exercising his contract right to make minor changes in the contemplated design of the memorial, Borglum accepted plans in 1929 for an impressive gateway to the Mount Rushmore Reservation proposed and designed by Scoval Johnson, an attorney of Custer, South Dakota. These plans were never implemented.[12]

By 1930, instead of four completed colossal figures and a finished entablature (as outlined in the plans in 1925), the 5 years of work had resulted in: one completed head of Washington; the procurement of Federal funding; the formation of a new governing body of national rather than local (South Dakota) scope; and the attainment of nationwide recognition for the project, largely because of the Coolidge-Borglum entablature hassle. During the 5 years several different locations had been prepared for the entablature. Orginally it had been planned for the east wall, but in 1926 consideration was given to the west side, opposite to and hidden from the faces. In 1930 the plan had been to put it north of the Washington face, but by then Borglum had had a different idea, as he stated in this 1930 report to the commission:

---

11. Ibid.

12. Letters and drawings of these plans are in Ibid.

> There is a small canon, through which we pass to reach the top, back of the sculptured groups. At the proper time, I shall recommend that the walls of this canon be dressed and the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, complete with amendments, together with certain other records of first importance, be there cut in three languages, English, Latin, and some other great Asiatic language,--Chinese or Japanese.
>
> I have no intention of involving funds contributed by the Commission in this or add to the Commission's financial burden, as there was no provision for these inscriptions in the nation's appropriation. At the proper time I will offer a plan that will completely finance the cutting of such inscriptions. I refer to it here because I am fully convinced that we must now leave to posterity the unabridged originals as written by the founders of our freedom!![13]

Also in 1930, Gutzon Borglum wrote the foreword for the first edition of a booklet on the memorial produced as a money-making item. In this he expressed his philosophy on the memorial and his need to record the "words of our leaders":

> 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 the dramatic moments or crises in our amazing history. We are cool-headedly, clear-mindedly setting down a few crucial, epochal facts regarding the accomplishments of the Old World radicals who shook the shackles of oppression from their light feet and fled despotism to people a continent; who built an empire and rewrote the philosophy of freedom and compelled the world to accept its wiser, happier forms of government.

---

13. Ibid. This is the first mention of the small canyon as a site for these inscriptions and the first use of the word "records"; Robert Dean, Living Granite: The Story of Borglum and the Mount Rushmore Memorial (New York: Viking Press, 1949), p. 42, says that the party camped on the site on the exploring trip in 1925. Lincoln Borglum says they only picnicked there but knew the site well.

We believe the dimensions of national heartbeats are greater than village impulses, greater than city demands, greater than state dreams or ambitions. Therefore we believe a nation's memorial should, like Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt, have a serenity, a nobility, a power that reflects the gods who inspired them and suggests the gods they have become.

As for sculptured mountains--
Civilization, even its fine arts, is, most of it, quantity-produced stuff: education, law, government, wealth--each is enduring only as the day. Too little of it lasts into tomorrow and tomorrow is strangely the enemy of today, as today has already begun to forget buried yesterday. Each succeeding civilization forgets its predecessor, and out of its body builds its homes, its temples. Civilizations are ghouls. Egypt was pulled apart by its successor; Greece was divided among the Romans; Rome was pulled to pieces by bigotry and bitterness much of which was engendered in its own empire building.

I want, somewhere in America, on or near the Rockies, the backbone of the Continent, so far removed from succeeding, selfish, coveting civilizations, a few feet of stone that bears witness, carries the likeness, the dates, a word or two of the great things we accomplished as a Nation, placed so high it won't pay to pull them down for lesser purposes.

Hence, let us place there, carved high, as close to heaven as we can, the words of our leaders, their faces, to show posterity what manner of men they were. Then breathe a prayer that these records will endure until the wind and rain alone shall wear them away.

This **foreword,** printed over Gutzon Borglum's signature, appears in every subsequent edition of the Mount Rushmore booklets[14] and expresses very well what he wanted to do. The last two paragraphs appear in some form on almost all the souvenirs sold at the memorial, from ashtrays to linen towels on which the full text is printed.

By 1934, with the financial burden of the project being borne by the National Park Service, and with Federal money coming in, Borglum's long-term planning began to include the Hall of Records. Fite reported that Borglum advocated to Senator Norbeck inclusion in the

---

14. Mount Rushmore National Memorial Commission, Mount Rushmore National Memorial (Rapid City: Fenskey Press, 1930, 1931, 1938, 1948).

appropriation bill of an item pertaining to "the museum, generally called the hall of records."[15] In 1935 Borglum claimed that $335,000 would finish the entire memorial. (In the end he did not finish either the Hall of Records or the entablature after having spent $580,000.) Mistaken estimates such as this caused Peter Norbeck and other persons interested in the financing of the monument much embarrassment. Still, by 1935 the concept of the Hall of Records had become a primary con-concern to Gutzon Borglum, and his enthusiasm had infected Peter Norbeck, who usually referred to the structure as the "museum." In the Norbeck Papers is a memo to John Boland dated July 4, 1935, concerning a conversation with Borglum on two points that Norbeck wanted discussed. These were: 1) to plan on starting a museum at an early date and to apply for Civilian Conservation Corps aid to build the stairway to it, and 2) "It is in the fitness of things to have an inn at the Memorial, built by the C.C.C."[16]

In letters to Norbeck and Boland on October 9, 1935, Borglum first mentions his intention to build within the mountain. To Norbeck he wrote:

> I'd very much like to start and get most of the rough stone cut out of the mountain where we would carve the museum. I could roof over the wall inexpensively and go into that cliff, get the stone moved down out of the way and have the project itself in such condition that four to six men could be carrying on through the summer and get that great museum pretty well complete.
>
> The C.C.C. men could be put on the steps next summer.[17]

To Boland:

> I received the consent of 36 of our men to work on reduced wages and even half time during the four winter months, on condition, of course, that does not obligate them to carry on the sculpture work next year at the same rate. My plan was to begin the work on our museum and lay the ground work, out of the stone we take out, for the steps. That could all be done this winter. The men could be under cover and kept comfortable and it would be disassociated from the sculpture work itself.

---

15. Fite, Mount Rushmore, p. 154, taken from Norbeck Papers, Borglum Collection, Container 102. The bill did not include a Hall of Records.

16. Norbeck Papers, Borglum Collection, Container 102.

17. Ibid.

You may not know that granite is very difficult, almost impossible to handle under heavy frost, unless it is more or less covered. We could do that in the ravine back of the heads, where we are going to carve or create the museum.[18]

By 1936 Gutzon Borglum was certain in his own mind about the needs of the memorial. He submitted an agenda to the commission planning the next year's activities:

Reading and approval of minutes
Annual Audit
Treasurer's Report
Sculptor's Report
Executive Committee Report
Budget
Annual Report to Congress
Revision Sculptor's Contract
1936 Program
    Work on Monument
    Stairway and Museum
    Power
    Equipment
    Aerial Tramway
    Inscription
    Superintendent
    Publicity and Brochure.[19]

"Publicity" had been moved, in Borglum's handwriting, into the "1936 Program" and out of the routine order of business. The plans and designs for the stairway and museum were not fully developed, however. On January 18, 1936, in an airmail letter, Peter Norbeck wrote to Borglum:

> I am afraid, Borglum, that we will be suddenly called for the plans of the stairway (Rushmore) and if we don't have them we will be left out of the program.[20]

On January 23 Borglum wrote to John Harlan, General Counsel for the Treasury Department at Washington, asking him for a legal opinion on the language of the appropriations bill with reference to the

---

18. Fite, Mount Rushmore, p. 207: "Norbeck and Boland wanted the C.C.C. to build the stairway, but Borglum opposed the idea. There is reason to believe that the sculptor refused to use C.C.C. labor because he would receive no honorarium under those conditions."

19. Borglum Collection, Container 109.

20. Ibid., Container 104.

inscriptions at the back of Rushmore. The decision had already apparently been reached by the commission to complete the four heads before proceeding to another part of the memorial. Harlan answered on February 14, 1936:

> Mr. Oliphant has told me of your question with reference to the inscription. As I interpret the proviso there is no limitation upon the use of funds in connection with such an inscription. The proviso prohibits the use of this appropriation for work on any figure upon which work has not commenced.[21]

The letter goes on to say that Mr. Oliphant had already taken steps to lay the groundwork for the elimination of the proviso. This suited Borglum, but not everyone. In August 1936 John Boland wrote to John L. Nagle:[22]

> It is the desire and intent of the Commission to complete the four heroic figures to the exclusion of all other items and to leave the inscription, museum (hall of records), and incidental details to the fortunes of the future.[23]

At the same time Borglum wrote to Norbeck on August 13, 1936 that

> the drawings for this stairway are completed, as are also drawings for the museum, with the exception of some details, refinements, that I have to add to the resting places. . . . I am however, not delivering these drawings, or any other plans, to the Commission, outside of the work contracted for.

In August 1936 President Roosevelt visited the memorial and the Jefferson figure was dedicated. During the ceremony Borglum directed the following speech at the President:

---

21. Ibid.

22. Norbeck Letters, Mount Rushmore Collection, Acc. 15850, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. John Boland was secretary of the Mount Rushmore Memorial Commission, and John Nagle was superintendent of memorials, National Park Service. (All subsequent Mount Rushmore Collection references refer to documents in the Library of Congress unless otherwise indicated.)

23. Ibid.

> I have little more to say. There remains, Mr. President, the great inscription. We have conferred over this and come to some tentative understanding. I've allowed work on this inscription to wait until such time as all our attention can be given to its language and its design and the best minds among our people be drawn into its forming. This inscription will cover an acre of the upright west wall of Mount Rushmore.
>
> There should be a great stairway of stone cut from the local rock on the east facade, easy to ascend and, back of the sculpture into the mountain itself--a great room, at least 90 by 110 feet should be cut. Into this room the records of what our people aspired to and what they have accomplished should be collected and preserved and on the walls of this room should be cut the literal record of the conception of our republic; its successful creation; the record of its westward movement to the Pacific; its presidents; how the Memorial was built and, frankly, why. I have prepared the designs for these.[24]

This direct appeal to the President did not change the commission's view, nor that of the Park Service and Peter Norbeck. Norbeck, who had been instrumental in securing Federal funding for the memorial, placed blame. On September 18, 1936, in a very long, frank letter, he said:

> We had better forget about the stairway and museum. There can be no museum without the stairway. It is dead and you killed it.

At the same time he pointed out:

> Your estimate on file in Washington does not allow anything for the museum and the stairway.[25]

Norbeck was probably also reflecting on Borglum's refusal to use C.C.C. labor in building the stairway. Norbeck was reported by Borglum, however, to have asked on his deathbed in December 1936 that the Hall of Records and the stairway be completed.[26]

---

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Fite, Mount Rushmore, pp. 183, 206.

By 1937 the search for funds in the halls of Congress was in the hands of Park Service officials and South Dakota's Representative Francis Case and Senator Bulow. They secured $287,000 in April 1937 to continue work on the memorial, but nothing was included for the Hall of Records. Instead it was recommended that the existing studio be ultimately remodeled for a museum. Borglum was also restricted, in his view, by a new contract that replaced the one originally signed in 1927 with the Mount Harney Memorial Association. In the new contract, work was specifically confined to the figures, and any changes in design had to be approved by the commission and the Secretary of the Interior. No provision was made for the Hall of Records or the stairway in the work plan, and the inscription had been eliminated in the appropriations bill. Further, the Acting Comptroller General of the United States questioned Borglum's vouchers and reports. On August 19, 1937, $3,890.64 had been paid to Borglum on voucher #108, and R. N. Elliott demanded a certificate on the voucher "stating that no part of this expenditure was for work on any figure in addition to the four figures authorized by law on which work had not commenced as of June 22, 1936."[27]

During this summer of 1937, Borglum's old friend Charles D'Emery, photographer for the memorial, visited Rushmore. After his return to Stamford, Connecticut, he wrote:

> Directly in back of the mountaintop is a deep gully about forty feet wide, lined on each side by a solid wall of granite a hundred feet high. Into one of these walls Mr. Borglum intends to cut a huge chamber which will be used to store the archives of our early American history. This room, being an integral part of the mountain itself, will be imperishable and preserve for untold generations to come, the history of our country when the present civilization had been dust for a thousand centuries.[28]

At the end of 1937 or early in 1938, Borglum wrote an annual report for the National Park Service, discussing the work accomplished in 1937 and plans for 1938:

> The museum which was provided by Congressional legislation involves the dressing of the inner wall in the small canyon that lies between the sculptured figures and the west wall that bears the inscription.

---

27. Papers of the First Mount Rushmore Commission, Rushmore Collection, Berry Library, Black Hills State College, Spearfish, S. D.

28. D'Emery Letters, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 22. First noted use of the word "archive."

> This archive, or museum, will be cut into the mountain itself, through a single great entrance, lighted electrically, to be determined upon and designed for the purpose of receiving the records of the nation's great western expansion to the Pacific, beginning with the Louisiana Purchase and will have carved upon its walls the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution; the list of presidents to date, together with records of the conception and completion of the Federal monument itself.[29]

He estimated the cost of preparing this room at $197,000.[30]

Gilbert Fite has thoroughly explored the relationships between the First Mount Rushmore Memorial Commission, Borglum, and the National Park Service between 1936 and 1938, and it need not be repeated here. This period was tremendously important in the history of the Hall of Records, however, because it was at this time that Borglum became determined to build it, and the necessity of producing plans and drawings for the Park Service resulted in the creation of these important records. These plans are now in the possession of Lincoln Borglum, assistant to his father in constructing Mount Rushmore and first superintendent of the national memorial.

Beginning on July 1, 1938, administration of the memorial passed directly to Gutzon Borglum, who would be assisted by a new commission created along the lines he wished. This story is detailed in Fite at length.[31] The Second Mount Rushmore National Commission has only one surviving member, Russell M. Arundel of Washington, D.C.[32]

House bill 10422, passed in 1938, authorized completion of the monument "in accordance with the sculptor's designs and models," and appropriated $300,000 for the work during the fiscal year 1938-39. Armed with the complete autonomy given him by the new commission, an adequate budget, and the plans and designs produced previously, Borglum began to carve the Hall of Records immediately. By August 1938 he reported the work well under way.[33]

---

29. Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 37.

30. Ibid.

31. Fite, Mount Rushmore, chpts. 12-17.

32. Both Lincoln Borglum and Mr. Arundel were interviewed in the course of this study.

33. Report to Commission, August 1938, Borglum Collection, Container 104.

In the House committee hearings in 1938 on H.R. 10462, the enabling act for Mount Rushmore, Mr. Borglum discussed the Hall of Records:

> Borglum: All my 22 years of labor has brought me two things of vast importance-the first of these is the scale of the work, and its relationship to the world always determined by the location of the cliff and the point of vision. Second, that mountain formations are the only locations for the records of the determining of great critical moments in a people's history. . . .
>
> That is also the only secure place against succeeding civilizations.[34]
>
> Borglum: There still remains . . . the Hall of Records cut into the mountain back of the great figures, $100,000.00.[35]
>
> Borglum: This Hall of Records is a hall in which there will probably be 24 statues in the course of time, as statues of Franklin, Thomas Payne [sic], and a dozen other men, that should not be handled by one or two men, that should not be handled by me, and I do not want that. I do not want to determine the historic character of this part of the Memorial.[36]
>
> Borglum: Three things can be finished in 1939 for $300,000.00, 1) heads, 2) inscription, 3) Hall of Records. I except [sic] that [the stairway] because I think we can get the state to make some provision for the stairway.[37]
>
> Mr. Demaray: I also want the record to indicate that the National Park Service has never heard of this museum hall until the last few days, when Mr. Borglum was down at the Department.

---

34. U.S., Congress, House, Hearings before the House Committee on the Library, Kent Keller, Chairman, 75th Cong., 3d sess., May 5, 1938, H. Rept. 10462 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1938), p. 3.

35. Ibid., p. 4.

36. Ibid., p. 9.

37. Ibid., p. 11.

Borglum: It is in the Bill. It has been in the Bill for the last 3 or 4 years.

Demaray: We have never heard of this excavation in the mountainside.[38]

Senator Bulow of South Dakota, who carried H. R. 10462 in the Senate, later wrote of the hearings:

> Gutzon would nearly always end his plea to the [appropriations] committee with the promise that this would be the last appropriation he would ever ask; this would wind up the job. The next year he would be back asking for a substantial increase because he had thought of a lot of new things that he was going to add to the Memorial.
>
> At one point he decided that there ought to be a hall of fame. This was to be housed in a large cave excavated in the solid granite of the mountain and would include the archives room where the national records would be stored and sealed--to be opened in 10,000 years. In due course of time he talked a number of prominent people into letting him make marble busts of them to be placed in the archives. And then he thought he ought to carve a stairway from the bottom of the mountain up to the doorway of the Hall of Fame.
>
> I remember particularly the bitter dispute between Borglum and Senator Norbeck about the stairway. . . . Norbeck had arranged for a government works project to build the stairway, and he [Borglum] would not stand for it.
>
> Work was started on the Hall of Fame and Archives room, but never finished. Borglum made a speech in the President's office to Senators representing the northwest territory. He stressed the importance of carving a short history of the United States on the mountainside in 4 languages--English, Latin, Greek and Sanskrit. He told Tom Connally (who questioned the Sanskrit), 10,000 years from now our civilization

---

38. Ibid., p. 24. In a telegram to Mr. Fogelburg of the Rapid City Daily Jorurnal, dated June 8, 1938, now in the newspaper files, Senator Case stated: "Senator Francis Case, R., South Dakota, a member of the Commission, said a stairway leading to the Hall of Records was a definite part of Sculptor Gutzon Borglum's plans for Mount Rushmore."

will have passed away. A new race of people will come to Mount Rushmore and read there the record we made. In 4 languages these people will not have the difficulty in reading our record that we do in reading hieroglyphics.[39]

Borglum had tried very hard to ensure that H.R. 10462 would not restrict his work on the Hall of Records, and he wrote freely of the hall to persons who were in favor of it, as evidenced by a letter to Key Pittman on February 28, 1938:

> I should like, when the Commission is finally created, to develop for them a complete program and the order in which this should be carried out in the quickest, cheapest and best manner. The cost will be $600,000.00 That, with the $50,000.00 allotted for this year and the small moneys we have on hand, will, if no changes are made in the plan, complete the work as designed,--that is, finish all the sculpture part of the four great heads,--cut and carve the tablet on the western wall about one acre square; cut into the solid rock back of the heads a room to hereafter be known as the Hall of Records, described in the old law as the Museum, into which we are going to put the great epochal events of the Western Movement-from the Old World to the Western World and on to the Pacific. I have provided for 24 busts in bronze, to go into this hall. They will be made by different sculptors and should form no part of the estimate that I have given here, not have I estimated that they would be ready by 1940--they could not and should not be--perhaps a half a dozen of them might be.
>
> There shall be a wide native stone steps leading to this Hall from the studio; drawings, surveys, detailed plans I have made for this, and if I can save funds out of the above estimates, I want to use a great part of the stone that has been shot off the mountain to rebuild the studio (the present log building) in stone. I will either do this out of my own funds, or forgive payment to me on all work on the mountain beyond the original features contracted for. That is, I shall build the great stairway, which will

---

39. William J. Bulow, article in Saturday Evening Post, Jan. 11, 1947.

probably cost us $30,000.00, the terrace, and the studio, without receiving any fee for my part in designing, superintending, and building this work.[40]

Prior to signing a new contract with the Second Mount Rushmore Memorial Commission on June 30, 1938, Borglum concentrated all his attention on acquiring financial support for the building of the Hall of Records and the Grand Staircase. This was his primary purpose both before and after the change of commissions. For instance, he wrote to a friend, John Kearns, in Rapid City on May 2, 1938:

> I am staying here just long enough to get what should have been given the work and me, without asking, years ago. We will cut the great inscription, which someone tried to block, and write there the story of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt. I shall also cut the great Hall into the Mountain; the great Stairway, and rebuild the Studio in Stone.[41]

William Williamson, Representative from South Dakota and one of Mount Rushmore's oldest and firmest friends, was also a confidant. Borglum wrote to him on April 10:

> There will also be a request in this same legislation for $600,000.00 for the purpose of completing the sculpture work, the inscription, the Museum, the Steps, and rebuilding the Studio and terrace in front in stone, taken from the main pile, and the work to be done in three years; twelve carvers, expert carvers, to be added to our workmen, five additional drillers, other laborers, bringing the working group to 75 or 80.
>
> My plan is to increase our power and to make preparations to work about thirty men through the winter, in the Museum or great hall, start the inscription and steps. I have here with me for the Senate committee, plans, drawings, estimates, which I made last fall. . . .

---

40. Borglum Collection, Container 104. This new contract is noted and described in FF1, Boland Papers, Mount Rushmore and Black Hills Memorial Society, Black Hills State College, Spearfish, S. D. This folder contains papers dealing with business transacted by John Boland in an attempt to ease the transition between the first and second commission.

41. Miscellaneous Correspondence, Borglum Collection, Container 105.

You are the only man in Rapid City that knows of this, and I want to ask you to keep it in strict confidence.[42]

And again on April 21:

I am separating this from the other letter in the same envelope because it will contain a good deal of confidential material. I can't possibly leave here until matters relating to Mount Rushmore are definitely determined. There is some legislation necessary, Case does not know that, although he has learned that something is being done and he is trying his best to drag himself into it and he is also trying to drag the National Parks into it. He is so mixed up in the Park element that has been so obnoxious to the work and will probably be left entirely out of the reorganization that is now taking place. . . .

I am asking for $600,000.00 to finish the work. I am fixing three years time in which to finish it, and arranging to cut the great Hall of Records back of the heads, start the inscriptions and the Steps this summer, and I am arranging to put in another engine compressor. . . .[43]

In a letter to Lincoln Borglum, who was attending to affairs at the memorial, Borglum wrote on May 12, 1938, that the commission was to be reorganized, without Boland, and that things would now progress differently:

The Park Department has confessed that they had no authority to interfere with the work at all, Spotts had no authority to interfere with it, and had no right to meddle with any of the engineering without consulting me. However, we'll let all that go now as bygone. I shall get $300,000.00 out of this Congress,--maybe a little more, and I am now making plans for another compressor like the one we have of Byron's and another engine to go down in Byron's place. 12 to 15 new drills, a large dining room and sleeping porches and a hoist that will take

---

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

up 12 to 15 men at a time. More winches, if we need them so I can put about 4 to 6 drillers on the West Wall for the big inscription, start stripping the wall in the little canyon back of Lincoln for the Hall of Records. In other words, I'm arranging for half our staff to work through the winter.[44]

One interesting aspect of Borglum's political activities at this time is his assumption that President Roosevelt would serve as a member of the new commission,[45] and his personal appeals to Roosevelt, exemplified by a handwritten manuscript that Borglum sent to the President sometime in early 1938.[46] The puzzling thing is that in this document Borglum does not mention the Hall of Records at all, although he describes the inscription carefully.

In a letter to Kent Keller, member of the new commission and chairman of the Library Committee of the House, Borglum mentions another aspect of the Hall of Records:

> You will be glad to know that the work is progressing splendidly, but will be gladder to know that for the first time since I began to work over Mount Rushmore and fix it the way God really intended it to be, and find within it the great characters that he put there--for the first time, I was about to say, I am working with a free hand, pushing it and carrying it the way my judgment and forty-five years of labor and experience have taught me it should be done.
>
> That isn't the whole of it, Kent, I know and you know that I know, and knowing that you know what an ungrateful cuss I would be if I didn't remember and didn't say it over and over again when the occasion offers, that if it had not been for Kent Keller, the present condition of freedom from interference and threatened destruction which has been hanging over me day and night would not be.

---

44. Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 17.

45. Letter to William Williamson, Apr. 10, 1938, Borglum Collection, Container 105.

46. Borglum Collection, Container 108.

> I hope you will take care of yourself because I am in dead earnest when I tell you that I shall put a head in bronze of you in the Hall of Records, and I shall scratch on the back of it into the metal itself, a nice little personal message to you, and tell the part that you played when I most needed just such help as you gave me.[47]

In a telegram from Washington, D.C., dated June 15, 1938, and probably sent to Lincoln at the memorial, is a tentative 1938 budget, allocating $50,000 for preparation of the face for the inscription and the Hall of Records.[48] There is also a handwritten memo on which Borglum figured the $600,000 budget and the details of his reorganization.[49]

Borglum was not only politically astute, but the entire history of Mount Rushmore shows that he also realized to the full the values and uses of publicity. In a "Washington Merry-Go-Round" column by Drew Pierson and Robert Allen on June 28, 1938, this item appeared:

> One feature of the new [appropriations] bill [for Mount Rushmore] which Borglum lobbied through Congress is a provision for a room to be carved out of the mountain and which is to be filled with present-day records, (including copies of the "Washington Merry-Go-Round") when sealed for posterity.[50]

In September and October 1938 Borglum approached Life magazine through Russel Arundel of the commission and W. A. Kittredge of the Lakeside Press in Chicago. Kittredge wrote to Daniel Longwell, editor of Life, on September 21:

> Have you heard of a room that is being blasted out of the mountain which will be about 50 x 40 feet wide cut out of solid granite? This room, it is hoped, will be connected with other rooms by passageways all cut out of solid granite. Mr. Borglum and

---

47. Ibid., Container 106.

48. Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 17.

49. Borglum Collection, Container 67.

50. Appearing in the New York Mirror and syndicated papers, June 28, 1938.

his committee hope to preserve a record of America's part in Western Civilization in these rooms to the extent of 3,500,000 words to be cut in the granite walls.[51]

Life planned a four-page spread on the Hall of Records in December 1938, but Mr. Borglum had to stall them until March 1939 because the model was not finished. Mr. Borglum also wrote a press release to the Associated Press in 1938 announcing the new administration of Mount Rushmore and the fact that:

> July 13 I broke the wall of the Mountain where I am cutting the Hall of Records. The roughing out of this great hall and the finishing of the important work on the great heads will be the program for the winter.[52]

In the year between July 1938 and July 1939 the existing Hall of Records was drilled, and this was undoubtedly the happiest time for Gutzon Borglum during his entire stay at the memorial. He had Senator Key Pittman as chairman of a new and agreeable commission, he had George Storck to take care of fiscal routines and details, and Lincoln was superintending the work. Ugo Villa and the driller known as "Matty" were on the staff to do the carving and the drilling, and Borglum planned to work through the winter, as indicated in a letter from Storck to Arundel on September 10, 1938:

> As I understand it, the Commission desires that he have men work all winter on the Hall of Records.[53]

Arundel and Borglum even hired a photographer

> to make a pictorial history of the progress at Mount Rushmore, including the Hall of Records, the manner in which the work is carried out, and a complete pictorial record of the surrounding grounds and territory, with a view to proper landscaping, etc, and to organize these pictures in such a way that members of the Commission and the Congress might have accurate knowledge of the work at this stage.[54]

---

51. Borglum Collection, Container 104. Copy to Gutzon Borglum.

52. Report to Mount Rushmore Commission, August 1938, Borglum Collection, Container 104.

53. Borglum Collection, Container 105.

54. Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 15.

Borglum presented a report to the commission stating that he intended not only to close in and work on the Hall of Records all winter, but that

> It is very much my wish to get all the rough stone out of that opening during the winter, and have the debris spilled down over the route of the steps so that it can lie there and settle during the winter season preparatory to building the steps next year.

One advisor on the construction of the Hall of Records was A. A. Holland of the Denver office of Ingersoll-Rand, the mining machinery firm. The October 1938 correspondence between the two shows their relationship very clearly:

(Borglum to Holland)

> I have been away part of the time since your visit at Rushmore, and when here too busy on the facade of the Great Hall to write you regarding the mechanism and the tunnelling and such safe-guards as I wished to establish. I must thank you for the book you have prepared of photographs showing me the line-hole drilling method. This had been in my mind from the beginning, but I had not thought of using the heavy drills.
>
> We are now nearing the point where we must take steps for carrying out these plans for the deeper cut, and I want to use the line-hole drilling method as adapted for tunnelling and recommended by the best miners that I have conferred with.
>
> I plan visiting you in Denver within the next few days, and shall then discuss to its finality, if possible, our problem. It is a problem that will not admit of premature, possibly harmful experiment, but which calls for each step to be taken only after thorough consideration and approved by professional, trained mining engineers. It is, of course, not a straight mining job, as they have warned me, that I must avoid in any way the use of dynamite in such a manner as will crack up the stone--the general plan in work of this kind to facillitate [sic] removal. Of course, I know that probably better than anybody after twenty-two years of this specific kind of work and the development of the use of dynamite as I use it giving me an experience equal to any mining problem of a like nature.

What I have in hand is a highly engineered tunneling job and I am determined, all things considered, to adopt line-hole drilling and shall so arrange this tunneling as to leave two rows of detached inside walls--probably six feet in diameter--see sketch enclosed--in lieu of stoping, later to be removed, and if the roof requires it, leaving columns standing, or need to insure absolute safety of the over-hanging ceiling.

You will see that I am taking every possible precaution against any form of failure. Our wall is granite but I find many fine cracks running through it. If those are short they may leave loose pieces to fall later and I must guard against that. But, where a crack runs clear through the Mountain it would be of little or no consequence except to let moisture in, and I can guard against that.

The granite is very hard--harder than the stone in the great heads, but this is all to the good. It requires a little more labor, and the tools do not last as long. I shall appreciate any further advice that you may have in the matter.

Meantime, I wish you would send me a half dozen of the little books that you have prepared if you can, with photographs of line-hole drilling. I want to send them to members of the Commission, and by the way, I want to use the size steel that we have, if possible.

(Holland to Borglum)

It was very interesting to note that you are now entering the point where you are preparing plans for carrying out the deeper cuts in the large museum room. Lincoln advises that you have made a very substantial progress in the doorway to the museum room, which must be gratifying to you. I think your plan as generally outlined in the first paragraph of page 2 is a good one. I feel sure that the photographs which we have sent will give you a rather graphic idea of how this work will look as it progresses. It will also give you a very good outline as to what type of equipment might be used and the general method of procedure. When Lincoln was here we looked over and discussed some of the heavier drills, and I think he has some ideas which

it is his desire to discuss with you further. Naturally, McArthur and I are very anxious to go over ways and means with you about the time you are ready. I think the fact that you have already done some line-hole drilling in that particular ground gives you a pretty good idea as to what you may expect further in. We could arrange to set up columns or quarry bars for line-hole drilling to best suit the plan which you finally decide on. The details, however, would have to be worked out with you later.

In a letter of instruction to Matty, the chief driller on the mountain, Borglum wrote on October 28:

> You have some instructions about the drilling and blasting about the doorway of the Great Hall. I want you come over about noontime and report exactly. Make a little pencil drawing as you look at the door, and bring to me.
>
> About the work where they are clearing the ground. Tell them to move that stuff down the hill as far as they can. That tree stump is the level for the lower side. Explain that to Grover and have them move all stuff down to the level of that. We will decide how to cover the pipe later.[55]

Borglum reported to Keller in late November 1938 that he was drilling as instructed by Ingersoll-Rand, although he did not have proper equipment. They were using a process recommended by miners from the Homestake, at the request of the miners experienced with it, and did quite a lot of damage. "It could be overcome by a couple of thousand dollars worth of Labor, which I terribly hate to lose." They would revert to the Ingersoll-Rand method, under tarpaulin with large wood stoves made of oil drums that kept the temperature around 60°.[56]

In his autobiography manuscript Borglum relates activities during this period:

---

55. Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 17.

56. Borglum Collection, Container 106.

I was particularly glad to begin work on the Hall of Records. There is probably no labor field in America where there is such a scarcity of trained men outside of regular "bench workers"-- architectural work--as can be used on carvings on Rushmore. To meet the above situation I developed a training course with my own men and kept crowding them from ordinary drilling into measured work as fast as I could, that is, as they qualified. There is a great deal of work on the mountain that is plain ordinary drilling, practically mining work, and is so handled. The work in the Great Hall of Records could be used for the purpose of training beginners--I mean beginners on the mountain carving, although they were men thoroughly acquainted with simple drilling. Men were shown here what to do in mountain carving meantime advancing the Hall work.[57]

This autobiography contains the most complete description yet discovered of Borglum's plans for the great hall.[58]

The Hall of Records and Stairway have been part of the Memorial from the beginning and are provided for in the Rushmore Congressional Bill of 1938, as has already been said. Both are necessary to make the Shrine of Democracy a complete whole, especially since it was decided to place the inscriptions inside it. Otherwise there would be nothing to tell posterity what the carvings meant. There is also something inspiring about a great open stairway, leading up to the stars. Senator Norbeck and I went repeatedly to see a certain movie in Washington, depicting, I believe, one of Rider Haggard's phantasies, [sic] just because there was a beautiful open stone stairway suggesting to them their dream.

The Hall is located about two thirds of the way up the mountain; the entrance to it is in a small gorge or canyon, cut by the ice aeons ago, to the right of the carved faces as one looks at them from below. The Hall is on the opposite side of the gorge from the heads and is not under them A good start has

---

57. Ibid.

58. MSS writings, Borglum Collection, Container 136, p. 88.

been made in the carving and as I said before could have been much further advanced. The Interior Department, or the Park Service, however, has included it in its plans. Russell Arundel, our secretary of the Commission, wired me from Washington in February, 1941, that their budget asked for about three million dollars, with which to construct additional buildings, and to complete the hall and stairway. The present rough stairway is hazardous for use.

The facade to the Hall's entrance, according to my idea, is the mountain wall 140 feet high; supporting pylons, cut into the mountain, flank the entrance. The entrance door itself is 12 feet wide and 20 feet high; the walls are plain, dressed granite and of fine color. I want to finish the inner entrance wall in mosaic of blue and gold lapis. The depth to the door entrance from the outer entrance facade is 20 feet. The door, swung on a six inch offset of the wall, will be of bronze and glass. Small, carefully modeled bronze figures of historic importance from Columbus and Raleigh to the present day will ornament the doors or be modeled into the supporting frame. The walls of the entrance will carry in gilded bronze immediately within the entrance ancient Indian symbols; British, French, Spanish and American seals.

The floor of the Hall will be 100 by 80 by 32 feet to an arched ceiling. At the height of fifteen feet an historic frieze, four feet high, will encircle the entire room. Recesses will be cut into these walls to be filled with bronze and glass cabinets, which will hold the records stamped on aluminum sheets, rolled separately and placed in tubes. Busts of our leaders in all human activities will occupy the recesses between the cabinets. The original thought of hall of human records I developed at Stone Mountain in Georgia and my drawings and full plans are extant, that was never completed.

The records of electricity, beginning with Franklin, which has given us light, heat, music, the radio, the telephone, the telegraph and controls in power the extent of which we can hardly imagine, must be here, together with the records of literature, the records of travel, immigration, religious development

and also the record of perhaps the largest contribution that we have made to humanity, which has been free controlled peace. Struggle as we will that great contribution is today the cause for the real unrest of Europe. Despotism, tyranny of every form is fighting it wherever it can, to take away from humanity the power freedom gives it--the power that freedom has given America.

The Hall will be reached by a monumental flight of steps varying from 15 to 20 feet in width, which will ascend the mountain in front, a little to one side of the sculpture, rising from a great granite disk or platform in the canyon below, which may be used as a rostrum from which speakers may address the public occupying the amphitheater facing the great group above.

These steps of granite and cement will be provided with seats at intervals of every fifty feet; they will have a five inch rise and an eighteen inch tread. The ascension from the foot of the steps to the floor of the great entrance is four hundred feet, the entrance way from the steps' landing to the great Hall is 190 feet; the floor of this Hall, reached by three steps, is two feet above the floor of the entrance way in the canyon; this to provide for proper drainage.

There is no room in the rock which contains the four heads for any additional figures, but owing to repeated requests from important organizations of women, the urging of some senators and congressmen, besides my own realization of the important part women have played in the development of our country, I am in favor of working out a design that is fitting and in no sense harmful in the matter of lighting or location to subjects determined upon to include the faces of two or three women. It would even be possible to carve out a second hall in the rock on a different level to include a more complete record of our women's activities. Our original plans for the inscription included seven or eight paragraphs, including the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, showing the development of our Republic. A splendid paragraph could be developed for the part women have played in the growth of the nation.[59]

---

59. Ibid., chpt. 13.

A handwritten list in the collections, in Borglum's handwriting, reads:

Glass, U.S.	Susan Anthony	
Emerson	Chief Justice Marshall	
Mark Twain	Oliver Wendell Holmes	
	Elliot	Bell
	Rockefeller	[illegible]
	Webster	Fulton
	Kent	Dana
	Storey	Pulitzer
	Santayana	Greeley
	Pershing	Hill
	Gorgus	Paine
	Andrew Jackson	Pat Henry
	Travis	
	Houston	
	Hamilton	
	James Whitcomb Riley	

This may have been a list of persons being considered for the Hall of Records,[60] because at the end of 1938 Borglum was actively formulating such lists as shown by his Christmas telegrams:

> Hon. Key Pittman: Spirits of the Shrine of Democracy, Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt send you grateful remembrance for the most understanding aid in your brief time given the Memorial in its twelve years of struggle. Evil influence returns at end July. The seasons greetings to you both. Please send several photos. I need them for your bust for the Hall of Records. --Gutson

and

> Hon. Kent Keller: The spirits of the Shrine of Democracy Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt send you special greetings and gratitude for the signal service you rendered the Memorial in Rescueing it from an evil and mercenary spirit. I shall not forget. --Gutzon Borglum[61]

---

60. Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 17. Identified as list for Hall of Records by Lincoln Borglum, Nov. 3, 1974.

61. Borglum Collection, Container 133.

At a testimonial dinner given Borglum in Rapid City on December 28, 1938, where a speech praising the sculptor was given by Judge Albert Denu, Borglum replied:

> I have been very touched tonight listening to what Judge Denu has said. . . . My dear wife has just whispered that that speech must go into the Hall of Records. Judge Denu, I shall make it a part of my business to see that that speech of yours, perhaps the first document written, prepared, thought and worked out, realized and appreciate what I really want Mount Rushmore to be, a Shrine of Democracy, shall find a place in the great Hall of Records.[62]

He then went on to remark:

> My first plans were those four men and of course the inscription. The great Hall has been developed in the last four years because of the need of a great deal more than we can say there. Then the fear came to me. If I do that anywhere on the surface, Time, that enemy time, will destroy all the fighting immortality, and I'm fighting mortality. So I said we'll go in, and I began to examine the great cliff and we found a wonderful place. And we've gone in something like twenty-six or twenty-eight feet. Our great entrance is already cut, in the rough of course. But our sod has been cleared away in the last three months. The Great Hall of Records which will be very much larger than this room over a hundred feet in depth. One of our Senators said, "Borglum, it's not enough. We need more room." I said, there's more rock. And you can go down another story. You can go further down to another one. And in that the record of what the mind, not what politics has done, but the mind and statesmanship has built and accomplished in this Western World. That is my dream. To that end we work.[63]

---

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid. In an interview Lincoln Borglum tentatively identified this Senator as Francis Warren of Wyoming.

On January 5, 1939, Lincoln Borglum, in his capacity as superintendent, submitted a report stating that the money spent on the Hall of Records from August 1 to December 10, 1938, totaled:

Payroll	$ 8,773.45
Material	2,899.08
	$11,672.53

He also mentioned beginning work on the model of the Hall of Records.[64] The handwritten label on this model, which in 1974 was housed in the studio at the memorial, says:

> This is the Sculptor's model of the Hall of Records. The dimensions were to have been approximately 100 feet long by 80 feet wide. It was partially completed and is located directly behind the face of Lincoln. Carved from the solid granite it would have served as an archive for papers and documents relating to the Memorial. The Sculptor also planned to adorn the walls with statuary of famous Americans with suitable inscriptions, commemorating the development and progress of Civilization in the Western World.[65]

A short description of the hall appears in Give The Man Room:

> It would have been an amazing thing, this Hall, and one day possibly will be. It was to be a room cut out of the solid rock 100 x 80 x 32 feet to an arched ceiling, finished in dressed granite. Here Borglum had planned to store the records of electricity beginning with Franklin--light, heat, music, radio, telephone, telegraph, and controls of power as they were used in the spread of the republic.
>
> Man's accomplishments were to be preserved here, sealed in airtight cases. If such an exhibition could be provided, he declared, the world a thousand years from now would have something interesting and educational to look at.[66]

In the manuscript autobiography of Borglum the following passage appears:

---

64. Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 17.

65. Copied from model. Lincoln Borglum says he wrote the label when he was superintendent.

66. Casey, Give The Man Room, p. 313.

The great purpose of the carvings--in my mind, in the minds of Cullinan and Doane Robinson was to enshrine a kind of Holy Grail in the center of the Continent upon a mountain top within which the sacred unselfish inspirations and aspirations of our great might somehow be rendered into the granite and so remembered, protected in its aloofness and in the stubborn material of which it would be carved. There was no other wish; there was no other purpose.

On the west wall an inscription will be cut out covering about an acre of upright granite, marking the nine great steps the Anglo-Saxon has made pursuing the star of empire westward on its way. And in the Mountain, opening into a deep gorge between the heads and the inscription, a great hall is being cut. It is planned, if the granite permits, that this room shall be sixty to eighty by one hundred feet in length with the vaulting of a Gothic Cathedral. Into this room, lining its recessed walls, will be placed in metal and glass cabinets, the story of our discovery, the adventures that followed--The Revolution and the founding of a new, free, self-determining nation in a virgin world, resulting in an awakening intellectually with amazing inventions that changed the entire life in the field of human service.

Into this great hall, beautiful as a temple, we will place records, the new records, the purely American records, of released souls, of great inventors--

as Franklin was released, and how he stole the power of the heavens, and, with a little key and a kite drew electricity to the world and there bound and fettered it to serve and labor eternally for mankind. Franklin became the veritable, mythical Prometheus Unbound. Prometheus Unbound was an American, and he was Franklin. We will place the records of Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Washington, Randolph, Madison, Mason, Morse, Bell, Fulton; photography, the airplane, the cinema, and the radio and the submarine.

The contents of this Hall, its records will be duplicated several times and placed as in the great mountain repository in the Congressional Library, at Harvard, in California and in Chicago. All records will be stamped upon metal in thin sheets rolled and placed in damp-proof tubes then sealed. It would be ridiculous just to place a date such as was fixed for the tiny tube that sunk in the low-lands on the Atlantic Coast. We have no wish that the seals to our records shall be broken; our whole desire is that they should be there--available and to serve the leaders of men in their progress to greater development.

The entrance to the canyon is one of the most heroic, even dramatic gateways that I know of in the great sculptured cliffs in the Black Hills. As one stands upon the threshold and looks forward toward the facade of the Great Hall and then as one turns and looks to the east, and one looks down a flight of steps for 200 feet before there is a turn; easy steps fifteen and twenty feet in width with a rise of five inches and a tread of fifteen. Then it swings sharply toward the south for seventy feet, another rest--then to the east. From there it proceeds downward three hundred feet about seven hundred feet in length to the valley and to the terraces in front of the studio.

The floor of the canyon has been leveled by the granite taken from the Great Hall, but over the top of this will be placed six to eight inches of granite terraza mixed with the red quartzite from the Sioux Falls quarries.

The facade itself will be very simple in great rectangular blocks; two immense, symbolic lights at each side of the entrance over which will be cut "America Marches On" and over the top, at the height of fifty-two feet, will sit very quietly, with wings released but not spread, an American Eagle such as we find here in our Mountains, fifteen feet from its talons to its crest.[67]

---

67. Speeches and MSS, Borglum Collection, Container 132. A note in Mary Borglum's hand appears on the manuscripts: "Note; probably 1940-41. Completed plans."

These are the visions Borglum had of his Great Hall of Records and Grand Staircase at the end of 1938 and the beginning of 1939. They were to be tempered, however, by events in the new year.

On January 17, 1939, Borglum appeared before the Independent Offices Appropriations Subcommittee of the House of Representatives. When pressed by Mr. Fitzpatrick for a completion date for the Mount Rushmore project, he said:

> I will say this in defense of anybody who may have misjudged the thing, that the work has grown, and it has grown because the Mountain has determined how we shall do it. I made my designs based on a block of stone, and when I got into it I had to move my head perhaps 90 feet, and if you have to take out 90 feet of granite you have some job on your hands.
>
> Then the inscription was to have been on the front wall, but it cannot be there because we have to use that wall for heads.
>
> I estimated the work originally to cost half a million dollars. It will cost more than that.[68]

By April the commission was beginning to realize how much more. On April 20 Kent Keller, whom Borglum counted among his staunchest supporters, wrote on behalf of the commission:

> As you are well aware, I am not giving an order, but I am calling on you to follow the thoroughly expressed opinion of the entire Commission that with the coming of spring no more money should be expanded on the Hall, but that you shall devote your entire time, entire energy, and money for the completion of the figures, for this reason. There is money enough now to finish those figures, and there may not be money enough to finish both the figures and the Hall. It is a chance that the Commission does not want to take at all, and I am sure you will more than willingly comply with their feeling in the matter. When winter approaches again, and we know the figures are completed, there will be no reason why the Hall should not be completed under your direction, but until fall, there should not be a dollar spent in that excavation.[69]

---

68. U.S., Congress, House, Hearings, Independent Offices Appropriations Subcommittee, 76th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1939), pp. 1191-1218.

69. Borglum Collection, Container 106.

On April 26, 1939, Borglum replied:

Here is my schedule--Jefferson and Washington--Washington and Jefferson will not be touched until the end of July or the first of August; it will be finished by the end of October. I mean finished the way Gutzon Borglum wants it finished; and that means as good as the heads in the Rotunda of the Capitol. And, Kent, I will make you another bet on that!

I am saying all this to assure you--of all people--that I haven't moulted a feather in my obligation to you, in my obligation to Congress, or in my obligation to the American people. I want to add on top of it (for I have worked here for twelve years and more and that I am in the position that most big men in the east are who take Government jobs) I have been underpaid and I have sacrificed eleven or twelve years the best years of my life; the most mature, the most experienced. For what reason? There must be a reason. After going through the hard grind of apprenticeship and finding out how to carve mountains at Stone Mountain.

I came here a master of granite work, blasting, carving, and able to tackle a range and convert it into a poem or historic document. Why did I do all this? Because I love the country that you are serving better than monetary reward, determined, and still determined, that one great record should somewhere be made that would--even ten thousand years hence--tell the people of what manner of men invented and built the great West World Republic.

Now about the Hall. I invented the Hall idea in Stone Mountain; Senator Norbeck was wholly responsible for introducing it years ago into an act of Congress as a Museum; it is a part of the law to complete the Hall. He recognized that without the historic data this carving would fall into the category of a great number of isolated sculptures in China, India, Africa, and some of the South Sea Islands that have been separated from or have no relationship to the civilization that founded them. He realized that so definitely that it became almost an obsession with him; we went together to see and study steps, entrances, and structures that would endure. We went into the methods of work and cost, and Norbeck was no fool of a mechanic. But, he had a very distinct opposition locally.

When I proposed a short time ago to carve his head on a granite boulder at the entrance of our Park for nothing, and make the Park a present of it as my tribute to a man I respected and care for because he helped me most in the practical side of his work, a man whom you conferred with, and, I believe, you have spoken of as a friend, told me that the people around here would rather see him burned in effigy.

Norbeck sent for me just before he died and his last request was "don't forget the Museum and steps; and try to get money for a great gate." I have, I may tell you, since he died the promise of the money for the gate, from friends.

Now one thing more. Last Sunday, a week ago, we had the worst blizzard of the year. I am two thousand feet above Rapid City; I am from fifteen to twenty degrees colder, and the wind up here has about the same relationship to Rapid City as one that would be on the look-out on an old sailing vessel in a gale between the deck and the crows nest. And yet, if you will look this letter over you will see that I have kept men up on the side of Washington where it has been so cold that I became ashamed of myself and ordered them out of the wind and put them in little sheltered pockets. The weather here doesn't permit me nor has it permitted me to move my men out in the open faster than I have, nor does it now. My prayer is that within another ten days--(maybe eight--maybe not for fifteen)--I can throw my entire staff over the face of the work. But I am going to do it sensibly, logically, and humanly.[70]

On May 17 Borglum called a press conference and issued a release:

The year's progress for this season, and to be carried through with all possible speed, is the finishing of the portraiture, and depicting the mental and spiritual character that may be possible in each separate head of the four colossal portraits.

The Great Hall is being roughed and blocked out by the regular miners-drillers; the Stairway will, naturally not be put in hand until next year; all the

---

70. Ibid.

stone out of the Great Hall is being poured out over the dump, preparatory to laying the base for the stairway. The great Hall, or Museum, as described in the law, will be an archive for records of our country, her inventions, developments, growth and government.[71]

He wrote a note to President Roosevelt and one to commission member William McReynolds on the same sheet of commission stationery:[72]

My Dear Mr. President:
The enclosed explains itself--a little long but necessary in this crisis of this colossal sculptured memorial to our democracy. It distresses me that I have to coax and reason and even force this national record into completion--We are swamped by a prayerful, even tearful waiting world.

If Congress continues its indifference--I am going to the nation.

Very sincerly yours,
Gutzon Borglum

My dear Bill [McReynolds]:
Information was brought to me by Mr. Case our Congressman. hense [sic] the enclosed to Chairman Taylor. I leave tomorrow for Washington, arrive Mayflower Tuesday. Want very much five minutes with the President. . . .

In Washington he protested all his wrongs and frustrations to President Roosevelt in a brief meeting on June 5. On June 7 he sent a long telegram to the President requesting assistance in solving the problem of interpretation at the memorial:

I am on my way back to carry on as before and as you would wish. It was a great pleasure to see and note that you are as well as you are and have the interest you have in the Nation's Monument at Rushmore. I have long felt the tremendous burden that is on you.

---

71. Ibid., Container 132.

72. Franklin D. Roosevelt files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 26.

Your suggestion of an executive order restoring authority of the Committee to complete the sculpture, as provided by law, without disturbing the present makeup of personal and financial setup of the Treasury Department was a greater confort to me than you can imagine. I am no easy burden. I felt, frankly, very much like the mother before King Solomon fearing the disembowelment of her child. When I reach the Mountain I shall wire you some data regarding the note you have promised for the second of July. My hopes are that you will emphasize your concern over the spirit of interpretation of the soul of West World Democracy and I should not be unhappy if YOU SHOULD MAKE some reference to my great concern that I be permitted to interpret that soul truly and broadly. About the executive order restoring authority to the Commission, I have had so much experience with committees that I am very sensitive about the crossing of wires and backseat driving. I know the working of this in its effect upon the creator of a work and loopholes in an organization are such a temptation to the laymen to butt in. As the work is approaching its final touches one becomes more concerned about the quality that must be maintained. I hope you will be freer in your time and that I may turn to you for advice on vital points. And I want to make another suggestion. This work will cover your administration. It would be petty and incomplete did I not bear this in mind and find a way to give it its proper place. It might be well that that should be kept between us, but I have long determined upon it. The great Hall of Records opens the way.[73]

George Storck, who was handling the financial matters in South Dakota, wrote to his superior officer in the Treasury Department on July 7, the same day the above telegram was sent:

Mr. Arundel told the members [of the commission] and Mr. Borglum that the Department of the Interior wanted him to stop all work on the Hall of Records and complete the four figures on the mountain, and whatever money was left over could be used on the Hall of Records. Mr. Borglum, when he appeared before the Appropriations Committee and in my presence, stated that the four figures would be completed by the end

---

73. Ibid.

of the fiscal year 1940 and as near as I can recollect there was to be no other work done although the Act provided for him to complete the Hall of Records.[74]

On July 17 Borglum reported to Arundel that

> I went over the work immediately for the relocation of the few men employed on hall and building as Commission suggested. The work will be readjusted by tomorrow morning.[75]

On August 1, 1939, Borglum wrote to Arundel saying:

> This fixes our future, and as far as I can see it is not retroactive in anything that we have done or plan to do, nor does it close the door on anything that I want to do or think advisable for the Memorial itself.[76]

On August 4, 1939, the letter that reputedly is the first "official" note of the building of the Hall of Records was written.[77] In it Arundel wrote about budgets and finances and said:

> This means it will be necessary, at least for the time being, to cease work on our Hall of Records. It is also necessary that work on the buildings be stopped. . . .[78]

On August 7 Borglum replied that

> There has been no work on the Hall of Records at all, except [illegible], cleaning up dirt and getting the free rock out for well over a month.

---

74. Storck files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 27.

75. Arundel files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 15.

76. Arundel Letters, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 13.

77. This letter was thus characterized in a message of December 20, 1939, from E. K. Berlew, first Assistant Secretary of the Interior, in answer to a request from Borglum for a copy of Nagle's progress report in August. Borglum Collection, Container 105.

78. Arundel Letters, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 13.

He also explained his drawing policy:

> We make our own drawings as work demands, and where there are serious technical differences of opinion, I have the School of Mines check and redraw where necessary. I have neglected having these blue printed and sent to the Commission.
>
> That has never been required of me before. . . . I have given orders to have our drawings worked over in ink and blueprints made. . . .
>
> One reason I have not done this is I find that building is like sculpture. Better ways to handle a piece of work are discovered than the drawing provides, and so I make the changes as the work grows. Another thing, being the designer and in charge of the work, and always on or near the job, the situation is rather different from what is practiced ordinarily in government work where plans are made by one set of men and sent to an entirely different group with instructions to "Follow the plans."[79]

In an article printed in many South Dakota newspapers, Borglum used the same arguments, commenting:

> The hall of records, located in a deep crevice behind the heads will be carved out of solid granite. It will contain portraits of many prominent Americans, and other records pertaining to the history of the Louisiana Purchase.
>
> It is impossible to estimate how much a project of this kind will cost. . . . We are not building a road, not blasting so many tons of rock from a mountain, but we are carving portraits. . . . My purpose is to make a work of art, a national shrine that will make people grateful that they live in a country like ours, a shrine dedicated to a nation conceived in liberty and freedom, unequalled anywhere in the world.[80]

---

79. Borglum Collection, Container 132.

80. Clippings file, Mount Rushmore, Borglum Collection, Rapid City Public Library, Rapid City, S. D. Appeared in Rapid City, Sioux Falls, etc., dated either April or August 1939.

On August 26 he wrote Mrs. R. T. Davis in Trinidad, Colorado, that

> The heads will be finished by July 1 next. The Hall of Records and steps and other improvements will require two or three years. The work is entirely Federal, and is under a separate and distinct contract with me.[81]

On July 1, 1939, administration of the Mount Rushmore National Memorial was returned to the Department of the Interior by Presidential order. Except for the design and artistic finishing, the memorial was again to be under the direction of the National Park Service. Borglum turned to the newspapers for backing of his dream, issuing a press release to the daily Argus-Leader in Sioux Falls about the Hall of Records[82] that was picked up and reprinted in the New York Times on August 26, 1939:

> While New Yorkers are going ahead with considerable fanfare with preparations to leave future generations a "time capsule" at the site of the city's 1939 world's fair, the man who carves mountains into memorials today labelled the eastern project "a trivial performance."
>
> Trivial, that is, to Gutzon Borglum, the sculptor, who is currently carving features of four former United States presidents from the granite of South Dakota's Mount Rushmore, when compared with his own dream--a dream he hopes the nation's congress will bring to realization.
>
> Borglum proposes a great hall of records at Rushmore, cut into the mountainside slightly below the colossal heads of Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson, and Theodore Roosevelt. He told of the plan in a letter to a local newspaper which editorially had suggested a "time capsule" for the memorial in the Black Hills. The noted sculptor said he has had the idea for more than four years.

---

81. Borglum Collection, Container 106.

82. Ibid., Container 133.

The vault would be 80 by 100 feet in size and would be reached by 800 feet of granite stairway. The sculptor said this was his first public disclosure of plans for the hall although congressional approval had been sought for the general idea.

Of the New York project he said:

"This capsule, seven feet long and eight inches in diameter***seems to us a trivial performance and shows a complete lack of appreciation of our civilization if they do not admit its greatness and it is too brief to be of consequence to a future generation as a record of our time."

The mountain-moulder said of his own proposal that "It will contain a briefed record of the occupation of the western hemisphere by the races of Europe--the greatest human adventure in world history--its development, political philosophy, the revolution, establishment of our democracy, its intellectual growth, inventions, Franklin--the "Promethous unbound"--the steamboat, Morse, Bell, the entire field of electrical development, photography, the cinema, radio, submarine, armored plate, airplanes, our aid to Europe in the World war, the field of medicine, etc.

"The 360 feet of wall space will be paneled and recessed to a depth of 30 inches. Into these recesses will be built in illuminated bronze and glass cabinets into which will be placed records of the west world accomplishments***typed upon aluminum sheets rolled and protected in tubes. These cabinets will be sealed and may be opened only by an act of congress."

Above the records the sculptor's plans call for a bronze, gold-plated bas-relief "showing the adventure of humanity discovering and occupying the west world." There would also be busts of 25 great west world men and women.

Great cast glass doors would stand at the entrance--22-1/2 feet wide--and over that entrance Borglum proposes to carve the words "America's Onward March."[83]

---

83. Clippings file, Mount Rushmore, Borglum Collection, Rapid City Public Library, Rapid City, S. D.

On September 9, 1939, Borglum wrote to Perry D. Edwards in the accounts section of the Department of the Interior about the Hall of Records:

> The work on the Hall of Records can be pretty accurately estimated as far as the stone work is concerned. This also applies to the great steps. I am now working on two scale models; one of the Hall and one of the steps.
>
> I shall need considerable cement for the great stairway and I am going to ask the State to provide it. I will furnish you with various accurate estimates of how much that will be. My purpose is to go before the State Legislature in January and request the gift of ten--or twenty ~~the sand~~ bags of cement to be delivered to us as we need it. Free of all cost to us. The law of 1938 provided that we could receive donations and as the State has never contributed to the Memorial, it will give them an opportunity to take some part in the work. South Dakota has a large and so rated one of the best cement plants in America within thirty miles of this work, and they would be able to store and keep any quantity on hand. The main thing will be to get the Legislature to pass that. The Governor approves of the plan, and my purpose is to go before the joint houses and ask for the contribution.
>
> We are arranging to photograph the monument and will send a very complete record to date showing all developments.[84]

Thousand ?

On October 25, 1939, Borglum wrote to President Roosevelt:

> My dear Mr. President,
>
> Your delightful and understanding letter of October eighteenth has just reached me. I turned it over to Mrs. Borglum and said "Look at this, it's something to get a letter like that from the President of the United States." It will go into the records of the carving of the great Shrine of Democracy on Mount Rushmore, showing your interest and your great part in the work and during days when Democracy was being threatened by despotisms the world around.[85]

---

84. Borglum Collection, Container 105.

85. Franklin D. Roosevelt files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 26.

On October 31, 1939, Borglum wrote to Russell Arundel protesting the stoppage of work on the Hall of Records:

> Curtailment of work on the Hall of Records has created an inability for efficient management and use effectively of partially trained drillers in training for needed work on the heads. Neither of these things, I may say, excepting from a matter of conscience, is of any importance to me personally, except that the tragedy of Mount Rushmore rolls on as ever.[86]

Nothing was stopping Borglum's plans for the Hall of Records, even if he could not see his way clear to continue carving. On December 2, 1939, he wrote to Frederick H. Brook of Washington, D.C.:

> I wonder if Murphey our associate in the Tower for Houston would advise me on some structure in my Hall of Records. He has a sense of large simple forms that I like. Please wire me and give me his address if you approve.[87]

Photos of the entrance to the Hall of Records appeared in such nationally distributed newspapers as the Christian Science Monitor at the end of 1939.[88]

According to Fite it had become

> clear in 1939 that the 1938 $300,000 would not finish the figures, to say nothing of the hall of records, the stairway, and the inscription. In fact, by that time Borglum had given up the idea of an inscription on the mountain and had decided to put it into the hall of records. But he was insistant [sic] on some kind of permanently engraved account. "The inscription will have to go on (or in) the mountain sooner or later. You might as well drop a letter into the world's postal service without an address or signature as to send that carved mountain into history without identification."[89]

---

86. Arundel files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 15.

87. Borglum Collection, Container 106.

88. Christian Science Monitor, Dec. 18, 1939, p. C9, in Mount Rushmore file, Rapid City Public Library, Rapid City, S. D.

89. Fite, Mount Rushmore, p. 217.

The basic concept of the Hall of Records, as reported by Fite, was that

> The facade of this great hall represents a perpendicular rise of 60 feet in height from the level dressed granite floor below, five steps lead to the entrance, 22-1/2 feet in width, with great cast glass doors. . . . these doors penetrate a panel 44 feet in height surmounted by an eagle with a wing spread of 38 feet. . . . Pylons on each side of the panel 49 feet in height rise like two great protecting barriers; upon these are carved two colonial torches, the flames from which are more than 30 feet in length and in full relief. Cut into the panel under the edge are these words: "America's Onward March," and below "The Hall of Records."
>
> The 360 feet of wall space will be panelled and recessed to a depth of 30 inches. Into these recesses will be built, in illuminated bronze and glass, cabinets into which will be placed the records of the West World accomplishments, the political effects of its philosophy of government, its adventure in science, art literature, invention, medicine, harmony-typed upon aluminum sheets rolled and protected in tubes. These cabinets will be sealed and may be opened only by an act of Congress; they will extend 16 feet upward. On the wall above them, extending around the entire hall will be a bas-relief showing the adventures of humanity discovering and occupying the West World. It will be bronze, gold plated. There will be 25 large busts of great . . . men and women, together with one panel reserved for our own day--why and by whom the great Federal Memorial was conceived and built and the records of that work. . . .
>
> In addition to the busts he intended to include modern inventions and artifacts of nineteenth and twentieth century culture. Borglum's work was for all time to come. He would not have generations thousands of years hence ignorant of life in America in 1940.
>
> At various times he suggested placing statues of Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, Patrick Henry, Alexander Hamilton, and other leading Americans in the hall of records. In a letter to Franklin Roosevelt, he said, "I am determined Benjamin Franklin's statue shall be among the first, and your own, which I am particularly anxious to do myself. . . . I will give Susan B. Anthony a place with the Gods in the Great Hall. Her friends should be happy."

> Borglum's first plan for a single large room was soon abandoned for a more grandiose scheme. He considered the possibility of excavating a lower floor in the mountain's very heart, where 5 or 6 rooms might be located.[90]

By early 1940, in spite of warnings about a shortage of money, Borglum's plans and dreams had not yet been tailored to financial realities. On February 3 he wrote to George Storck:

> While the actual sculpture work is nearing completion so that we can finish on the basis that we are now working, the fact remains that there are going to be some pretty nice buildings put up here, the removal of the great pile of stone, and dressing it for the steps, etc. We need another $50,000 to perfect the great plan that we have developed here. I have always had it in mind to make something of Rushmore beyond any pre-conceived Park Service Memorial. I have simply abstained from developing it until the monument itself had proven the great success it now is.[91]

On February 4 Borglum wrote to Edward Rumley in New York that he wanted to put a bust of Senator Borah in the Hall of Records.[92]

Little more than a week after writing these letters, Borglum was in Colorado Springs, Colorado, to see the doctor. On February 13 Russell Arundel, Secretary of the Mount Rushmore Memorial Commission, began wiring Borglum frantically for information on the amount of money still needed to complete the memorial. This correspondence is reproduced in full:

(Telegram from Russell Arundel to Gutzon Borglum, February 13, 1940)

> Appropriations Subcommittee is closing its hearings very soon papers not received. Keller anxious to get bill prepared must leave for Puerto Rico Thursday. Back ten days.
>
> Washington, D.C. Russell Arundel[93]

---

90. Ibid., pp. 205-7.

91. Borglum Collection, Container 107.

92. Ibid., Container 38.

93. Arundel files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 15.

(Telegram from Gutzon Borglum to Russel Arundel, February 13, 1940)

> Here to see doctor. Can I send report to Kent? Will be back to mountain and my records Monday. Present funds budgeted to carry us until July first and complete faces; that exhausts funds. Three hundred fifty thousand estimated to complete shoulders, hands, Hall of Records or Museum and granite steps to Museum. Estimate for Hall of Records so called Museum and great granite steps on man hours material and power purchased; these are blocked together as one item budget same as now, approximately fourteen thousand per month; labor, supplies, power and time estimated to complete 1941-1942. Detailed models in hand; absence of heat in studio stopped that work and warehouse not finished; we have no place for such work; these items will be finished in May or June. Surveys have been made two years ago and plans approved by old commission. With the exception of time between February 27th and March 4th I can be in Washington any time. The entrance to great hall fourteen by twenty; hallway forty feet deep; room eighty by one hundred and thirty-two feet to center of arched ceiling. Stairway twenty feet in width, with seats every fifty to one hundred feet, with five inch rise and eighteen inch tread; about 800 steps. The Museum and the steps as designed were a part of the law previous to 1938 and developed with Senator Norbeck and approved by old commission. Three hundred thousand to three hundred fifty thousand will complete these items in the Memorial. For you and Kent I am at Antlers Motel Colorado Springs until Friday night can reach me by phone.
>
> Gutzon Borglum[94]

(Second telegram from Gutzon Borglum to Russell Arundel)

> Wire received I had supposed information sent you sufficient Matters requested will be attended to with all promptness possible have never been requested by commission in any appropriations to supply details such as you ask and it is well known among producers that they cannot be accurate on wants such as Rushmore Had prepared flexible data for our own use but did not send for above reason blue prints of stairway have

---

94. Ibid.

been in existence for some years (temporary) have phoned Storck who leaves immediately for Rushmore and with Lincoln from records and data will prepare requested details covering finished figures hall records stairway development of old studio for public.

By March 7 and 8, 1940, pressure was mounting. The appropriations bill was already reported out of Congress, and the completion of Mount Rushmore had not been included. The only way to secure funding now was to get a supplementary appropriation from the President. Storck and Lincoln Borglum were in South Dakota working on the figures needed for the estimate, and Borglum was writing directly to the President in a letter that spelled out his dreams and plans for the Great Hall:

My dear Mr. President:

I am lying in a hospital in Colorado Springs revovering from a slight operation and have just received the following from the Commission's secretary: "Neither Keller nor I have received detailed budget estimates for 1941 from you. Have been trying to get these for months. Appropriation bill is already reported and the only way we can get money is by a supplementary estimate from the President. Suggest you have Storck (representing Treasury Department) come to Rushmore immediately and prepare detailed budget estimate for us. The budget must be broken down as follows: First, amount of money needed for each project, landscaping, finishing of figures, hall of records, stairway and any other planned work. These to be broken down into the number of men in various categories, money to each, cost of materials, etc. Storck knows the form necessary; he can refer to the budget of which he must have a copy in Watertown, South Dakota."

To this I replied: "Supposed information sent you sufficient. Matters requested will be attended to with all promptness possible. Have never been requested by the Commission in any appropriations to supply details such as you ask and it is well known among producers that they cannot be accurate on work such as Rushmore. We have prepared flexible data for our own use but did not send them for above reason. Temporary blue-print sketches have been in existence for some years. Have phoned Storck to leave immediately for Rushmore and with

my son Lincoln, from records and data available prepare requested details for finishing figures, hall of records, great stairway, including development of old studio for public use, necessary landscaping, materials, etc. Am requesting them to break this down as you suggest and while this is a practice of routine budget reports, it cannot be accurate on two thirds of this work which is sculptural and variable. It seems utterly impossible for me to get this thought into the minds of bureau authorities. I don't want to mislead. However estimates will be as accurate as possible. Models of great hall and stairway were about one third done when, without notice or my presence, work was stopped on those buildings, housing these, which would have made it possible to go on with that work this winter. Data will be sent you by air mail which should be received by Monday morning at the latest. I am recovering from an operation in hospital here, but can receive and send telephonic communications."

The above telegram was received and the answer sent this morning. I am not disturbed about it. Senator Norbeck was detained in the hospital four years ago until some time in June, after the appropriations had passed, but by your kind assistance money was supplied to go on with the work, although, as in this case, all the information that seemed necessary, beyond bureau detail, had been supplied.

We are finishing the faces by the first of July as I have promised. That is a wild promise to make in a piece of sculpture work, but I am making it. I know my men pretty well and what I can do and I will not be long in this hospital. But the shoulders, the hand of Jefferson, the hand of Lincoln and the front part of the figure of Washington--very important in the composition--will require men and labor to the cost, at the minimum of $60,000. Cutting the great hall beyond the hallway entrance, which I have made to about the depth of seventy feet, will require approximately $80,000; that is the sheerest finishing of the stone work and that doesn't apply to the cabinets and the statues which I am determined shall be in there. I am determined Benjamin Franklin's statue shall be among the first and your own, which I am particularly anxious to do myself and I will do it for nothing rather than ask Congress.

There will be ten or twelve other statues, which you must help me to determine and there will be great bronze doors and a finish to the room generally, mosaics, bronze tablets, friezes, etc., which cannot be estimated now, because they cannot be determined upon. You and I and others must determine this with great care after much discussion and it is folly to put in an appropriation at this time.

The great stairway will run into $130,000 at a minimum. There is nothing like it in history but the steps leading in Athens to the Parthenon from the Acropolis. It will be built from the stone which has been cut from the great portraits on the mountain itself. There should be $150,000 spent on the great esplanade and shelter for the public just above where you sat in your car, when you unveiled the Jefferson head. I have always planned this and somewhat prepared for it. It is the perfect situation for the great multitudes who visit the work. The design for this building has not yet been determined but the estimate for the building and the promenade is moderate and sufficient.[95]

On March 8 Russell Arundel wrote to George Storck:

In reference to your wire, I would say that at the annual meeting it was agreed that Mr. Borglum should send us drawings of proposed Rushmore work for 1941, together with the budget estimates, and that these would be submitted to the Park Service for subsequent submission to the Bureau of the Budget.

I have called Mr. Borglum's attention to this matter on numerous occasions, and he informs me that it is now impossible to furnish the drawings because the studio has not been equipped for winter work. The Park Service can not be expected to make all detailed estimates without something to work on, and you will remember that last year it was necessary for you and Mr. Borglum to come to Washington and work with the Bureau of the Budget in order to get these forms in shape.

---

95. Franklin D. Roosevelt files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 26.

This procedure can not be followed this year, as we must have budget estimates to give to the Park Service in order that they may prepare them in the proper manner.

What I am trying to do now is to get reasonably accurate estimates in the proper form so that I may take them to the White House and get a supplementary budget to send to Capitol Hill. Since Mr. Borglum is ill, it is up to you and me to carry this load now. I am terribly sorry to learn that he is in the hospital, and if I had known he was there I should not have sent such a vigorous telegram.

As soon as Mr. Borglum is able, I believe he should come to Washington and help me get this matter straightened out.[96]

On March 9 a wire was sent from Gutzon Borglum to Lincoln Borglum:

Lincoln--

Russell wired yesterday sorry I am ill did not know, and that Storck, he and you will handle matter. Answered him quote: "strongly advise no separate interior appropriation this year for any development about Rushmore major plan as they have suggested and I heartily concur must be determined completed and approved then we can enter on a cooperative agreement for finishing etc." Refer you to my letter to the President. We are now concerned over securing $300,000 referred at end of letter. That will provide us $60,000 for finishing figures, $80,000 for excavating and clearing great hall, $130,000 for steps. That $130,000 will cover dressing of stone, cement, base, labor, etc., it will not finish steps as I want them finished, but there remains a balance of $30,000 that will enable us to do such clearing up as we would like, adding another comfort station, toilets in the old studio, burying pipe from the pump house, possibly adding heating plant that could reach the comfort station. You and Storck can work that out. We are not asking for any money whatsoever for landscaping until the central monumental work is practically complete and I together with Nagle and Baker can cooperate

---

96. Arundel files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 15.

on a master landscape plan. I don't want any interference with my plans in that until my monument job is done; I have so stated to Nagle. The Commission will not be offered any plans by me for approval on landscape work which law required of me until next year and I have so written Nagle that I don't want any injection of alien plan until the master plan is generally agreed upon. Don't hesitate to use telephone and telegraph.[97]

That same day Gutzon Borglum sent a letter to Russell Arundel, saying:

> They [Lincoln & Storck] also know that the general plan is for me to complete my master plan during the year. That would include plans for landscaping, in which I expect the Department of Parks will cooperate; we have already had some consultation on the subject. Mr. Nagle also knows that we don't want any interference with our plans until the main monumental work is determined, for one year at least. By that time we will have worked with Mr. Nagle and Mr. Baker and completed such plans as will merit careful, careful consideration and full approval by the commission and be the basis for further appropriations.
>
> The injection of the landscaping at this time will be premature, embarrassing and not wise, so I have asked them all to avoid going into that. Your wire made me anxious and, as the President had requested me, I wrote at once to him and to Mr. McReynolds.[98]

The urgent need for facts, figures, and plans did not lessen during the months of March and April; the supplementary budget was being desperately worked on, as the correspondence of the period shows:

(Borglum to Russell Arundel, March 18)

> Everybody connected with the work, even the uniformed Park Service, knew that no such drawings were available, or models sufficiently developed

---

97. Lincoln Borglum files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 17.

98. Arundel files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 15.

to serve, as later requested in the minutes that were not prepared at the meeting. I don't think for one moment that this was put into the minutes to embarrass me nor sent to Mr. Storck to shift responsibilities. The master plan the drawings referred to, could not be done for six or seven months of this year and under favorable conditions, and no thought or suggestion that they be made for appropriation purposes was ever proposed.[99]

(Borglum to Bill McReynolds, March 19)

The faces will be done by July, but there remains the rest of the Great figures, The Great Hall of Records, (Called the Museum), and the Great Stairway of cut-stone leading to the Hall.[100]

(Borglum to Kent Keller, April 13)

Meantime I have heard from Mr. McReynolds and Mr. Arundel regarding this year's appropriation. There seems to be a little confusion between finishing the faces and finishing the Memorial. I have not been confused about that at all, and I have not only definitely said that I would finish the faces, but you will find in my report to the Commission a statement made to Mr. Nagle and made, as I have written into the report, under protest, giving the man hours necessary (supposedly) to finish the separate heads. An absurb report to make on a piece of sculpture work, but these engineers and laymen cannot understand that expression and character has anything to do with time limit of Memorial work, and it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine how much work may be necessary to complete the facial expression of a great head of that kind. So much for that.

I am writing this only to make it clear that when I said the faces would be finished with the last appropriation I expect they will be. Every effort is

---

99. Ibid.

100. Kent Keller files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 20.

being made to carry that out, but naturally I would think of the faces as separate and only as part of the group as a whole, while the people in Washington, not knowing the work or having seen it as you and I have, would think of it in terms of the Monument.

You know the question before the Commission was that all labor and money should be spent over that part of the work, and none of it used for the rest of the work until that part was completed; all of which definitely fixes the fact that the appropriation of 1938 should apply to that part of the Memorial, and also there was a great part of the Memorial still left unfinished. You know also that the estimate in the original form of the 1938 law, as you and I discussed it, was for finishing the work, the Great Hall, Steps and figures and was for $600,000.00. While it was suggested that $300,000.00 should be asked for then, and $300,000.00 when that was exhausted you remarked immediately--"Let's make one appropriation of it"--and you were the one who advised to go in frankly and state just what it would cost, that is $600,000.00. Later that was changed to $300,000.00 and I think at the suggestion of Senator Pittman, you and he having discussed it and concurred in that matter.

Now they are reading into their minutes and records that I conveyed the idea the entire Monument would be finished and no more money would be asked, etc. I did say that if more money was asked for, and if Congress would not give it, or something to that effect, I would go to the public for it; and at my urging a clause was put in the 1938 Bill that the Commission could receive contributions, etc.[101]

It is essential to note the statements in these letters that the plans, models, and drawings of the stairway and the Great Hall had not been completed by March 1940, and that Borglum himself had advised "no major Rushmore plan."

By May 16, 1940, the situation was desperate. Senator Case had tried to get the additional appropriation for $318,000 for the completion of Rushmore, including the Stairway and the Hall of Records, but William Williamson wrote to Borglum that "Case was not able to get the amendment in proper form through the house, but did get an amendment which went part way."[102]

---

101. Ibid.

102. William Williamson files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 20.

On May 24 Borglum wrote to Kent Keller that "the Shrine of Democracy is proceeding wonderfully, and in the afternoons of my days I am working on your head and on the head of Key Pittman. They will go into that great Hall of Records that you tried so hard to ruin for me."[103] On this same day Borglum made a speech at Mount Rushmore to the Travel Bureau Association. In it he said:

> We are going to put an inscription on the Mountain. That has been more or less abandoned and replaced by the Hall of Records. We have gone into the Mountain 74 feet, fine solid rock. It will be 100 x 80 on the ground floor. It will have a dome ceiling about 34 feet from the floor, and that ceiling will be treated like the very sky over the Mountain itself. There will be a cross pointing to the North Star, stating 'The North Star was in this direction when this Mountain was built.' We all know this world is changing a little all the time, and in the course of time we will be rolled over, and we are trying to tell our children's children where we are today. This mountain is 40 million years old--nothing has been disturbed. . . .
>
> When President Coolidge dedicated that rock, I had to answer . . . "Mr. President, you have just dedicated a great mountain on which we are going to carve the story of our civilization. . . . Everything perishes sooner or later, and that is why we have to make the record."
>
> That Hall of Records will be 100 feet in depth. A Senator of Wyoming said, "We must have several in order to preserve all the records." But I want to build a model that will tax the ingenuity of anyone to carry it on. The entrance will be of bronze and mosaic. I think the government will let us have it. In the Hall you will find inscriptions of the tragedies and the struggles, then you will go inside the Hall and you will find Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, Patrick Henry--one after the other, who have given all they had to help Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln to carry on. . . .

---

103. Kent Keller files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 20.

> In the walls there will be cabinets, and in these cabinets you will find tablets on which will be stamped the story of Prometheus Unbound. Who was he? He was an American who took a little boy in hand, sneaked a key on the tail of a kite and robbed the heavens of electricity. That is a marvelous, wondrous story. Nothing has been done with that. Then there is the story of telegraphy, the one of photography, and others--all coming out of America.[104]

In the late summer of 1940 Borglum expressed his dream for the memorial to two such dissimilar people as the President of the United States and a South Dakota schoolboy. His letter to Franklin Roosevelt said:

> One of the very great and important phases of this Memorial is the data, time, names of individuals, etc., the records which you and I have discussed. In the course of development it was found it was best to put all of these, and to provide a place for men who stand high in the nation, into a Great Hall. That Hall is not only planned, that Hall had been begun. Then, but the details of its plan were discussed with the Commission and its importance to the Memorial itself clearly and definitely realized. . . .
>
> The need of this work being finished as the Sculptor planned it and in the Spirit it was conceived must be done. . . . You know I will not let this matter be corrupted nor injured. . . .[105]

A student at Pennington High School, son of a workman on the mountain, wrote that

> Last fall, just before school started I went to the Mountain and climbed the long stairway to the top of the heads. Back of these faces in the granite, Mr. Borglum showed me where he hoped to build his

---

104. Borglum Collection, Container 132.

105. Franklin D. Roosevelt files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 26.

"Hall of Records," where he hoped to place the names who helped to make Mount Rushmore possible, and also sculptures of great men in American History.[106]

There are several plans for the Great Hall expressed in the various drafts of speeches and memoirs written by Borglum late in 1940 and during the winter of 1940-41. Mostly undated, some of these express such ideas as the following:

> The Great Hall in the Memorial occupies a position immediately back of the colossal heads. This Hall will be reached by a monumental flight of steps from the valley varying from fifteen to twenty feet in width; they will ascend the mountain in front, a little to one side of the sculpture, rising from a great granite disk or platform in the canyon below, a rostrum from which speakers may address the public occupying the amphitheatre that faces the great group.
>
> These steps will be provided with seats every fifty feet. The complete ascension is three hundred and eighty feet.
>
> The facade to the hall is the mountain wall one hundred and forty feet high. The entrance door itself is twelve feet wide and twenty feet high; the walls are plain, dressed granite of a fine color. The inner entrance wall will be finished in mosaic of blue and gold. Doors will be of bronze and glass, ornamented with sculptured figures of historic importance from Columbus and Raleigh to the present day.
>
> The great hall will be one hundred feet by eighty feet--by thirty-two feet to an arched ceiling. At the height of fifteen feet an historic frieze four feet wide, in bronze will circle the entire room. Recessed bronze and glass cabinets will hold the human records of America's great. Twenty busts of our leaders in creative activities will be placed between the cabinets.

---

106. Published in Tomahawk, Pennington County High School, Rapid City, S. D., Black Hills Issue, Spring 1940-41, Borglum Collection, Container 109.

You ask why do I plan so richly a finished Hall of Records. I may tell you our immortals are the real masterpieces of civilization; they aré our great women and their great sons. No surroundings are too precious for their proper setting. A great man or a great woman is greater than anything they do.[107]

I am writing this letter for just one reason--the four figures, the Hall of Records and the sculptured stairway that will lead to this work is all one item. It is one item in my contract. It is one item in the understanding of the Government's Commission. It will cost a minimum of $300,000.00 to more or less finish these. I say more or less because this is an art work. The Hall of Records is an art work. The great stairway will be an art work, and an art work cannot be measured by rule, nor compass, nor square. It is not a thing that can be contracted for the way bureaus contract for raw material by ton or yardage.[108]

I can work with, in time work over and by degrees work into the largest custodians of the ideas we believe worthy to serve as accomplishments, live? mortal of our age. I'm thinking of our age as since 1492--We are perhaps not the flower of that blooming--We certainly are an expression of the great Promise--that came wildly - beautifully - greatly - out of the freedom promised. I mean the Declaration--the Constitution, the more or less peaceful expansion--I mean the private dreams of the adventurous dramatist that crept onto the west world, gave us this west world--Telegraphy, telephones, photographs, radio, the common and all that thieving out of the Universe of the God's Prometheus man has taken.

My plans are to make the Shrine of Democracy one of the truest most complete Memorials ever built - with all the known thought of the Egyptian to beat in as far as we can, the ambitions of the Egyptian mortality and leave whatever we should and can that is good and worth leaving--leave in such condition as will preserve it to whatever posterity America's Western Civilization produces. We don't know--But were

---

107. Borglum Collectión, Container 103.

108. Ibid., Container 107.

we morally certain it would be a gamble of the Vulgarity of Hollywood, mixed with the worst we think now of gangster civilization, as are tolerable politicians and political Europe permits nationally, still we would not be justified in any other course than doing our best, leaving our best,--making that mark Nature has given us vision and strength to carry on--that's my thought--of course.

Mount Rushmore was built as an idea and by the borrowed from the great thought form our ancesters America--Perserverance--a show string truthfully speaking against even elastical that clutters the earth--out of which a forgetme-not breaks and little by little I have by a little attention and making good built each thought worth saving into a strong living ally and Rushmore has become the parent fulcrum into which the best of our dreams are nursed--housed, a little while and when tested and strong--given real form.

Mount Rushmore and the Parent Shrine I'm making of it in spite of all that is poor and rotten that gathers from the spewing of our poor, who have gone through the bath tub, bathing salts, cosmetic, men and women, around government--to gather as the beggar in the decoyed near east--in spite of these, there is still in all men a desire to be thought appreciative of what is worth while--out of that I've built and built and--I have finally assembled what the general press calls Rushmore--the heart, and little by little--the soul of the modern human release--and heaven willing--to give me a few more years I'll have something as representative of the Might of Modern Released man as Williamsburg is. . . .

I mean to give Rushmore a Hall of Records cut within the Mountain, 80 x 100 feet, into that Hall 30 feet in height, I shall begin the Record of the Great Treck towards the Sun--and put in the immovable Recesses, in the great glass and bronze cases--in the best possible form, the story of our permanent accomplishments--in Peace.

And provide there place for the names of the men and women whose labors have made the West World--the Real Master of so much that masters the whole modern world.

My plan is to make Rushmore a center in the heart of America so attractive, so comprehending that the inevitable visiting world will assemble there with something more than curiosity and go away with something more than wonder. I have something there that Ickes is trying to subjugate, vulgarize. He's late. I've got the heart and conscience of the world--and I'll go to it. . . .[109]

On January 3, 1941, Borglum wrote from Washington a detailed description of the Hall of Records to Mrs. Rose Arnold Powell of Minneapolis--a leader in the growing feminist movement in the United States. The letter said:

About the Halls: The Great Hall of Records will be 80 x 100 feet on the floor line. The entrance of it will be finished in bronze and lapis blue mosaic with inscriptions that will indicate the nature of the records kept. There will be three-quarter statues in this hall, beginning with Benjamin Franklin, continuing with Patrick Henry, Thomas Payne, Mason, Hancock, Hamilton, Randolph, etc., etc.

It has been my thought that there would be statues of at least three of our women, and there will be no question, as you will see by what I am saying, of a secondary place. There is no doubt but what Andrew Jackson, Elihu Root, Daniel Webster, Thomas Jefferson, one of the Wright brothers,--our great inventors, our great scholars--rather than politicians will fill the niches that I am referring to.

Now I get word from a Senator that one room will not be sufficient. Of course, I knew that before I started, but I have had so much labor to convince a small body of culture that control matters of this kind in America, that I was glad to get one room started. This will not be a museum, but it will be as beautifully finished room as there is in America. There will be a bronze frieze nearly 300 feet in length and in that frieze we will show the great western trek into the setting sun in the western world.

The cabinets between the statues, all of which will be recessed in a granite wall made of glass and bronze, will carry, in form of indenture, in aluminum or copper, plates as may be best for the records of

---

109. Ibid., Container 108.

our civilization. In this alone you will find an opportunity for recording the great services our women have performed and when it comes, I am going to request of you that out of the best minds among our women in America an historic committee be created and they themselves determine what shall be recorded.

I suggest a second room. There is plenty of rock for this. There will probably be two large rooms adjoining this first room and then I am making provision in my design for another floor, just below this one, down into the heart of the Mountain, where we may have five or six more rooms. The records of electricity alone, beginning with Franklin, should be given one, if not two rooms, when we think of what electricity has done, how it has given us light, heat, music, the radio, the telegraph, the telephone and controls in power the extent of which we can hardly imagine. The records of literature, the records of travel, immigration, religious development, and perhaps the largest contribution that we have made to humanity has been free controlled peace, a government of the people, by and for the people. Struggle as we will that great contribution is today the cause for the real unrest of Europe. Despotism, tyranny of every form is fighting us wherever it can to take away from humanity the power freedom gives them; the power that freedom has given America.[110]

Also in January 1941 Borglum wrote an article that was published in the South Dakota Education Association Journal and widely printed in South Dakota newspapers such as the Black Hills Weekly of March 15, 1941, which ran it under the headline "Borglum's Last Writing." The text shows that it was the same information he disseminated elsewhere late in 1940:

---

110. This letter was dated January 3, 1940, but was postmarked January 3, 1941. It was never received by Mrs. Powell, but was returned unopened to the Mount Rushmore Memorial Commission, on whose letterhead it had been written, in April 1941, and is now in the Boland files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 20. Boland was reappointed to the commission very shortly after Borglum's death.

Immediately back of the great group I am carving a hall, into which will be placed the records of our political, civic and cultural growth--the development of electricity and steam, transportation, the telephone, the airplane, the radio and the cinema. This great hall will be a hundred feet square and is located about two thirds of the way up the mountain. The entrance to it is in a small gorge, cut by the ice aeons ago. A great wide granite stairway will lead to the Hall, into the walls of which hall recesses in bronze and glass will be built to hold the records. There will also be found here statues in bronze of Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry, Thomas Paine, the great inventors, great scholars, Andrew Jackson and such characters indispensable in the service rendered American democracy and necessary to complete the record of the building of our great civilization.[111]

On January 21 Borglum was writing to Senator Norris to ask help with the 1941-42 appropriations for Mount Rushmore:

The great Hall and Stairway provided for the Rushmore Bill are still unfinished and the appropriation of $300,000 for them proposed last year was, at the request of the Park Service, reduced to $86,000 to provide for the finishing of the carving alone and work on the Hall, which was well under way, has been stopped for over a year. It would have been more economical to have both going on at once and, personally I would like to get this job done and do some other work that is waiting for me, in the time I have left.

Our South Dakota Congressman Case has just written me of the urgency of getting the balance of our appriation in this year's budget and I have written our chairman Mr. McReynolds and our secretary Russell Arundel, asking them to do what they can. You and Senator Bulow are the only members of the Commission left in Congress and I am begging you to help us in any way that you can.[112]

---

111. Borglum Collection, Container 132. Also in clippings file, Mount Rushmore, Borglum Collection, Rapid City Public Library, Rapid City, S. D.

112. Norris files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Container 24.

In February 1941 the Interior Department had submitted requests to the Director of the Budget for $278,000 for Mount Rushmore, $125,000 for completing the Grand Staircase, $75,000 for completing the Hall of Records, and smaller amounts for providing water, sewage, power, buildings, etc.[113]

It is clear that Borglum was keeping track of these developments from his hospital bed in Chicago, because Mary Borglum was writing to Francis Case about them.[114] In spite of her assurances to Case that Borglum was recovering nicely, he died suddenly on March 6, 1941, without ever again seeing his mountain. Immediately Russell Arundel called Secretary Ickes to see if Borglum could be buried at Mount Rushmore.[115] On March 14 a friend, Edward Rumley, wrote to Mary Borglum from Connecticut, "Gutzon must rest finally in the Mountain. I ask myself whether it wouldn't be better that he should be in a separate crypt a little to one side rather than in the Archives."[116]

Mary Borglum wrote to Senator Case on March 12:

> Of course the thing dearest to his heart was Rushmore and the wish that Lincoln should carry on in case anything happened to him. Two years ago he got the commission to adopt a resolution to that effect and I hope very much they are going to make that official at their meeting next Monday. Gutzon depended absolutely upon Lincoln and had the fullest confidence in him and his ability to complete the work and it would be tragic if some other unsympathetic influence should be introduced to disturb or change Gutzon's life work. I was so glad to get a letter from Mr. Williamson taking it for granted that Lincoln would go on, and I am sure you feel the same way.[117]

In an AP wire story run in the Rapid City Daily Journal on March 14, Lincoln Borglum was quoted as asking that the work be carried on as planned. This story was repeated throughout April in newspapers as far away as the Boston Christian Science Monitor[118] and the Sioux Falls

---

113. Fite, Mount Rushmore, p. 219.

114. Case files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Black Hills State College, Spearfish, S. D.

115. Fite, Mount Rushmore, p. 220.

116. Borglum Collection, Container 37.

117. Case files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Black Hills State College, Spearfish, S. D.

118. Apr. 24, 1941

Argus Leader.[119] Bob Lee repeated the plea in a signed article in the Rapid City Daily Journal on November 21, 1941, the day after the commission gathered for a meeting at which Lincoln had voiced an eloquent statement that the figures were finished but the memorial was not. He reported that

> The work has been completed generally as outlined to you at the meeting in Washington last March. The cleaning up of the heads has been completed; Lincoln's hand has been brought out to a considerable extent; Washington's collars have been completed. Roosevelt's face was finished (there was some work to be done on the lower part of his chin); Jefferson's collar was blocked out, but the work on Jefferson's hand was not attempted, because of the poor quality of the stone there. Instead the money that would have been spent there was used in further finishing other parts of the work, it being felt that this money would not have accomplished as much on the hand as it did on the rest of the work.
>
> With the possible exception of some more work on the hand of Lincoln, to make it stand out more and to balance that part of the Memorial (this would cost about $5000), I do not think any more should be done on figures of the Memorial. It looks very well as it is and I think it is more effective this way, than if carried down as shown in the models. The effect of the heads, finished as they are, and then gradually blending back into the mountain is very good. Arrangements are being made so that photos of the work as of last spring and of the present time will be sent to you.
>
> I believe that it is very essential that the Hall of Records and the Stairway leading to it, be completed. Without the records and the inscriptions that would be placed in this Hall, the Memorial will become a riddle to people a few thousand years from now. There will be no story of why these men were placed here or who they were and what form of government they represented. The cost of thse two items would be about $150,000 and was turned down by the Bureau of the Budget

---

119. Mar. 14, 1941. Both clippings appear in the Mount Rushmore, Borglum Collection, Rapid City Public Library, Rapid City, S. D.

in Washington last summer. The pile of debris below the group should be partially removed, to give more height to the carving. This would cost about $10,000 and has also been requested of and refused by the Bureau of the Budget.[120]

The idea of the Hall of Records did not die with Gutzon Borglum. Francis Case's 1942 correspondence contains several references to it: in letters of February 13, 1942; March 25, 1942; and April 2, 1942 from Lincoln Borglum and in one from William Williamson on April 4, 1942.[121]

In 1944 there was thought of getting money from Frank Phillips of the Phillips Petroleum Company, Bartlesville, Oklahoma, for construction of a chapel and mausoleum at Mount Rushmore. This was chiefly the idea of Doane Robinson; John Boland favored completion of the memorial.[122] Russell Arundel felt that at the very least a bronze plaque shoudl be placed on the mountain at the memorial, honoring Borglum as the sculptor.[123]

In 1945, after the death of Franklin Roosevelt, the suggestion[124] of building the Hall of Records as a memorial to F.D.R. was discussed by Lincoln Borglum and Russell Arundel:

> In view of the proposal to do something for FDR, it seems to me that a final report and completion of the plaque by the Commission should be delayed. Since when those things are done the Commission will cease to exist, however if it is still functioning it can help and direct in any future work on the Memorial. Francis sent me a copy of his letter to you regarding the proposal to place FDR on Rushmore. We had gone over the subject when he was here and I agree with his view. There is no way of adding FDR to the present

---

120. From the files of the Rapid City Daily Journal, Rapid City, S. D.

121. Boland files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Black Hills State College, Spearfish, S. D.

122. Ibid.

123. Arundel files, in possession of Russell Arundel, Washington, D. C.

124. Ibid.

> group. As you know it was very difficult to place the four heads that are now there. I have suggested to Case and others that the Hall of Records be completed and made a memorial to him. This can be done and I think would be very appropriate. It would also complete the design of the Memorial. It might be called Roosevelt Memorial Hall and be used to house a complete history of the war, there are many possibilities. I think that is the only thing that can be done at Rushmore, if a head were carved on the north side it would be in shadow most of the time.

In 1950 Senator Case again spearheaded a campaign to reopen the subject of "completion" of the monument with the new National Park Service Director Conrad Wirth. By 1951 Case had refined his ideas to 5 major points:

1. Removal of stone debris from mountain.
2. Use of this rock debris to create a large open air amphitheatre.
3. Complete finishing touches on heads.
4. Build the stairway.
5. Complete the Hall of Records.[125]

In 1953 Mary Borglum wrote to Case that "as long as I live I shall continue the fight to finish my husband's work."[126] In November she wrote to Russell Arundel about the possibility of getting the Women's Clubs of America to finish the memorial, and said:

> You said the Rushmore Commission was temporarily suspended until I decide where I want Gutzon to be buried. . . . At the time, I didn't have much choice . . . but if there were a beautiful stairway going up to the Hall of Records and a place provided there, I might change my mind.[127]

In 1959 Russell Arundel reopened the question of at least putting a plaque on the mountain naming Borglum as the sculptor, which, he said, "would happily conclude the affairs of the Commission."[128] It did

---

125. Case files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Black Hills State College, Spearfish, S. D. Also articles by Warren Morrell in Rapid City Daily Journal, Aug. 19, 1951; Mar. 26, 1952; and May 21, 1952; and in the Omaha World-Herald, Mar 2, 1952.

126. Case files, Mount Rushmore Collection, Black Hills State College, Spearfish, S. D.

127. Arundel files, in possession of Russell Arundel, Washington, D.C.

128. Ibid.

not, however, and the commission met in 1960 at Mount Rushmore. In a report of the meeting appearing in the Rapid City Daily Journal, Lincoln Borglum expressed his opinions:[129]

> Lincoln Borglum, Beeville, Tex., stressed the importance of an eventual hall of records at the Shrine of Democracy.
>
> "The important thing," Borglum said, "is that a record be made and preserved for posterity."
>
> "You mean," asked Park Service Historian Russell Apple, "that you want records kept for the use of future generations rather than something for tourists to look at now?"
>
> Borglum agreed that was his thinking. "These faces will be here for a long time, longer than any of the facilities built around here now. There must be something to identify the faces in the future. Look at the example of the Sphinx."

In March 1960 Russell Arundel requested and received copies of the plans and drawings of the Hall of Records and the Grand Staircase from Lincoln Borglum. These were discussed at an informal meeting of the commission in April 1960, and then Mr. Arundel returned the plans to Lincoln Borglum. These are now in Mr. Borglum's files at the Borglum Ranch at Hermosa, South Dakota. According to Lincoln Borglum, these plans were drawn by Earl Dake of the South Dakota School of Mines Engineering Department, but they did not include such details as the design of the frieze, the mosaic, or the cabinets. There are no models of these, or of the eagle and the lamps for the facade. Of the busts that Borglum wanted to place in the Hall of Records, only six were completed. They are listed here with their present locations:

1. Pittman, in Lincoln Borglum's possession.
2. Keller, in the Keller family's possession.
3. Norbeck, in Pierre, South Dakota.
4. Boland, at concessions building, Mount Rushmore.
5. Williamson, in Williamson family's posession.
6. Robinson, at Pierre, South Dakota.

There is also a plaque commemorating Franklin Roosevelt, but not a sculpture in full round.[130]

---

129. Rapid City Daily Journal, Aug. 6, 1960.

130. From Arundel and Borglum interviews.

Further publicity was given the matter in 1969 and 1971. In 1974 only two members of the Mount Rushmore National Memorial Commission, Lincoln Borglum and Russell Arundel, were living. Both wanted the Grand Stairway and the Hall of Records constructed--but Lincoln Borglum wished them to be financed in part from the funds of the Mount Rushmore concessions, and Russell Arundel insisted they be built with private money. Both were chiefly interested in seeing that the memorial is properly labeled so that it will never be inexplicable as the heads on Easter Island.[131]

---

131. Ibid.

SUMMARY

The proposed Hall of Records at Mount Rushmore seems to have been considered only a minor part of the Mount Rushmore National Memorial by almost everyone except Gutzon Borglum. As the records show, no one had ever seen the designs, plans, or measured drawings of the hall or of the stairway at the time of Borglum's death. The date of completion of the model of the hall is in some doubt, although it was not finished in 1940. Several requests were made for these plans and drawings in 1940 and 1941 during preparation of the budgets, but they were never produced. Lincoln Borglum said in 1974 that the plans, which were drawn in engineering fashion by Dr. Earl Dake of the engineering department of the South Dakota School of Mines, were in his possession at the Hermosa, South Dakota, ranch. Mr. Borglum said he was not sure of the completion date of these drawings and was unable to get his hands on them for our use within the time limits of this study (although the researcher made two trips to Hermosa). Mr. Borglum is in Texas, and Paul Ellsworth, in charge of the ranch, is not knowledgeable about Mr. Borglum's files.

According to Lincoln Borglum, six of the busts and one plaque for the Hall of Records were finished. The subjects and their present whereabouts are:

1. Key Pittman--in Lincoln Borglum's possession.
2. Kent Keller--in Keller family's possession.
3. Peter Norbeck--in Capitol Building, Pierre, South Dakota.
4. John Boland--at the memorial, in the concessions building.
5. William Williamson--in Williamson family's possession.
6. Doane Robinson--at State Historical Society, Pierre, South Dakota.

Plaque, Franklin D. Roosevelt--in Lincoln Borglum's possession.

The frieze, mosaic, eagle, lamps, and other projected details of the hall were never designed, according to Lincoln Borglum.

Russell Arundel, the only surviving member besides Lincoln Borglum of the second commission, said that he would like to see a simple hall finished--dignified, but of much less magnitude than envisioned by Gutzon Borglum. He would like to see the commission reactivated to raise money for the hall's completion, for he is insistent that it should be done without public funds. He mentioned that possibly Mrs. Scaife, Nathaniel Reed, and the Rockefellers would be interested in becoming members of the commission.

Lincoln Borglum is extremely interested in seeing that some record is kept of the meaning of the mountain. He said his father was always very concerned with the riddle of the statues on Easter Island, and was afraid that ultimately Mount Rushmore would provide a greater riddle. The great figures at Mount Rushmore were only half his father's dream. Lincoln Borglum has been studying improved mining techniques recently, as he did in 1938 with Ingersoll-Rand; this time he has been dealing with the Rock of Ages Corporation at Barry, Vermont. He summed up his feeling about the Hall of Records by saying, "My real feeling is that there should be a record of the heads where the heads are."

A copy of a paper in the Gutzon Borglum Collection in Container 108 at the Library of Congress is labelled "The Great American Memorial":

Fifteenth Century.	Columbus revealed the American continent to the Christian Nations.
Sixteenth Century.	Intrepid Seamen explored American Waters and vaguely mapped the coasts.
Seventeenth Century.	Cavalier and Pilgrim planted Anglo-Saxon civilization on the Atlantic seaboard.
Eighteenth Century.	The Spanish brought Latin Culture to the Gulf Coast and to the headlands of the Pacific. The French sprinkled it along the great interior valleys. Washington founded the Republic to embrace the Eastern parts.
Nineteenth Century.	Jefferson conceived the Continental Nation and by honorable and peaceful negotiation eliminated the flags of France and Spain. Lincoln destroyed slavery and established the equality of men.
Twentieth Century.	Roosevelt awoke the public conscience to that Civic Righteousness that exalts the nation.

These four are chosen for this memorial as typefying the Genious [sic] of America.

Sculptured by Gutzon Borglum in the Twentieth Century.

Perhaps this was essentially Gutzon Borglum's concept of the memorial, but it does not mention the Hall of Records. References to that part of Borglum's dream must be found in the documents quoted in the text of this study, for they are the only records that reflect Gutzon Borglum's ideas on the Hall of Records and the Grand Staircase leading to it.

ADDENDUM

Any report on the Hall of Records at Mount Rushmore based on Gutzon Borglum's concept would be incomplete without checking the holdings of Lincoln Borglum at the Hermosa, South Dakota, ranch and studio. In spite of vigorous efforts to effect a meeting with Mr. Borglum or to see the documents deposited there in October, the meeting did not take place until December 4 at Hermosa. At that time Mr. and Mrs. Borglum flew to the ranch at Park Service expense to locate the records that Paul and Pat Ellsworth, Mr. Borglum's stepson and daughter-in-law, who are in charge of the ranch and museum, had been unable to locate.

These plans consist of a series of drawings for the Grand Staircase, which seem to be incomplete; large watercolor renderings of the staircase and of the Hall of Records; two color transparencies of the interior of the model of the Hall of Records; twelve 8-by-10 glossy prints of the construction phases in 1938-39 of the present Hall of Records; and some pages of scrapbooks discussing Borglum and the Mount Rushmore Memorial. Only one article dealt with the Hall of Records. It appeared in the Chicago Daily News for Friday, August 18, 1939, and said:

SCULPTOR TO ADD HALL OF
RECORDS IN MOUNTAIN ART

Borglum Plans Chambers
for Posterity
in South Dakota

By Robert J. Casey.

Rapid City, S. D., Aug. 18.--When (in the course of 200,000 years or so) the features of the sphinxes of Mount Rushmore have eroded to their proper size, the investigative Hottentots or Maoris or what have you who have taken over America will be able to march down the granite staircase behind them and see what this civilization really amounted to. Gutzon Borglum has paused in his work of carving the gigantic heads of Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson and Theodore Roosevelt to blast out a tunnel for a hall of records which he hopes will last as long as the mountains.

This work, which has received considerably less public notice than his spectacular sculpture, a work which only a few of the thousands of visitors who come here daily take time to see, is definitely more impressive. Already it has taken on the proportions of the great caverns hewn out of the rock at Memphis, Egypt. Tomorrow it will be the most breath-taking thing of its sort in the world.

Hall to Be Left Open.

The idea of preserving for future generations some record of American progress from Plymouth Rock to the Golden Gate and from Eli Whitney to the Wright brothers is not new. The world is still echoing to the ballyhoo that attended the burial of the "time capsule" in Flushing Meadows. Coin Harvey has not been dead long enough for anyone to forget how he hoped to build an obelisk at Monte Ne, Ark., and keep there the records that would show some bright new world what was wrong with the old one. But Mr. Borglum's plan resembles these only in their basic philosophy.

"The trouble with other generations that have looked for immortality is that they have sealed up their works," he said.

"And when you seal a thing up and bury it, its already dead and forgotten. It's useless to put away a 'time capsule' and hope for its rediscovery through books and plats scattered about the libraries of the world. Because books don't last--nor libraries.

Seeks to Sustain Interest.

"It has been my plan since I came out here to start this project to build a hall of records that would have not only permanence but a continuing interest to the generations that will suceed one another long after we are gone. The granite here is eternal. The people who come after us can check the decay of the things we leave with them."

. . . . . .

The Sculptor Speaks.

"Aside from the spirit that has always led nations to erect monuments to their great men there is much to be said for colossal sculpture," he said. "These

carvings will remind future generations not only of the men whose portraits are here but of the things they stood for in the making of a great civilization. But over and beyond that the Rushmore sculptures will be a matter of record.

"The history of the world is filled with names that are merely names. We think that nobody in hundreds of years to come will ever be without an idea of how Washington looked, or Jefferson or Lincoln. But we know from experience that the faces of great men fade.

"The most priceless thing in the world today would be an authentic photograph of Christ."

Quarrying to Take 3 Months.

Behind the peak on which the faces are carved is a narrow chasm about 150 feet deep. Into the far wall of it Borglum is sinking his hall of records. Completed, the main chamber will have an opening 100 feet wide and some 50 feet high. At present, it extends into the mountain 150 feet. It will go farther. Side chambers of similar height and width will branch out from the main hall--rooms big enough to provide cases for full-sized airplanes, samples of what American has produced in industry and commerce, working models of a century's principal inventions, exhibits typical of accomplishments in the arts and sciences.

In its way the excavation of the halls looks like a bigger undertaking than the carving of the great heads but there is a difference. This is just a magnificent job of quarrying rather than sculpture. On the face of the cliff the rock had to be chipped off a few inches at a time with small shots of explosive. Here the dynamiters are free to use the technique they learned in mines with heavy blasts and rougher drills. Mr. Borglum estimates that all his tunnel work will be finished in two or three months.

At present the place is difficult of access. Eventually a wide staircase will be built to it from the valley below. Meantime the world of travelers and sightseers can wait. There is no need for hurry. It will be here always.

This article was written by Robert Casey of Rapid City, who collaborated with Mrs. Gutzon Borglum in writing the biography of Borglum called Give The Man Room. The direct quotes attributed to Mr. Borglum in this newspaper article are more illuminating than the description of the Hall of Records in the biography Give The Man Room. The book relied heavily on the Borglum autobiography in manuscript form now in the Borglum Collection at the Library of Congress. Both book and manuscript are quoted in the text of Enid Thompson's report on Borglum's concept of the Hall of Records.[1]

The plans for the staircase that are at the ranch, two of which are originals and the rest of which are blueprints, consist of a grade drawing, a map of the terrain of the access route to the small canyon holding the Hall of Records, and five section drawings of the staircase showing curves, rest areas, tread widths, heights, etc. These were drawn by Earl Dake of Rapid City, engineering professor at South Dakota School of Mines, probably in 1939 according to Lincoln Borglum. There is an occasional note on them, which Mrs. Lincoln Borglum[2] says are in Gutzon's handwriting. These plans range in size from 2 by 3 feet to 4 by 6 feet, and were copied so that they could be deposited with the planning team at the Denver Service Center in charge of the project at Mount Rushmore.[3]

The watercolor sketches or renderings of the plans are very fragile and brittle, but they have been copied photographically. The sketch of the Grand Staircase is about 4 by 7 feet and shows two sections of walkway raised above the terrain by arches. This plan has never been mentioned in the documents. The sketch of the Hall of Records is smaller in size, about 2-1/2 by 4 feet, but it includes a drawing of the "facade of the Hall, a section drawing of the Hall to the front, a section drawing to the rear, and a longitudinal section plan." The scale is 1 inch to 16 feet. The design shows a huge window above the entrance, a built-up and walled terrace, and three small rooms branching off the main room. None of these looked large enough to hold the inventions and artifacts, such as an airplane, often discussed by Mr. Borglum.

---

1. Thompson, Special History Study, Gutzon Borglum's Concept of the Hall of Records, Mount Rushmore National Memorial (Denver: National Park Service, 1975).

2. This is Mrs. Mary Ann Ellsworth Borglum, not Luella Borglum who was Mrs. Borglum in Gutzon's lifetime. Mary Ann and Lincoln Borglum were married in 1965.

3. Special thanks go to the District Six Council of Governments of South Dakota office in Rapid City, and to Jack of Jack's Camera Shop, also in Rapid City, These copying jobs would have been impossible without their help, their machines, their patience, and their knowledge.

When questioned about the window in the plan, Lincoln Borglum said that this was an early rendering--the window was left out in later plans. Both the drawing of the hall and of the staircase are signed by Lincoln Borglum. There is no Gutzon Borglum signature or writing on either. Both plans are reproduced in this report (see Illustrations 1 and 2).

An article in Ford Times for March 11, 1939, (in the possession of Lincoln Borglum), lists a number of persons selected to give a "message to posterity" in the Hall of Records. These persons are:

Ben Franklin	Andrew Jackson
Pocahantas	Grover Cleveland
Chief Joseph	Woodrow Wilson
Susan B. Anthony	Calvin Coolidge
Franklin D. Roosevelt	Sacajewea.
James Madison	

This list includes several names not seen elsewhere, and indicates some changes in Gutzon Borglum's thinking to include Indians and women.

In October the interior of the model was closed to inspection, sealed behind glass, and completely darkened, so that the entrance to it looked just like the present Hall of Records in the mountain. The Park Service staff at the memorial has, however, since October, opened a doorway into the interior of the model and installed electric lighting. They have also painted the entire interior white to make it more visible. The original paint of the model was a dark blue, in accordance with Gutzon's intention to use lapis mosaic on the interior walls. Photos from the original model, found on transparencies in Lincoln Borglum's collection, are included here for study (see Illustrations 3 and 4).

A visit on December 5 to the memorial with the Borglums, Memorial Superintendent Harvey Wickware, Park Historian Arnold Simmons, Park Naturalist Eugene Koevenig, and Planner William Jones from the Denver Service Center to study the model and discuss the plans for the Hall of Records resulted in some dimensions being noted. At a scale of 2 inches to 1 foot, the model has the following dimensions and details:

Door	20 feet high
	12 feet wide
Step treads	17 inches by 2 inches
Facade	23 feet high
	5-1/2 feet on each side of door
Entrance Hall	depth 28 feet
	column, 2-1/2 feet wide, 20 feet back into hall
	height 20 feet
	baseboard or coping around floor to a height of 12 inches

Main Room — ceiling 35 feet high
floor coping continued; 2-1/2 feet wide,
3 feet high
80 feet wide
100 feet long
frieze around entire room, 17 feet from floor,
4-1/2 feet wide to a height of 2-1/2 feet.

Lincoln Borglum, in explaining the model, said that the historic inscription would have been carved in the granite between the coping and the frieze. The busts of persons selected for inclusion in the hall would be placed on top of the coping between various inscriptions. Bas reliefs in bronze would be fastened to the frieze. He did not subscribe to the use of lapis mosaic or gilt as his father had discussed.

No designs were ever worked out for the decorative details of the facade, the frieze, or the doorway, or for the lighting of the hall as Gutzon Borglum sometimes envisioned them. Lincoln said that they had decided that the large window on the drawing was not feasible in the granite. There were no details for the extra rooms shown in the drawing, but Lincoln said that was where they planned to put the records engraved on metal and sealed in capsules and bronze cabinets. Lincoln stated that his father felt that the entire hallway should not be sealed, but left open. Only the records should be sealed off from inspection. Lincoln also said that he thought that the list of historic events appearing in the original report by century was probably his father's last thinking on the subject.

Lincoln Borglum told Bill Jones during this visit that he (Lincoln) built the model in the then-new studio, where it remains, about 1939, following the plans and instructions of his father. He said that Ugo Villa had been instructed to do the job first, but Villa wanted to do it in wood, which would have taken "forever," so Villa was released from the project and Lincoln finished it. Lincoln said this model represents the last proposal for the Hall of Records.

One very interesting fact uncovered during this study of Borglum's clippings is the fact that the results of the 1935 essay contest are imperfectly understood. According to the Chicago Daily News for February 22, 1935, the essay contest grand prize winner was a Mr. Bradley. Mr. Burkett, whose essay is memorialized in bronze at the memorial, was winner of the college section of the contest. Copies of this article have been sent to Mr. Wickware at the memorial.

Copies of all documentary material mentioned in this report, but not included with it, such as the blueprints of the Grand Stairway, are in the possession of the planning team and the Historic Preservation Team at the Denver Service Center, as are copies of this report.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Chronology

Pre-1925	Stone Mountain, with Memorial Hall
1925-1930	Mount Harney Memorial Association First dedication of memorial, October 1925 Unveiling of Washington head, Coolidge present, August 1927 Entablature plans Borglum's first contract written, 1928 First Federal money secured, formation of First Mount Rushmore Memorial Commission, February 1929
1930	Dedication of Washington figure Coolidge-Borglum entablature hassle First Borglum discussion of Hall of Records
1933	Executive Order from FDR placing Mount Rushmore under National Park Service
1935	Discussion of Hall of Records with Norbeck, etc.
1936	National Park Service administration Dedication of Jefferson figure Hall of Records and Grand Staircase planned
1937	Dedication of Lincoln figure
1938	Second Mount Rushmore Commission formed, National Park Service administration ended, authority given to Borglum Drilling begun on Hall of Records
1939	Administration of memorial returned to Park Service by Executive Order, FDR; Borglum given full responsibility only for carving figures Dedication of Roosevelt figure First official knowledge of Hall of Records, August 4
1940	Final Congressional appropriation
1941	Death of Borglum, March 6 Law passed for burial crypt for Borglum using private money
1942	Second Commission expires, no money raised for crypt

1943	Borglum buried in California
1945	Senator Case renews interest in Mount Rushmore crypt
1950	Reactivation of Mount Rushmore National Memorial Commission
1960	Surge of interest in Hall of Records led by Senator Case
1964	Dedication of new visitor center, terrace, etc. at memorial
1971	Resurgence of interest in Hall of Records

Appendix B

Persons Involved in Development of Mount Rushmore National Memorial

Mount Harney Memorial Association
1925

Chairman, Governor Gunderson
Vice Chairman, Senator Norbeck
Secretary, Parmely
Treasurer, Bennett

1927

Chairman, Governor Bulow
Vice Chairman, Senator Norbeck
Secretary, Doane Robinson
Treasurer, Schnieder

First Mount Rushmore National Memorial Commission, 1929

John Boland, South Dakota
Charles M. Day, South Dakota
D. B. Gurney, South Dakota
Charles R. Crane, New York
Joseph S. Cullinan, Texas Co.
Hale Holden, Southern Pacific R. R.
Lorine J. Spoonts, Texas
Frank O. Lowden, Illinois
Julius Rosenwald, Sears Roebuck
Fred W. Sargent, Chicago and Northwestern R. R.
William Williamson, South Dakota
Royal Johnson, South Dakota
Doane Robinson, South Dakota, 1930

Second Mount Rushmore National Memorial Commission, 1938

Key Pittman
William McReynolds
John Townsend
Senator George Norris
Senator William Bulow
Representative Kent Keller

Russell Arundel
L. B. Hanna
William Williamson
Eugene F. McDonald
Isabella Greenway
Herman Oliphant
Lorine Spoonts

Mount Rushmore National Memorial Society formed as a money raising group, 1930

Cullinan
Robinson
Boland, etc.

became the Mount Rushmore National Memorial and Black Hills Society, and in 1950 became the Mount Rushmore Badlands and Black Hills Society

Park Service Officials

A. E. Demaray
John L. Nagle
Julian C. Spotts
Arno Cammerer
Horace Albright
Howard W. Baker

U. S. Treasury Department

George W. Storck

Borglums

Gutzon
Mary Mongomery, his wife
Lincoln, his son, assistant, first superintendent of Memorial

Appendix C

Federal Legislation Concerning Mount Rushmore

March 3, 1925:
First Federal authorization allowing carving on Mount Harney. Did not name Borglum or the figures to be carved, or provide any funding. Originally gave National Commission on Fine Arts Review of design, but provision deleted.

February 22, 1929:
Public Law 805
Created first Mount Rushmore National Memorial Commission. Provided $250,000 on matching basis to carve four figures and entablature to be written by Coolidge.

June 6, 1938:
H.R. 10462.
Created Second Mount Rushmore National Memorial Commission. Provided $300,000 for the completion of the memorial. No mention of Hall of Records in bill.

2nd Deficiency Appropriation Act of 1941:
Legislated commission out of existence after June 30, 1942. 77th Cong. 1st sess., pp. 954-56.

July 11, 1941:
Act to provide for construction of suitable crypt at Mount Rushmore for Mr. and Mrs. Borglum, signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt. No public money to be used, private money never found.

1943:
Defunct commission revived to try to raise money for crypt. Arundel chairman. No action taken.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Borglum, Lincoln. My Father's Mountain: Mount Rushmore National Memorial and How It Was Carved. Rapid City, S. D.: Fenwinn Press, 1965.

Borglum, Mary. Gutzon Borglum. Rapid City: Mount Rushmore N.M., n.d.

Casey, Robert Joseph, and Borglum, Mary. Give the Man Room: The Story of Gutzon Borglum. Indianapolis: Bobbs, 1952.

Dean, Robert J. Living Granite: The Story of Borglum and the Mount Rushmore Memorial. New York: Viking Press, 1949.

Fite, Gilbert C. Mount Rushmore. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952.

Johnson, Gerald White. The Undefeated. New York: Minton Balch and Company, 1927.

Price, Willadene. Gutzon Borglum, Artist and Patriot. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1961.

Newspaper and Magazine Articles

"America's Shrine of Democracy." Reader's Digest. August 1972.

Black Hills Weekly. June 16, 1939: Rushmore dedication. Mar. 18, 1941: Borglum's last writing.

Borglum, Gutzon. "I Molded a Mountain." Coronet. Aug. 1, 1941.

Bulow, William J. "My Days with Gutzon Borglum." Saturday Evening Post. Jan. 11, 1947.

Davis, Robert. "Bob Davis Reveals: 3 part memoir of Gutzon Borglum, 1890-1942." New York Sun. Aug. 25, 27, 29, 1942.

Houston, Robert. "Rushmore Bonanza for South Dakota." Omaha World-Herald magazine. Mar. 2, 1952.

Morrell, Warren. "Thru the Hills." Column in Rapid City Daily Journal. Articles of Aug. 19, 1951; Mar. 26, 1952; May 21, 1952. Also in Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Feb. 23, 1969.

Rapid City Daily Journal.	July 16, 1924:	article on Stone Mountain
	Aug. 15(?), 1939:	plans for Mount Rushmore
	July 29, 1947:	stairway gets part of funds
	July 2, 1950:	lighting of monument
	June 19, 1951:	Bulow remembers Borglum
	Aug. 10, 1952:	creator honored
	Aug. 9, 1959:	symbol of American ideal
	Aug. 3, 1960:	Hall of Fame at Rushmore to be discussed
	Aug. 9, 1960:	commission meeting
	Feb. 23, 1969:	Los Angeles paper asks "Rushmore Completion"
	May 2, 9, 15, 1971:	unfinished Borglum masterpiece (3 parts)
	July 4, 1971:	speakers ask completion of hall
	June 16, 1974:	Borglum Library Collection
Washington D. C. Sunday Star.	Aug. 21, 1927:	article on mountain carving by Gutzon Borglum, chiefly about Stone Mountain. In library of National Collection of Fine Arts files, Washington, D. C.

Manuscripts

Rapid City, S. D. Mount Rushmore NM Headquarters. NPS files. Lincoln Borglum letters to Francis Case.

_____. Minnie Stevenson Hughes. "The Borglum Story." Xerox.

_____. Julian Spotts. "Report of Operations at Mount Rushmore National Memorial for the Years 1936, 1937 and 1938."

Spearfish, S. D. Black Hills State College. Leland Case Library for Western Historical Studies. Hoadley Dean Collection: Boland, Case, and Fite Files; McNulty Audits; Papers of the Second Mount Rushmore Memorial Commission; Papers of the Mount Rushmore Memorial Society.

Washington, D. C. Library of Congress. Manuscript Division. John Gutzon de la Mothe Borglum Papers, 1896-1953.

_____. Mount Rushmore Collection. Acc. 15850. Gilbert C. Fite papers pertaining to publication Mount Rushmore.

Miscellaneous Publications

Mount Rushmore National Memorial Commission. Mount Rushmore National Memorial. Brochure. 1st ed. 1930; 2d ed. 1931; 3d ed. 1938, by Mount Rushmore National Memorial Society; 4th ed. 1948, by Mount Rushmore National Society of the Black Hills. Rapid City: Fenskey Press, 1930, 1931, 1938, 1948.

U.S., Congress, House. Hearingsbefore the Committee on the Library, House of Representatives, on H.R. 10462, to amend the act entitled "an act creating the Mount Rushmore National Memorial Commission and defining its purposes and powers." 75th Cong. 3d sess. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1938.

_____. Hearings, Independent Offices Appropriations Subcommittee. 76th Cong. 1st sess. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1939.

Interviews

Arundel, Russell M. Oct. 21, 1974. (Chmn. of second Mount Rushmore Natl. Mem. Comm.)

Borglum, Lincoln. Oct. 1, 1974; Oct. 21, 1974 (with Russell Arundel); Nov. 4, 1974.

Canaday, Dayton W. (Dir., S. D. Hist. Soc., Pierre, S. D.)

Davies, Mrs. Mervin (Monica). (Cousin of Lincoln Borglum, daughter of Solon.)

Dean, Hoadley. (Recently gave papers to Black Hills State College, Spearfish, S. D.)

Lee, Bob. (Editor, Rapid City Daily Journal.)

Montgomery, Marshall H. Oct. 19, 1974. (Mrs. Gutzon Borglum's nephew.)

ILLUSTRATIONS

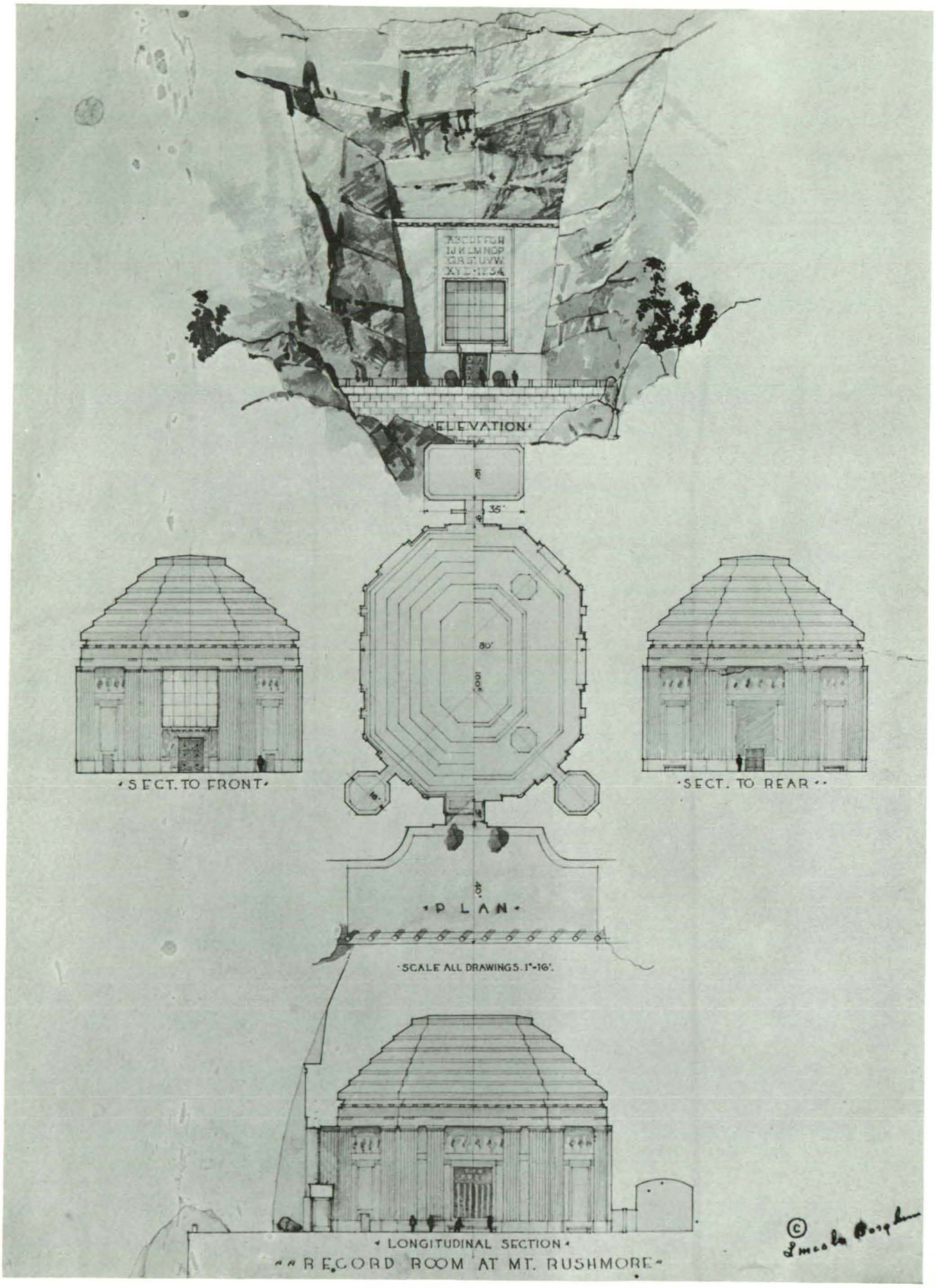
Illustration 1.

Plan of the Grand Staircase, Mount Rushmore National Memorial.



Illustration 2.

Plan of the Hall of Records,
Mount Rushmore National Memorial.


ELEVATION
36'
80'
100'
PLAN
SECT. TO FRONT
SECT. TO REAR
SCALE ALL DRAWINGS 1"-16'.
LONGITUDINAL SECTION
RECORD ROOM AT MT. RUSHMORE

Illustrations 3 and 4.

Original Model, Hall of Records,
Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

