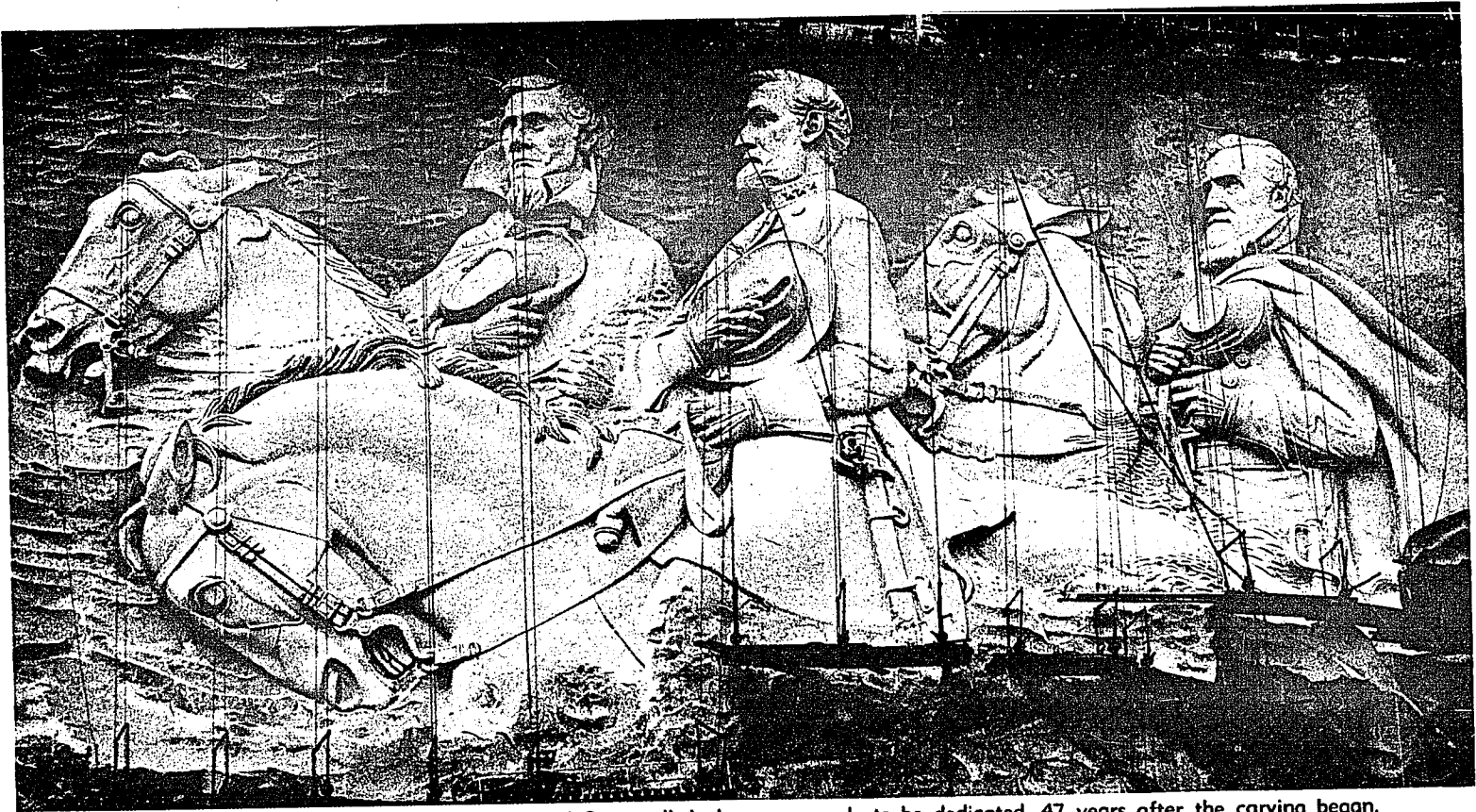


# Men On the Mountain



Figures of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson are ready to be dedicated, 47 years after the carving began. The colossal sculpture covers almost one and a quarter acres. Notice the workman sitting in the handle of Gen. Lee's sword.

## By Willard Neal

**T**HREE men have attacked the mountain: Gutzon Borglum, Augustus Lukeman and Walker Kirtland Hancock.

Borglum spent more than a year carving one head on the steep north face of Stone Mountain, assisted by a large crew of helpers using pneumatic drills and wedges.

Lukeman, working almost continually with 12 or more men for two years, finished two heads and roughed out the figures of two men and a horse.

In the Hancock era, one man with a couple of helpers has carved three men and three horses in six years, removing several hundred tons of granite with a thermo-jet torch that blasted away the stone with intense heat.

The memorial had remained untouched for 35 years, from the time Lukeman left in March, 1928, until the Stone Mountain

Memorial Association late in 1963 engaged Hancock to complete it. In those years, stairs, rigging and scaffolding rusted and rotted out and had to be replaced. Instead of rebuilding the steps from the ground to the carving 400 feet up on the mountain, a prefabricated elevator was installed. It is the world's tallest outside elevator, rising 386 feet.

An experienced carver was hired to do the carving. But when he rode up on the new elevator and stared at the acre of granite which he was to fill with three horsemen, he found he simply was not able to visualize such immense figures.

Meanwhile, Roy Faulkner, the foreman of the work crew, had been experimenting with the new thermo-jet torch and discovered he had a knack for using it. He had never taken an art lesson and his only previous experience with stones was throwing them. Mr. Hancock let him work around some of the rough edges while the search continued for a carver.

Usually it takes years to become an experienced stone carver. The work on the me-

morial called for a man with agility and stamina, enough engineering skill to manipulate the scaffolds, and a daring nature that would let him enjoy spending several years 400 feet above the ground, where one misstep could be fatal.

Such a carver was never found. But Roy Faulkner graduated from smoothing the rough edges to doing the most detailed carving. By now he probably has more experience cutting granite with a torch than any other man in the business.

The thermo-jet torch is an iron pipe eight feet long, fed by three hose lines. One carries kerosene, another oxygen and the third water to spray through the tip and keep it cool. By manipulating three valves, the operator can obtain a flame at any temperature up to 4,000 degrees.

When such intense heat strikes granite, the moisture inside the rock crystals expands, literally exploding away the surface layer, or flaking it, as stonemen say. In deep gouging, flakes as big as a dinner plate and a quarter of an inch (Continued on Page 36)



The memorial carving looks down on a playground with lake, marina, museums, motel and sky lift.

(Continued From Page 32)

thick pop out of the wall in a continuous stream and go sailing from the mountain like tiny flying saucers. Carving is a one-man job because two men trying to work on the same mountain would bombard each other with hot stone. One man can do about as much work in a day as a dozen could in a week with Lukeman's tools.

**A**LTHOUGH the figures on the mountain are now complete, about two more years of work will be needed to smooth out the background and carve a frame for the sculpture. It is 305 feet wide and 190 feet high, about an acre and a quarter.

For fine work, Mr. Faulkner uses a 40-inch torch, which can be adjusted as fine as an acetylene flame, and can cut along a pencil mark. With it he carved the horses' manes and the men's beards and hair in such detail that visitors viewing the figures through a telescope are always amazed.

The thermo-jet torch is really a miniature jet engine which produces a continuous thrust about equal to the recoil of an automatic shotgun. Muscle cramps, from bracing against the thrust, is an occupational hazard.

Mr. Faulkner pointed out that a major part of his work is measuring.

"When I was ready to start a new feature, such as the bridle bit on Gen. Lee's horse, I went to the model and took measurements from the bit to the tip of the horse's ear, to the general's knee, his nose, and half a dozen other spots," he said. "One inch on the model represents one foot on the mountain. I went up to the carving, and, interpolating a foot for every inch on the model, I repeated the measure-

ments. When I got all of them to come out at the same place, I drilled a hole to the exact depth of the top of the bit.

"Carving consists of cutting away all the stone you don't need, and leaving exactly as much as is required to fill out the figures. The irreparable error is to cut away too much. To insure against that I sank depth holes to all the high points in the vicinity of the bit. The depths were measured from a plumb line hanging from the top of the model, and another plumb line from the top of the carving. I'm sure I have drilled thousands of those depth holes—more holes than ants ever dig in an acre of meadow.

"I knocked out the stone with the large torch until I came within half an inch of the bottom of the holes, and then switched to the smaller torch to finish the job."

**M**R. Faulkner said that after completing the measurements he sometimes could look at the granite and envision the figure down inside the stone, before the carving began. Occasionally there was an opposite reaction. After bringing out a feature like a thumb or an ear lobe, he got the feeling that it was turned the wrong way, or was in the wrong place. The scaffold was not wide enough for him to step back for a better view, so he lived with the uncertainty until he came down in the evening and could see it in the proper perspective. Actually, all those features came out in the right places.

For detailed work on heads of men and horses, Mr. Faulkner used models one-fourth ac-

(Continued on Page 42)

# Carver braces himself against 40-mile winds

(Continued From Page 36)

tual size, which he took up on the scaffolds with him, for handy comparisons and measurements.

He photographed the work he finished every day and sent the pictures to sculptor Hancock. If he had a serious problem, Mr. Hancock came down to straighten it out, and he always came to inspect a newly finished feature and to help Mr. Faulkner begin his next assignment.

"I doubt if any sculptor fully trusts a carver," Mr. Faulkner said. "There is always a chance for an accident or an error. After about four years, I noticed that Mr. Hancock seemed to feel easier about my work.

"Actually I wasn't quite as good as I thought at the beginning. I wish now I could go over some of the earlier work."

Mr. Hancock made several major changes from Luke-man's design. He lowered the head and neck of Gen. Lee's horse several feet to show more of Jefferson Davis and his horse. Davis was riding in a rather awkward position, and Mr. Hancock straightened him up in the saddle. The sculptor modeled a new head for Stonewall Jackson that looks much more like his photographs than Lukeman's model does. He stopped the carving just below the riders' knees, saving many months of work that would have produced nothing more interesting than the horses' legs. And he made the three central figures the entire monument, simply omitting the cavalry that Lukeman planned to have following them.

**A**FTER six years suspended on the vertical side of Stone Mountain, with assurance of at least two more years to go, Roy Faulkner thinks he has a very desirable job.

If you like excitement, it is there, he said. He never forgets for a minute that he is 400 feet above the ground, where any slip could drop him to his death. The work is in the healthful open air. He has not missed a day from illness.

He uses enough muscles to keep in good physical trim. There are many rungs of ladders to be climbed every day in moving from one scaffold

to another. He must stand braced against the thrust of his torch, and against the wind. The air may seem still on the ground when a 30- or 40-mile wind is blowing aloft. Gusts blow straight into the mountain, or straight up, or around the mountain.

The work is never dull. In fact, it's about the most precise you can find. A carver cannot erase or sew up or bury a mistake.

"And I always keep in mind that I am carving the largest piece of sculpture anyone ever attempted, a memorial that will stand through eternity," Mr. Faulkner said. "You could hardly ask for greater satisfaction than that."

**M**RS. Helen Plane, a charter member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, seems to have been the first to think of Stone Mountain as a site for a memorial. She was quoted in 1909 as mentioning the possibility. In 1912 John Temple Graves, editor of the New York American, came home for a visit and wrote a rousing editorial for the Atlanta Georgian in which he urged a monument to rival the Taj Mahal or the Sphinx. In 1915 Mrs. Plane, then president of the Atlanta Chapter of the UDC, suggested a 70-foot statue of Gen. Robert E. Lee for the steep side of the mountain.

The UDC members consulted Gutzon Borglum, just then in the news for his beardless statue of Abraham Lincoln.

One look at Stone Mountain set Borglum's imagination afire. But such a small statue would be like a postage stamp on a barn, he said. The world's largest block of granite deserved a fitting monument, like an entire army marching around it.

The ladies almost swooned when he said he could carve the monument for about two and a half million dollars. In 1915, almost the only women in commerce were salesladies, telephone operators, seamstresses and milliners. However, Borglum assured them that financing would be the easiest part of the project.

In 1916 Sam Venable and the Venable family decided the face of the mountain and 10 acres of land to the UDC with the

(Continued on Page 44)

*(Continued From Page 42)*

proviso that a monument be completed within 12 years. At the 1917 district conference of the UDC, in Chattanooga, the delegates named a Stone Mountain Confederate Monumental Association to look after finances.

Soon after that World War I stopped all nonessential operations. In 1923 Borglum returned to Stone Mountain and announced he was ready to start carving.

Such gigantic sculpture had never been attempted, and Borglum had no precedent for getting his figures sketched on the face of the mountain. He announced that he would pour photographic chemicals down from the top, flash a photograph of his model through a giant enlarger, and develop the picture with other showers of chemicals.

The story appeared in magazines and newspapers, and the Stone Mountain Memorial became known around the world, before photographers convinced Borglum that a picture could not be printed that way.

Borglum used the enlarger anyhow. He changed the negative to a line drawing, and projected the image on the mountain at night so workmen could outline the figures on the stone with paint.

**I**N June 23, 1923, the sculptor led a group of dignitaries over the top of the mountain and down the stairs for a ceremony and pictures at the carving site, then had himself lowered in a bos'n's chair, and drilled the first holes.

On Jan. 18, 1924, he entertained at a dinner party on Gen. Lee's shoulder, and the next day, Lee's birthday, unveiled the finished carving of Lee's head.

Work slowed down after that. The flamboyant Borglum seemed to be more concerned with battling the association over finances than in carving. In March, 1925, in one of history's most famous tantrums, he destroyed all his models and sketches, and left Georgia. Other artists pointed out later that the real reason for the sculptor's behavior was his discovery that the upper part of his figure of Lee was so distorted he never could have finished it. His method of imposing the image onto the stone had been at fault.

Borglum went immediately to South Dakota, and success-

*(Continued on Page 46)*



Roy Faulkner works on Gen. Lee's cheek with a thermo-jet torch. He has carved for six years.

(Continued From Page 44)

fully carved the Mount Rushmore masterpiece.

All his work on Stone Mountain has since been erased. But he may be the person most responsible for the memorial. If it had not been for his colossal ego, which plunged him into the job, it is not likely that anybody else ever would have come along with enough nerve to start it.

Augustus Lukeman, the next sculptor, was an exact opposite. Starting April 1, 1925, he knew he could never finish the monument by the 1928 deadline set by the Venables, but he hoped, by working at top speed, to accomplish enough to show that he could and would complete the job.

Lukeman was hired at \$10,000 a year to design the monument and oversee the carving. The Stone Mountain Granite Corp., which operated the quarry on the east side of the mountain, was engaged to do the work. Lukeman brought young Fred Schoenfeld from Germany to serve as liaison and direct the carving in his absence.

Lukeman left nothing to chance. He had the sloping face of the mountain blasted off to leave a vertical plane. The images were then drawn onto the flat vertical surface by actual measurements.

Mr. Schoenfeld, who lives at 1116 Moreland Dr. SE, described the method of removing stone in his day. If a section two feet wide by four feet high was to be taken out to a depth of two feet, a line of holes almost touching would be sunk two feet deep along the sides and bottom with pneumatic drills. Then a slanting row would be drilled near the top, and wedges pounded into them until the stone broke loose and fell.

Congress authorized an issue of 5,000,000 Confederate Memorial half dollars, from a design supplied by Borglum. The first of these arrived from the mint early in 1928. The association paid 50 cents apiece for them and sold them for a dollar. They were so well received that it looked as if the memorial could be completed with no further financial interruptions.

On March 28, 1928, Sam Venable said nothing about extending the deadline for completing the memorial. On April 9, the anniversary of Lee's surrender at Appomattox, the Gate City Guards hosted an unveiling of the finished heads of Lee and Davis, with Mayor Jimmy Walker of New York as the speaker. Apparently the Venables were not impressed. On May 28 they reclaimed their property.

**I**N recent years it was decided to remove the pile of rubble that had been accumulating below the carving from the time Borglum began work. Since there was hardly a man living who had seen it before it was covered up, everybody was surprised at finding an outcrop of granite, foreign to Stone Mountain, bulging out of the monolith. This was part of the surrounding rock into which the molten mass of Stone Mountain intruded about 200 million years ago. It explains why Borglum and Lukeman both went to the trouble of designing an auditorium to be carved out of the base of the mountain.

President Jefferson Davis and President Richard Nixon are scheduled to meet this week. Nixon announced in Washington last month that he would accept an invitation to come to the dedication of the mountain carving on May 9.