



Earl's Diary - Friday - May 31, 2013
 Greetings to all my loyal readers - both on the internet and those two who receive printed copies:
 I believe I told you on my last report that we bucked a fierce headwind traveling to the town of

Keystone, gateway to Mount Rushmore. A fierce wind it was! In spite of that, we arrived at our RV Park ahead of schedule. The park was not busy, so they let us set up anyway. It's a bit rustic, but completely serviceable. The WiFi was not the best,

but with perseverance we made it work. We were parked just four miles from Mount Rushmore and those famous heads.

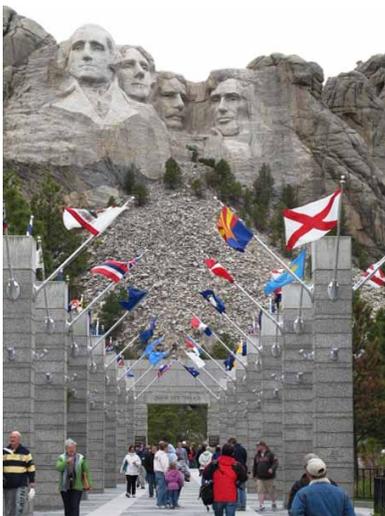
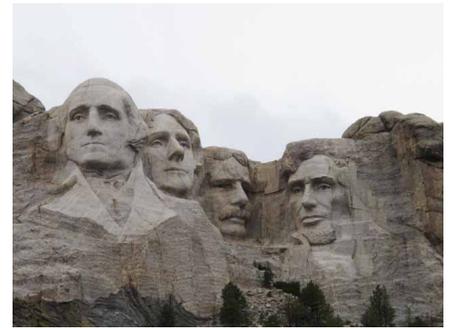
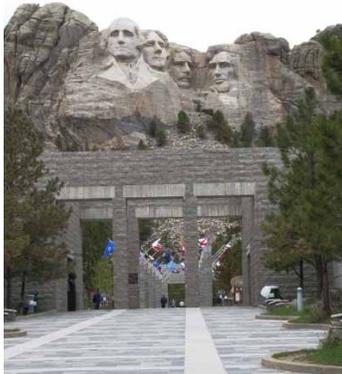
Speaking of those famous heads, the city of Rapid City is on the rolling flats of the prairie. We had to do some climbing uphill into the Black Hills in order to get to those heads. I don't know what this silly author was thinking about, BUT,

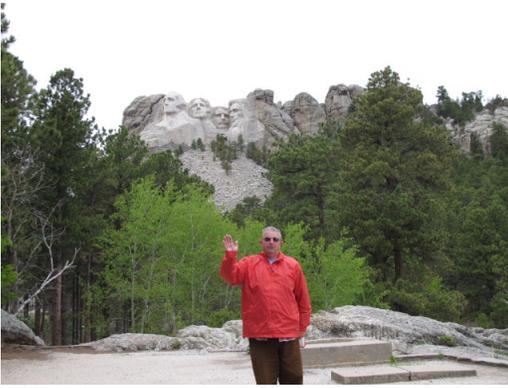
those heads are at the 5,700 foot level. I pictured them on the flats. Silly me, why wouldn't they be up in the mountains???

I sure learned something today!
 After getting set up, we took a ride up to see what this was all about. I know we have all seen pictures of the four presidents, but in person - WOW! Now that's impressive! Our government has done an outstanding job of preparing the site for visitors. The visitor center does an excellent job of explaining what the site is all about.

Remember, I told you about the headwind on our travel here? Well, the cold wind was still blowing when we arrived at the Visitor Center. I told Alan, even though it's cold and miserable, I'm going to see what there is to see! It was also overcast during our visit. I would have preferred a backdrop of sun. But alas, I had to take the hand that was dealt to me!

We walked the President's Trail which takes us up close and underneath the portraits. The trail is clearly marked and covers a distance of 1/2 mile on a boardwalk. We climbed up and down on many steps. From this trail a person can see the portraits (that's what they are called) from different perspectives.





We were well windblown and chilly when we arrived at the artist's studio. Inside the studio is a 1/12 model of the sculptures.

Back at the Visitor Center we watched a movie on the creation of the project and a history of artist who created it.

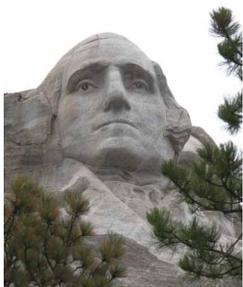
Earlier in the day (after we visited Mount Rushmore) we drove over to Crazy Horse. When we got there, we were not impressed and declined to pay the \$27 to enter. We did see what little we could see from outside the gates. That was enough! We returned to Keystone and our trailers for a brief nap before going out for dinner. Michele suggested a Mexican restaurant that we found very good!

Later that night (9:00) Alan and I returned to view the sculptures which were brightly lighted. It gave an erie feeling to the place. There is a huge amphitheater facing the faces. This night not too many people were watching. The program included a ceremony that honored our veterans, and a flag retiring ceremony before lighting of the figures. After those ceremonies most of the people headed for the warmth inside buildings. I

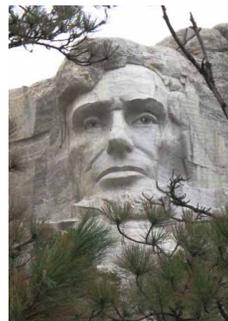
understand that during the summer this place is packed with visitors. Fortunately we are a little early for the tourist season and not too many people are running around the place. I always thought Gutzon Borglum was some NUT that wanted to do something big. Well, it was BIG, but he also had the backing of the U.S. Government. The story continues - - - - -



Why these four?



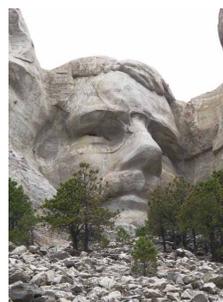
George Washington = Birth of country, first president.



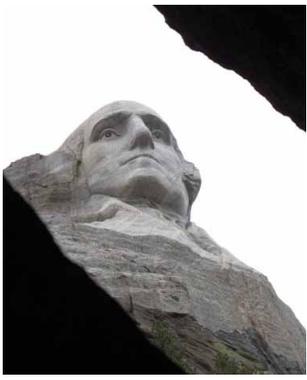
Abraham Lincoln = Preservation, saved the union during Civil War.



Thomas Jefferson = Expansion, Louisiana Purchase.



Theodore Roosevelt = Development, Panama Canal, Trust buster, and National Parks



I know that many of my loyal readers have probably been here, so here is your warning: **The following is a brief history of Mount Rushmore. You may continue reading, or just skip this part.**

It started as an idea to draw sightseers to South Dakota (Oh yes! Another shameless self promotion scheme!). In 1923 state historian Doane Robinson suggested carving giant statues in South Dakota's Black Hills.



The sculpture's 1/12 size model

Robinson wanted his sculptures to stand at the gateway to the West, where the Black Hills rise from the plains as a prelude to the Rockies. He imagined images of Indian leaders and American explorers who shaped the frontier. The final outcome was four U.S. presidents.

The artist: Gutzon Borglum. He was known as a man to make something BIG. He was born in Idaho in 1867, the son of Danish

Mormons and studied art in Paris. Borglum made his name through the celebration of things American.

Borglum scouting out 5,725 foot Mount Rushmore because its broad wall of exposed granite faced southeast to receive direct sunlight for most of the day.

President Calvin Coolidge dedicated the memorial in 1927, commencing 14 years of work; only six years were spent on actual carving. Money was the main problem. (I guess that's because the U.S. government was involved!)

The Washington head was dedicated in 1930, followed by Jefferson in 1936, Lincoln in 1937, and Roosevelt in 1939. Borglum died in March 1941; the final dedication was not held until 50 years later. Son Lincoln Borglum supervised the completion of the heads. Work stopped in October 1941, on the eve of U.S. entry into World War II.

Statistics: Each face is 60 feet tall. Each eye is 11 feet wide. Washington's nose is 21 feet long. All other noses are 20 feet long. Washington's mouth is 18 feet wide.

Well, dear readers, that was an exciting day. I didn't really think I could get excited over a pile of rocks!

That was my day. Thank you for coming along with me. Bye for now - - Earl

