

## COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION SURVIVOR FOUND IN KEYSTONE, SOUTH DAKOTA

We went to see Mt. Rushmore in the Black Hills of South Dakota but discovered a story from the 1893 Chicago fair instead.

Taking refuge from heavy rains and low clouds that obscured the national memorial to four presidents two miles ahead, we ran for cover into the Borglum Historical Center assuming we would at least learn the history behind the carved mountain. Just inside the door in the spacious lobby was an unexpected bonus—a sculpture entitled “Indian Scouts” from the World’s Columbian Exposition! The sculptor was John Gutzon de la Mothe Borglum whose best known work is Mt. Rushmore, dedicated in 1936. By 1893, Borglum, then 26 and studying in Europe, was slowly becoming known for his two dimensional works. At the same time, he was exploring sculpture as a medium of expression. For the Columbian Exposition he submitted a 13 x 17½ x 11¼ inch bronze sculpture that was based on a distinctly western theme of two Native Americans intently watching the horizon. The viewer is left to ponder whether they sought buffalo or spied settlers who ultimately would change their way of life forever.

The inventive artist went on to employ sculpture in more and more of his works. One of his other interests, politics, soon found him in the company of presidents, and many of his creations included sculptures of past presidents, notably a seated Lincoln. The size of his sculptures increased steadily, and in 1915 he began sculpting a memorial on Stone Mountain in Georgia. He devised clever techniques for determining stone quality on grand scales, as well as ways of transferring dimensions and proportions in inches from studio models to yards on the face of sheer rock walls. The sculptor was also an engineer at these colossal sizes.

For Mt. Rushmore, which he started in 1924, he also was a promoter, public relations artist, and effective fund raiser. Initiated by public funds and donations from patrons, the project was completed with the aid of Federal funds; the total price of \$990,000 over 14 years seems inexpensive today for such a massive and thought provoking monument. The project consumed him and his family up to the time of his death in 1941. Some family members still live in the Black Hills area.



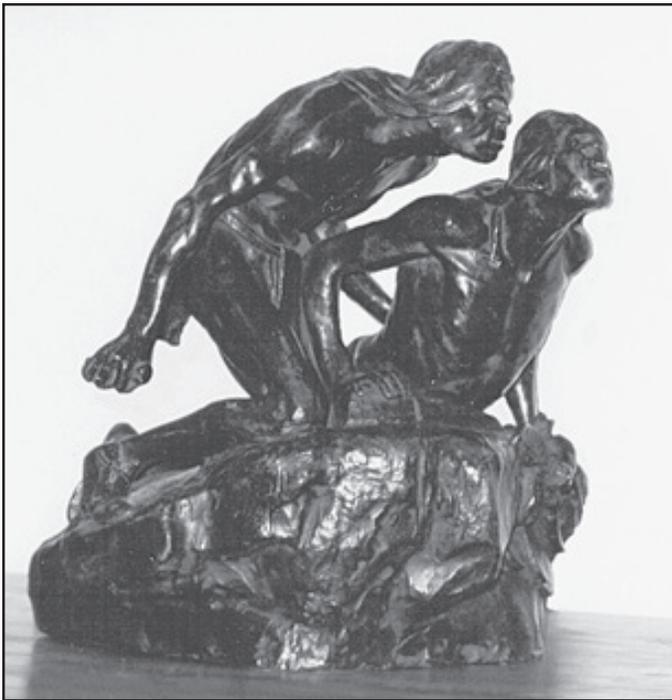
“Indian Scouts,” bronze, front view:  
1893 Columbian Exposition exhibit

### GROUP 139.

#### Sculpture.

- Adams, Herbert, New York.
1. Portrait Bust of a Lady. (Marble.)
  2. Primavera. (Marble.)
  3. Colored Bust of St. Agnes. (Plaster.)
- Bachman, Max, Boston.
4. Bust of Miss O. (Plaster.)
  5. Portrait Bas-relief of Mrs. Frank Sheldon. (Plaster.)
  6. The Son of Man. (Plaster.)
  7. Portrait Bas-relief. (Plaster.)
- Bartlett, Paul, Paris.
8. Medallion Portrait of Rev. Dr. Skinner. (Marble.)
  9. The Ghost Dance (study of the nude). (Plaster.)
  10. Bohemian and Bear. (Plaster.)
  11. Bust of Mrs. B. (Marble.)
- Baur, Theodore, New York.
12. The Secret. (Unfinished.) (Plaster.)
  13. Panel of Joseph Jefferson as Rip Van Winkle, Bob Acres, and Dr. Pangloss. (Bronze.)
- Bissell, George E., New York.
14. John Watts. (Bronze.)
  15. Indian Scouts. (Bronze.)

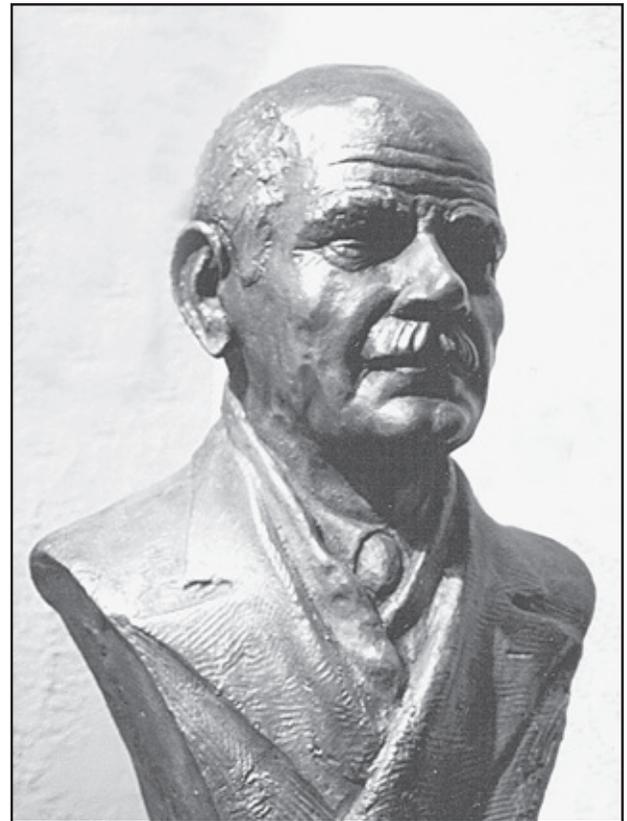
“Indian Scouts,” # 15, Borglum’s only juried entry, as listed in the Columbian Fine Arts catalog under US sculpture.



**"Indian Scouts," side view**

The Historical Center details Borglum's adventuresome life and his innovations at Rushmore such as leaving a stone stub at the edge of each hole representing the eye's pupil, which when viewed from a distance, gives the appearance of a black pupil with a lifelike white highlight from daylight reflecting off the end of the projecting stone stub. After the self-guided museum tour of excellent displays, we learned further details of the Columbian sculpture from museum staff members Heidi Hofer and Laura Pankratz. We left the Center much wiser, amazed at the life of this innovative American artist. Heavy rain continued, and we never saw Mt. Rushmore, but discovering Borglum's Columbian sculpture lessened our disappointment.

For further reading on the sculptor and the Columbian bronze, we recommend *Gutzon Borglum : His Life and Work* by his granddaughter, Robin Borglum Carter. This is citation #2332.2 in our Supplement : Annotated Bibliography : World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago 1893, published last December and advertised in the "Member Advertisements" section at the back of this issue. The Center in Keystone, SD, may be contacted at (605) 666-4448 from May to mid-October.



**Bronze bust of Borglum**



**Wood carving of Borglum and his Rushmore creation. Borglum Historical Center.**

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