

Massive Monument: The Crazy Horse Memorial

In 1939, a Sioux Indian chief named Henry Standing Bear invited a renowned **sculptor**¹ to the tribe's home in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

The chief asked the sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski (jool-CUFF-skee) to undertake a new carving, one that would be even bigger than his previous project. Ziolkowski had just helped carve the granite faces of four U.S. presidents into the side of Mount Rushmore.

"What," the sculptor thought to himself, "could be bigger than that?" Standing Bear wrote: "My fellow chiefs and I would like the white man to know the red man has great heroes, too."

They wanted Ziolkowski to carve an image of their fallen chief, Crazy Horse, on a mountainside. The Polish American sculptor pondered the idea for seven years before accepting the offer. Today, almost six decades after Ziolkowski began the project--and 22 years after the sculptor's death--the Crazy Horse Memorial remains a massive work in progress.

Ziolkowski grasped the enormity of the task. "Everybody says I'm nuts," he once told an interviewer. "You've got to be nuts to do a thing like this."

More Years to Go

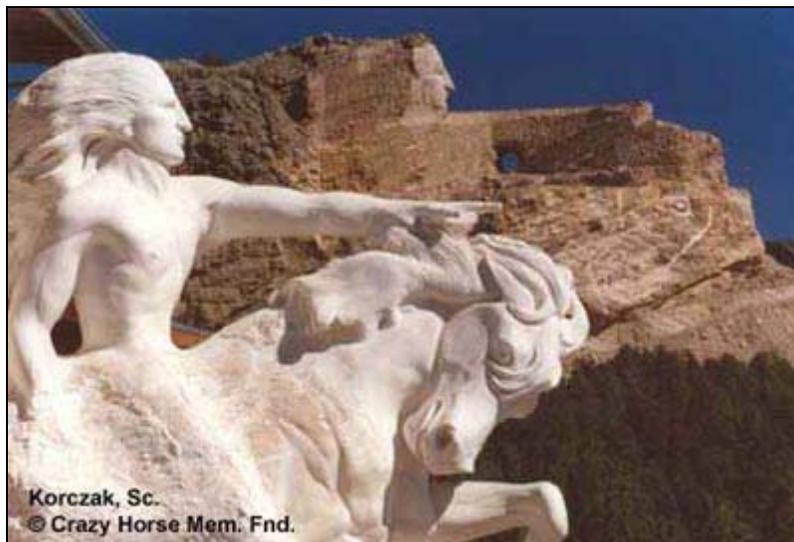
In 2004 officials gathered at the Crazy Horse Memorial to mark the 65th anniversary of that first meeting between Chief Henry Standing Bear and Ziolkowski. The sculptor's 78-year-old widow, Ruth, led the ceremony. She is also president of the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation, which oversees the ongoing project.

The memorial is still decades from completion. When finished, the sculpture will show Crazy Horse with his left arm extended over his

¹**sculptor**: one who carves or cuts hard substances (such as stone) into statues and other works of art

Reading Passage

stallion's mane. Designs call for the memorial to be 563 feet high and 641 feet long. It will be the largest sculpture in the world.



Korczak, Sc.
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The white sculpture (front) is how the monument will look when it is finished. The brown sculpture (back) is how the monument looks today.

Who Was Crazy Horse?

Many agree that Crazy Horse was a great Native American leader. In 1876, Chief Crazy Horse led thousands of Indians into battle against Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer and his troops near the Little Big Horn River in South Dakota. The Native American warriors killed Custer and his men.

The chieftain died a year later, when he took a **bayonet**² to the back while being placed in a guardhouse at Fort Robinson, Nebraska. Ziolkowski felt he had a special bond with Crazy Horse. The great Oglala Sioux war leader died on Sept. 6, 1877.

Exactly 31 years later, on Sept. 6, 1908, Ziolkowski was born in Boston.

Progress Continues

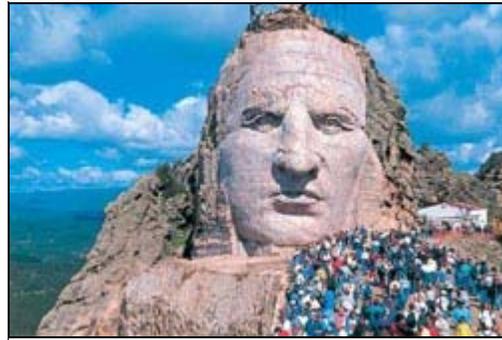
² **bayonet:** weapon like a dagger made to fit on the muzzle end of a rifle

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The Crazy Horse Memorial was dedicated on June 3, 1948, with the first blast of dynamite on what Ziolkowski named Thunderhead Mountain.

When the sculptor started the carving, he lived in a tent on the mountain and had only \$174 to his name.

In the decades that followed, workers blasted millions of tons of granite from Thunderhead Mountain to help block out the form of Crazy Horse. The scruffy-bearded sculptor supervised every step of the process. When Ziolkowski died in 1982, the mountain was a rough outline of the horse and rider.



© Crazy Horse Memorial 2004

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In 1998, on the 50th anniversary of the memorial's dedication, the head of Crazy Horse was finally unveiled. The carving is 87.5 feet high.

Work crews continue to blast away at the mountain. Crazy Horse's 227-foot-long arm is taking shape. After that comes the racing **steed's**³ 22-story head.

When will the Crazy Horse Memorial be completed? Ruth Ziolkowski does not like that question.

"It didn't make a difference to Korczak and it doesn't to me when it's done," she said, "just so long as it's going forward."

³**steed:** a horse (especially a lively horse)

Question Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

“Massive Monument: The Crazy Horse Memorial” Questions

- ___ 1. The sculptor’s widow, Ruth, is a person who
- a. continues to honor her husband’s intentions.
 - b. does not care about finishing the monument.
 - c. oversees the sculptural project.
 - d. was left poor when her husband died.
- ___ 2. Crazy Horse is apparently considered to be heroic by
- a. the warriors he led into battle in 1876.
 - b. the Sioux tribe living in the Black Hills today.
 - c. Ziolkowski and his wife.
 - d. all of the above.
- ___ 3. The order in which the parts of the Crazy Horse memorial sculpture will appear is as follows:
- a. horse’s head, chief’s head, chief’s arm.
 - b. chief’s arm, chief’s head, horse’s head.
 - c. chief’s head, chief’s arm, horse’s head.
 - d. horse’s head, chief’s arm, chief’s head.
- ___ 4. The sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski seems to have been a man who
- a. showed vision, skill, and determination.
 - b. acted with impulsive craziness and superstition.
 - c. insisted on getting the honor he deserved.
 - d. none of the above.
- ___ 5. What other big sculptures, like the U.S. Presidents’ heads and the Crazy Horse monument, would you like to see made? Why?

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Date: _____

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Answers will vary.

Suggested Additional Vocabulary: ponder, decade