

# MOUNT RUSHMORE NATIONAL MEMORIAL COMMISSION

## COMMISSION

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Charles M. Day, *Vice-Chairman*  
John A. Boland, *Secretary*

John A. Boland  
John Budd  
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Ella Greenway  
D. B. Gurney  
L. B. Hanna

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Lorine J. Spooner  
Margaret S. Strawn  
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## EXECUTIVE OFFICES

Rapid City, South Dakota

July 31st, 1935.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

John A. Boland, *Chairman*  
William Williamson, *Secretary*  
D. B. Gurney  
L. B. Hanna  
Fred W. Sargent

## COMMITTEE ON DESIGN AND PUBLICITY

Gutzon Borglum, *Sculptor and Engineer*  
Lorine J. Spooner, *Secretary*  
Charles M. Day  
Peter Norbeck  
Margaret S. Strawn

Dear Mr. Boland:-

I have read the report of Mr. Terrill twice and once aloud to Billy and Lincoln. Its observations are amazingly accurate, as checking with our own and it is interesting to have his corroboration of our figures, regarding amount of air needed, produced, delivered at the compressor tanks and at the outlets and that we are producing every pound of air our power will permit and delivering that air where we need it - it reminds me of what the boy said: "he telling us?"

His solutions, however, and recommendations are amateurish. I doubt if he's an engineer of practical service experience. His cursory observations regarding the Rushmore power plant are curiously familiar and according to his own statement of no value, yet he proposes conditions for hooking up not at all in line and should and would never be tried by anyone of practical experience or acquainted with the conditions he comments upon. His comments on the possible cost of parts are problematical and cannot be known until the engine is taken down and properly examined. As it stands, however, two engineers and Mr. Uppercu looked it over last summer and Uppercu offered me \$4500 cash for it. As it had been abandoned by the commission and given to me with the compressors and other material, I wrote you for a definite release of the engine, if it was not to be used. I received no answer that I could act upon, so that was lost.

I have had that power property examined by three different experts and I still maintain that no proper examination has been made by anyone whatsoever, therefore no reliable opinion exists as to the value of the engine to the Memorial or the expense necessary to put it in repair. The power plant did serve us in the beginning and also delivered power to Mr. Byron's mine for three months and 21 days. Of course it has suffered from deliberate injury, robbed of valuable parts and our own neglect; with that all against us and the fact that it was an obsolete engine, I still maintain that there is a chance of putting it in working order buying a new compressor and running it as a separate unit in connection with Byron's power, and will give us all the power we need, cheaper than any other plan proposed.

You have always opposed repairing our engine and preferred to buy power. I have no objection to that, although I disapprove of that kind of economy. My concern is to get power and I am opposed to any makeshift of any kind. I am returning the Rand-Ingersoll report. I want to compliment you on having it made. It should be kept on file and contains figures and data in a form that we have not examined and it corroborates our own knowledge of our own power plant.

I have just received a note from Bianco, resigning tonight. I called Billy, Bianco and Lincoln together and discussed the situation. This quitting revives the old policy of "penny wisdom and pound foolishness" that has threatened the wreck of the Black Hills mountain sculpture from its beginning. No work

that I have ever been in charge of has been subject to such petty economies or, in the aggregate, been so wasteful and expensive. And I must tell you this wasteful amateurish practice of trying to create a great national memorial to America in sculptured granite in a pile of largely decayed, ancient, cracked up rock is not a child's undertaking and if I am not permitted to employ even a few trained stone men and carvers for the finishing of the features of these great men, their features will not be finished.

In the absence of a highly trained competent executive who knows sculpture, I yesterday posted an order, dividing the responsibility of the work under the two or three trained minds that I have on the mountain, placing the removal of all granite, methods of removal, form and use of tools, under Bianco; all measurements of every kind whatsoever and the full responsibility of any faults in measurements not provided for drillers on Lincoln. Handling the work preparing the scaffolds, providing tools, under Johnson. Billy to remain as general aid to all and special assistant to Lincoln, he asked for that. I am sure that you cannot realize the seriousness, the exactness necessary in every phase of this work, the constant vigilance required in the removing of stone, the protection of the stone that is not to be removed from any form of injury, the nature and character of the use of powder and how every blast is a form of carving and must be considered as a separate and individual operation. I say, you can't possibly know these things, no man can, unless he has had long experience and great intelligence. Billy doesn't know it; Johnson doesn't know it; Red, the powder man doesn't know it. Lincoln has stopped two blasts that would have wrecked a serious portion of our work, approved of by two men in authority there, who should years ago have known better. I have given orders that no powder shall be used or shots fired that are not approved by both Bianco and Lincoln.

I don't know what we are going to do about ever finishing the work without trained carvers. We have got three first class assistants there now that can work right along with carvers and four more who make very fine seconds to the first three, but this work cannot go on in this manner. I have worked under a contract that was conceived in bad faith, dishonest in its draft, and dishonest in its administration. I knew that, of course, but frankly I never looked at it for three years, had to ask you for a copy of the contract. When Tucker was obliged to leave I accepted the trap I had been caught in and I have worked out of it alone at chiefly my own personal expense and labour as best I could, with the worst tools ever given a man, without aid and without funds.

I have no intention of abandoning Rushmore nor failing in the trust the nation and Washington has in me. That is one thing that will not happen. On the other hand I am not going to carry this work on to an injurious and amateurish finish for the lack of intelligent assistants.

*As far as I am concerned*

I shall let Bianco go. I am not going to make up his wages, nor the wages of anybody else. I have spent the last money that I shall spend, running into many, many thousands, for the sole purpose of lifting a standard here, a burden I should never have had to carry and cannot continue.

His leaving will stop all work on the features of Washington and Jefferson.

Yours truly,

*Anna Boylston*