

The Woodbury/Rushmore Connection

The Story of Charles E. Rushmore

Just what is the connection between Charles E. Rushmore of Highland Mills and Mount Rushmore of South Dakota? It is a rather curious story which goes back to the 1880s when Rushmore, a young attorney with a New York City law firm, was sent to South Dakota to inspect some mines which a large investing company was planning to buy. Rushmore visited the site and became suspicious about the valuable minerals that immediately turned up. Upon investigating, Rushmore found the mine was being “salted” with minerals by the promoters of the investment and placed in working areas for easy discovery. Rushmore blew the whistle and, in doing so, saved his firm’s client a great deal of money. Later, Rushmore asked some local officials and businesspeople what the name of the great stone mountain they faced was. One of the businessmen, William Challis, reportedly replied,

“Never had any, but it has now. We’ll call the thing Rushmore.”

That was in 1885, and in 1930, the United States Board of Geographic Names formally recognized the name “Mount Rushmore.” During its early development, Charles Rushmore donated \$5,000 toward the now-famous memorial, which was dedicated by President Calvin Coolidge in 1927. It contains 60-foot high sculptures of the heads of Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Teddy Roosevelt.

The Rushmores in Woodbury

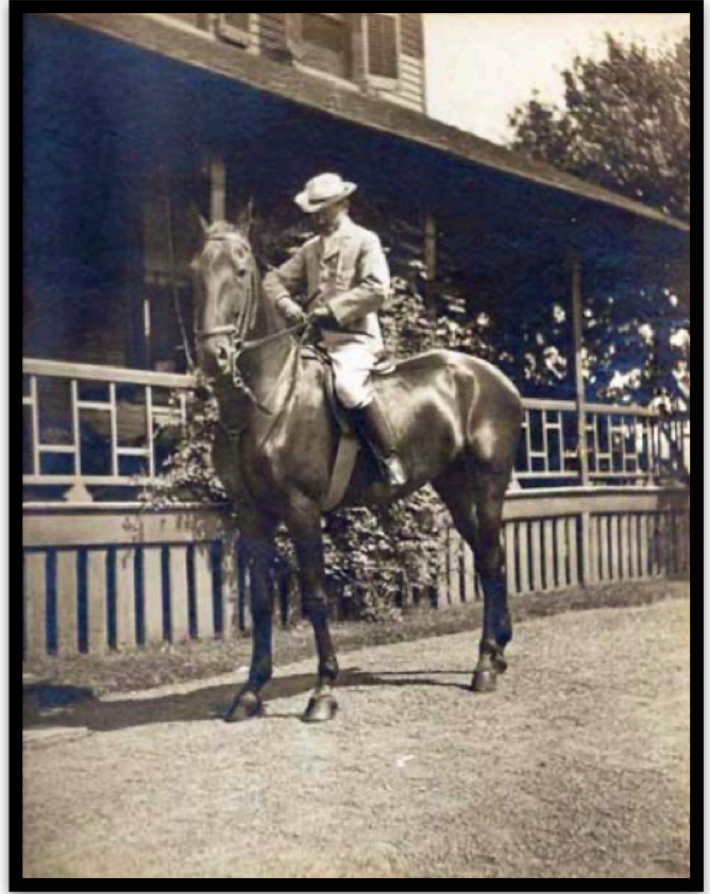
Charles Rushmore was born in New York City in 1856 and remained a resident of New York State his whole life. He founded his own law firm, Rushmore, Bisbee, & Stern, and had the largest New York banks as his clients. Around 1900, because of Mrs. Rushmore’s (Jeanette Carpenter’s) ill health, the family decided that good country air would improve her condition. They settled in Highland Mills for their new home and first lived in a house on Quaker Road that most recently operated as Peppy & Eddy’s Restaurant. Soon, the Rushmores began acquiring property in the Woodbury area, eventually owning 1,500 acres, including Schunнемunk Mountain. In 1908, they built a mansion of Spanish colonial design, which they named Carmore (the “Car” from Carpenter, Mrs. Rushmore’s maiden name, and the “More” from Rushmore). It still stands today, known as the Rushmore Estate, and operates as a Bed & Breakfast/Event Venue. Much of the original land is now part of the Brigadoon housing community off Route 32.

The Rushmore Memorial Public Library

Mrs. Rushmore’s health improved considerably after moving to Woodbury. She lived to be 96, surviving her husband by many years. Caring about their community a great deal, the Rushmores and their daughter, Jean, became concerned that there was no library in Highland Mills, and they sought to fill that void. They bought land at the corner of Route 32 and Weygant Hill and had a building constructed, which opened as a library in 1924. The Rushmores provided the original furnishings, books, and even formed a volunteer group to staff it. After Charles Rushmore died in 1931, Mrs. Rushmore deeded the library to the Highland Mills School District with the agreement that it would be named the Rushmore Memorial Public Library in honor of her late husband. The building has been granted state and federal status as an historic site and, in 1984, became the home of the Woodbury Historical Society—housing the organization’s extensive collection of historical books, maps, artifacts, and memorabilia related to Woodbury.



Charles E. Rushmore



The Rushmores initially resided in a home along Quaker Road in Highland Mills, the northern part of which was once known as Woodbury Falls. Mr. Rushmore is seen on his horse outside that home, known most recently as Peppy & Eddy's Resturant.



The ballroom of Carmore is still under construction in the image above from C. 1910-1915. The photograph to the right depicts how the Rushmore Estate appears today.

