
THE 7 NATURAL WONDERS OF GEORGIA SERIES: PART 3



STONE MOUNTAIN

The third wonder featured in ELS's 7 Natural Wonders of Georgia is the infamous, historical and now controversial, Stone Mountain. Stone Mountain is located in Stone Mountain, Georgia, approximately 10 miles from downtown Atlanta and boasts the title of being the largest exposed mass of granite in the world. Once used by Native Americans before the 1800s as a meeting and ceremonial place, the mountain was officially named Stone Mountain in 1847. Stone Mountain received much attention in 1915 with the re-birth of the Klu Klux Klan but received even more attention for lengthy attempts to memorialize the confederacy on the side of the mountain.

From its conception around 1914 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy to its unveiling in 1970, memorializing the confederacy through the military leadership of three southern Generals (Robert E. Lee, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson and Jefferson Davis depicted on their horses) took over 55 years, two World Wars, the firing of two sculptors, and the eventual take-over by the state government, to come into fruition. Now the home of Stone Mountain Park, millions of visitors flock to Stone Mountain to view the amazing carving embedded nearly 42 feet deep into the side of the mountain and to participate in the various festivals, fairs, laser shows, golfing and winter activities.



Recently, Stone Mountain has been under scrutiny concerning the confederate shrine because it is seen as perpetuating racism. The historic Antebellum Plantation dating back to 1700s is also a source of controversy because of its connection between plantations and slavery.

FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT STONE MOUNTAIN

- It is the world's largest piece of exposed granite: an 825-foot tall dome-shaped, isolated mountain (the scientific term is "monadnock").
- It rises 1,683 feet above sea level.
- From the top of the mountain, on a clear day, you can see out more than 45 miles.
- It has a base circumference of 3.8 miles.
- It was created 300 million years ago by a pocket of magma trapped underground.
- It rose to the earth's surface 15 million years ago as a result of uplift and erosion.
- Its granite was used in the foundation of the Georgia Capitol building, the steps of the east wing of the U.S. Capitol, the dome of the Federal Gold Depository at Fort Knox and the locks of the Panama Canal.
- Frank Lloyd Wright also used its granite it to build the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo.
- Robert E. Lee is as tall as a nine-story building and Jefferson Davis' thumb is the size of a sofa.
- The carving measures 90 feet tall, 190 feet wide and 11 feet deep. It is larger than Mount Rushmore.
- By calculated "guesstimate," Stone Mountain weighs more than 1 trillion pounds.
- There's an entire theme park at the base of the mountain, Stone Mountain Park that offers rides, games, food, and other activities. From the Stone Mountain Park, visitors can take the Sky Ride to the summit, take a tour of the base of Stone Mountain via the Stone Mountain Scenic Railroad, go for a Mississippi style paddle boat ride on Stone Mountain Lake, or visit the historic Antebellum Plantation and Farmyard, comprised of original plantation buildings dating back to the late 1700s.



Sources

1. <https://www.rd.com/advice/travel/stone-mountain/>
2. <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/geography-environment/stone-mountain>
3. <https://www.accessatlanta.com/entertainment/celebrity-news/things-you-might-not-know-about-stone-mountain-park/bdffmFbsNskCuHX2mgEHpO/>
4.
This photo of Stone Mountain is courtesy of TripAdvisor