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Mount Rushmore Focus of State Historical Society's Latest Book

Pierre, S.D.—Written by former soap opera star Richard Cerasani, “Love Letters from Mount Rushmore: The Story of a Marriage, a Monument, and a Moment in History” is the newest book available from the South Dakota State Historical Society.

Starting with the discovery of an old trunk, Cerasani recounts a previously untold story of love and opportunity set during the carving of Mount Rushmore.

The story centers on Cerasani’s father, Arthur Cerasani, who worked on Mount Rushmore from March to September of 1940. A sculptor and artist from Rochester, N.Y., Arthur lived in the Black Hills, while his family remained over 1,500 miles away in Avon, N.Y. Over this vast distance, he and his wife Mary stayed connected through daily letters. Their correspondence, presented here with never-before-seen photographs, brings to light the everyday trials of working on the Mount Rushmore Memorial and the strength of the human spirit.

Despite isolation, spring blizzards, summer heat, and the unpredictable moods and fortunes of master sculptor Gutzon Borglum, Arthur Cerasani manages to grow as an artist and connect with Luigi Del Bianco, Hugo Villa and other carvers of the great monument.

“Richard Cerasani is telling the story of his parents, but, in the end, he is sharing the experience of many workers on Mount Rushmore,” said Jay D. Vogt, director of the State Historical Society. “By using letters, photographs and art, the author has created an engaging new account for readers about this national monument. It is an important piece of history that, until now, was not available.”

Made famous by his role as the villain Bill Watson on “General Hospital,” Richard Cerasani is the middle son of Arthur and Mary Cerasani. He has been a professional actor and member of the Screen Actors Guild, Actors’ Equity Association and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists for some 50 years. He acts under his professional name, Richard Caine.

On the experience of writing “Love Letters from Mount Rushmore,” Cerasani relates, “when I first started this book, Arthur and Mary Cerasani were simply my parents. However, the trunk in the attic revealed a more complete—and complex—picture of the life they had lived for their children and others.”

“Love Letters from Mount Rushmore: The Story of a Marriage, a Monument, and a Moment in History” is available for \$29.95 plus shipping and tax and can be purchased from most bookstores or ordered directly from the South Dakota Historical Society

Press. Visit www.sdshspress.com, email orders@sdshspress.com or call (605) 773-6009.

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The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.