

STATUE OF

*Liberty*

NATIONAL  
MONUMENT  
BEDLOE'S ISLAND  
NEW YORK



# STATUE OF LIBERTY

## NATIONAL MONUMENT

*The Statue of Liberty, a gift from the people of France to the people of the United States, commemorates the alliance of the two Nations during the American Revolution and attests their abiding friendship.*

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY enlightening the world was conceived and designed as a symbol of a great international friendship. With the passing of the years its significance has deepened until today it is the most symbolic structure in the United States.

The Statue of Liberty, one of the most colossal sculptures in the history of the world, stands in New York Harbor at the very portal of the New World. It has greeted many millions of the oppressed and of the venturesome of other lands who have crossed the ocean in hopeful search of greater freedom and opportunity. To them, and to the whole world, the statue has become the symbol of those ideals of human liberty upon which our Nation and its form of government were founded.

In its international aspect, the statue, which was a gift from the people of France to the people of the United States, commemorates the long friendship between the people of the two Nations. This is a friendship that has continued since the American Revolution when, supported by the French with sinews of war, it helped turn the tide of victory to the side of the Colonies.

Then there is symbolism in the design of the statue itself. The broken shackles of tyranny that are molded at the feet of Liberty have spoken for themselves to generations of people fleeing tyranny. The tablet in the statue's left hand, inscribed July 4, 1776, refers to the Declaration of Independence—

telling all comers of the American ideal that "all men are created equal." The torch, held high in her right hand, hardly needs explanation as she lights the way to freedom and liberty.

### *The French Build the Statue*

A monument to commemorate the alliance of France and the United States in the War for American Independence was proposed by Edouard de Laboulaye, French historian and commentator. His idea was first offered to a group of his own countrymen shortly after the end of the American Civil War. After delays, the Franco-American Union was formed in 1875 for this purpose, with De Laboulaye as president.

A young Alsatian sculptor, Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, was commissioned to design the monument. As Bartholdi entered New York Harbor to plan his work, he conceived the idea of a colossal statue to stand at the very gateway to the New World. It would represent the one thing man finds most precious—liberty. He saw Liberty in the form of a woman breaking the bonds of tyranny and extending the light of freedom to the world. A broken shackle lies at her feet and she steps forward, clasping in her left hand a tablet, inscribed July 4, 1776, and in her right a burning torch with which to enlighten the world. The statue was to be erected through the joint efforts of the two peoples: the

French to give the statue proper and the people of the United States the pedestal.

The response of the people of France was quick and warm, and a campaign to raise the necessary funds was launched with public entertainments. The cost of the statue, approximating \$250,000, was far greater than anticipated, however, and it was not until July 1882 that the required amount was subscribed. Every cent of this amount was contributed by popular subscription and governmental assistance was not required.

The mechanics of enlarging Bartholdi's 9-foot "working model" to its present height of 152 feet tested the sculptor's ingenuity. The plaster model was first reproduced four times its original size. Then section by section the 36-foot model was enlarged to its existing scale. Copper sheets three thirty-seconds of an inch in thickness (about that of a silver dollar) were pressed into wood patterns and hammered into shape by hand. The present green coating of the statue, a patina, is the result of oxidation of copper. The framework of the statue, designed by the French engineer, Gustave Eiffel, consists of four huge steel supports which bear the weight of the entire structure. The construction is remarkable when one considers that the width of the face is 10 feet and that of the eyes 2 feet 6 inches. Moreover, the arm carrying the torch is 42 feet long and 12 feet in diameter at the point of greatest thickness.

The arm of the statue which carries the torch was exhibited in Philadelphia in 1876 at the Centennial Celebration of American Independence. Later in the same year it was exhibited at Madison Square in New York City and then returned to France. The head of the statue was shown in Paris at the World's Fair held there in 1878. On July 4, 1884, in Paris, the completed statue was presented to the United States. The following year it was taken apart and the pieces crated for shipment to New York City.

## *The People of the United States Build the Pedestal*

Meanwhile a committee in the United States started to raise \$125,000 for the construction of the pedestal. The original estimated cost, however, proved to be about half the amount necessary to complete it. With only 15 feet of the structure completed, work on the pedestal stopped in the fall of 1884, pending subscription of an additional \$100,000. On March 16, 1885, the *New York World* took up the crusade. In daily editorials, Joseph Pulitzer, publisher of the *World*, assailed public indifference and urged benefit performances, sporting events, and entertainments for the pedestal campaign fund. The drive was so successful that he was able to announce the collection of this fund by August 11, 1885. This was less than 5 months after the drive had been started and 2 months after the arrival of the statue in the United States.

In 1883, work on the construction of the pedestal, at old Fort Wood on Bedloe's Island, was commenced under the direction of Gen. Charles P. Stone, engineer in chief. It was built of concrete with a granite facing. Four huge steel girders were built into its walls, with similar girders placed a few feet from the top of the pedestal. These connect with the first set by iron tie rods and continue on up into the framework of the statue itself. It was only in this way that the 152-foot figure, placed on a pedestal almost 150 feet in height, could withstand the high winds of the bay.

## *Dedication and Recent History*

Edouard de Laboulaye did not live to see the work finished, and his place as president of the Franco-American Union was taken by Count Ferdinand de Lesseps, builder of the Suez Canal. Bartholdi was among those present to see President Grover Cleveland dedicate the statue on October 28, 1886.



*Sheet copper for statue being hammered into shape in Paris workshop.*

*Air view of Statue of Liberty, with Jersey City in background.* Courtesy The Port of New York Authority



Lighting this gigantic structure to best advantage was a perplexing problem. The system of electric lights originally installed has been replaced several times by more modern equipment. The present improved system almost doubles the lighting of the previous installation. The torch itself is equipped with a special brilliant illumination, which is equivalent to 2,500 times the effect of full moonlight.

The statue was first placed under the jurisdiction of the Lighthouse Board, as it was for many years considered an aid to navigation. In 1901, control was transferred to the War Department, which continued to maintain Fort Wood, a small army post, on one end of the island. On October 15, 1924, the Statue of Liberty was declared a national monument by Presidential proclamation. The Army abandoned Fort Wood in 1937 and the remainder of the island was added to the monument.

In 1937, the National Park Service supervised the replacement of some of the ironwork and strengthened and reconditioned structural features of the statue.

### *Your Visit to the Statue*

You may visit the statue by taking a ferry to Bedloe's Island. The ferry leaves the landing, situated in Battery Park between Castle Clinton and South Ferry at the lower tip of Manhattan, every hour on the hour, with

half-hour schedules during the summer. You may reach the ferry by Broadway bus, by I. R. T. subway, or B. M. T. subway.

You will find the monument open daily, Sundays and holidays included, from 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. During the period daylight saving time is in effect visiting hours are until 6 p. m.

The entire structure is divided into three parts: base, pedestal, and statue proper. The base, an 11-pointed star, part of old Fort Wood, is entered through a tunnel which leads to the lower elevator landing. You have the choice of an elevator or stairway to ascend 10 stories to the top of the pedestal. A small fee is charged for the elevator ride. A 12-story spiral stairway leads from the top of the pedestal to the head of the statue. From the balcony at the top of the pedestal, you will be rewarded with a magnificent view of the Manhattan skyline and the interesting activities in the world's largest harbor.

You may obtain a 44-page handbook relating to Statue of Liberty National Monument at the monument or from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington 25, D. C., at 25 cents a copy.

### *Administration*

Statue of Liberty National Monument is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Bedloe's Island, New York 4, N. Y., is in immediate charge.

*The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.*

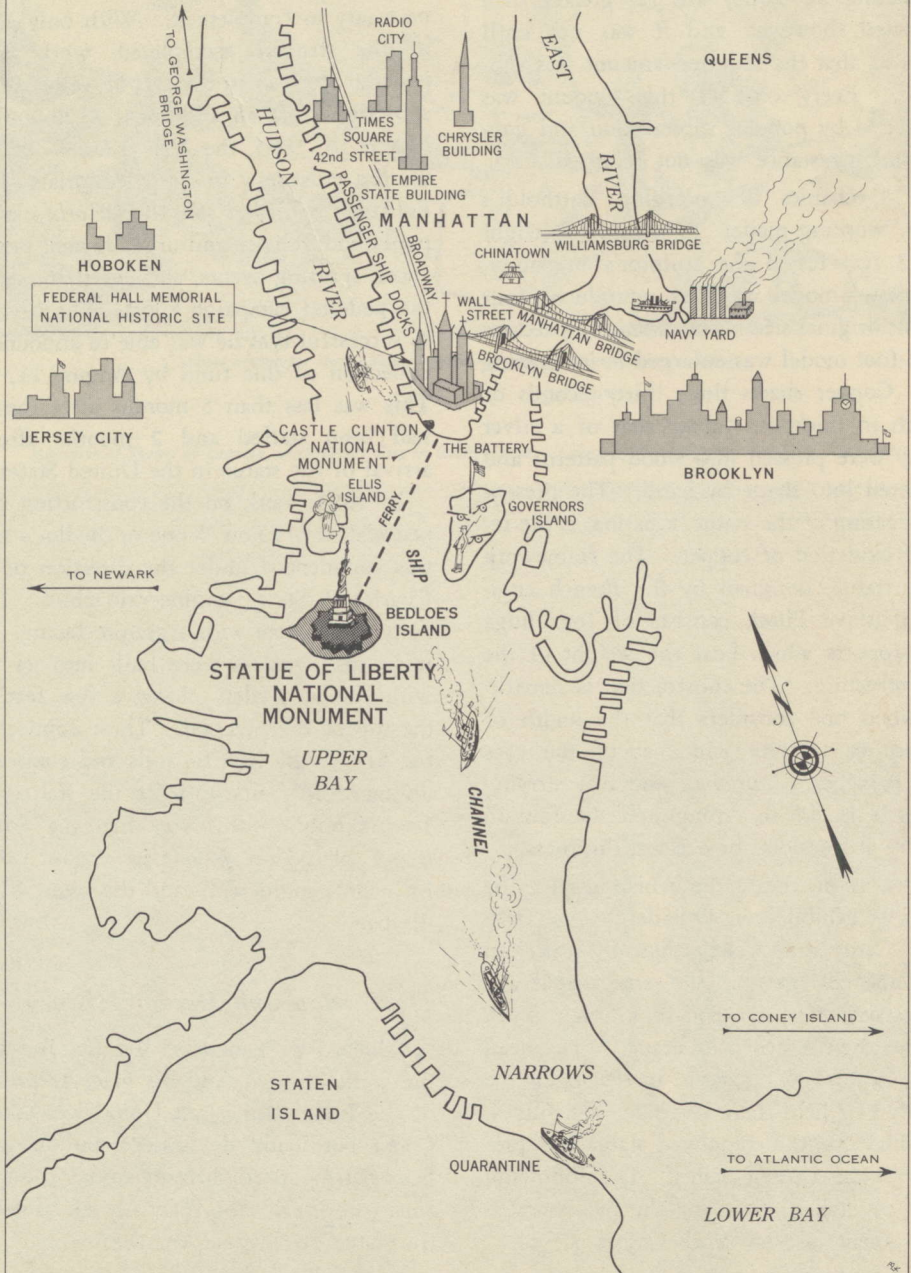
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Douglas McKay, *Secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, Conrad L. Wirth, *Director*



# NEW YORK HARBOR AND THE STATUE OF LIBERTY NEW YORK



December, 1950 S.L.N.M. 7000