

Statue of Liberty



National Monument, New York

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-band
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

Emma Lazarus, 1883

For many of America's immigrants the first sight of their new home was the majestic figure of the Statue of Liberty, the cherished symbol of American ideals. Leaving behind all they knew, immigrants by the millions braved the unknown in search of a new life. Fears, hopes, and a host of private anxieties accompanied them, but that first glimpse of "the Lady" would ease their doubts and restore their faith in themselves. Getting a new start in life would be difficult, perhaps even cruel, but the statue's imprint would remain with them and help them through the hardships ahead.

The statue, created by French sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, was given by the people of France to the people of the United States in recognition of ties first forged during the American Revolution.

From the beginning of fund raising in 1875 to the dedication of the statue in the fall of 1886, public interest in the project was international. A constant stream of ordinary folk, famous personalities, and dignitaries passed through Bartholdi's workshop to catch a glimpse of the monumental sculpture. In the



United States, art exhibitions, auctions, musical entertainments, prize fights, and a steady round of editorials by immigrant publisher Joseph Pulitzer overcame a period of public apathy and raised funds for the statue's pedestal.

Constructed of thin copper sheets, the statue is supported by an iron framework that is still regarded as a fine engineering achievement. The man who designed the supporting structure was Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel, who later built the Eiffel Tower. From the first model in terracotta, Bartholdi progressed to the final figure by creating four successive statues, each an exact, larger-scale version of the one preceding. Fully assembled, the statue, surrounded by scaffolding, rose above the rooftops of Paris, and on July 4, 1884, ceremonies marked official acceptance of the statue by the American people.

Disassembled, crated, and shipped to America, the statue had to wait more than a year for the pedestal to be completed. The pedestal, designed by architect Richard Morris Hunt, rests within the star-shaped walls of Fort Wood, built in the first half of the 19th century as part of the defenses for New York harbor. On October 28, 1886, amidst the booming of cannon, waving of flags and banners, and the salutes of ships in the harbor, the "Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World" was formally dedicated by President Grover Cleveland.

Since that day, the statue has been host to more than 50 million visitors—Americans of recent making, descendants of the country's earliest immigrants, and countless persons from other lands around the world.

The sound of the words "Ellis Island" echoes the confusion, joy, hope, and fear that the millions of immigrants who landed here felt in their hearts. Through its doors passed an average of 2,000 immigrants a day in the peak years between 1903 and 1914. Altogether, between 1892 and 1954, when its use as an immigration depot was discontinued, more than 12 million persons

were processed at Ellis Island. Today its haunting, red brick buildings stand silent in the harbor. The noise and bustle of its past are only a memory.

The idea of establishing a museum to honor the immigrants who came to America from the far reaches of the world first emerged in 1954. That year, a group of public-spirited citizens led by Pierre S. du Pont met with the American and Scenic Preservation Society and the National Park Service. The first result of the meeting was the establishment of a National Committee for the American Museum of Immigration which met with President Dwight D. Eisenhower at the White House. The President gave his enthusiastic support. The cornerstone was laid October 28, 1962, and the difficult task of constructing the museum began. The museum opened in 1972.

During this period, the American Museum of Immigration, Inc., shared responsibility with the National Park Service in the full development of the museum. Today, this nonprofit organization continues to work in close cooperation with the National Park Service to bring the story of American immigration to the public. The museum has also had the invaluable support of countless individual donors and of more than 70 organizations, including nationality and labor groups.

The long years of work have resulted in a museum that tells the unique story of the United States—the making of a nation by millions of men and women from other lands. It begins with the ancestors of the American Indian and continues to the present day, a saga of people who brought with them not only their personal courage but the customs and traditions of their homelands. Photographs, scenes from the past, and objects brought to the New World make up the exhibits.

The museum honors those immigrants who earned public acclaim as well as the anonymous millions who braved the unknown to make America what it is.



Immigration: The Making of a Nation ▶

Immigration is a common experience to all of us, whether recently or in the dim, distant past. Motivation for such an enormous undertaking has varied greatly, for our forebears came to America for all kinds of reasons. Economic and political opportunities not available in their homelands, escape from the ravages of war, famine, and persecution of minority religious beliefs are the main reasons. Many came out of pure adventure, to see what was here, and they often stayed. Slaves were the one exception to the pattern; their immigration was forced.

The great period of immigration began about 1845 and lasted about 80 years. It was the time when whole boatloads of immigrants arrived almost daily in New York harbor. Where small, select groups had set out for the New World in earlier times, in later years the immigrants were most often families—or individuals, lone men who came to establish themselves to be later followed by wives and children.

Disheveled, tired, and worn by the long voyage yet brimming with excitement and anticipation, the future Americans washed their faces and put on their best clothes for the immigration officials. For those who arrived between 1855 and 1890, Castle Garden, an old fort at the tip of Manhattan, was their introduction to America. In 1892 Ellis Island,

a larger, modern facility in New York harbor near the Statue of Liberty, opened its doors to the ever-increasing numbers who sought to make America their home.

In the years after World War I unfounded fears and reaction to involvement in European affairs led to, among other things, a tightening of immigration laws. The number of immigrants was limited by the mid-1920s to 150,000 not including the western hemisphere. A quota system was established that heavily favored north and west Europeans while almost excluding individuals from south and east Europe, the Orient, and Africa. This national origin quota system remained in force until July 1, 1968. Since then the quotas have been replaced by a yearly limit of 170,000 (with no more than 20,000 from any one country) from the eastern and 120,000 from the western hemisphere. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the act into law at the base of the Statue of Liberty.

The vast numbers of people who have arrived at these shores during the four centuries of settlement here have all played important parts in the rise and growth of this Nation. Today the descendants of these earlier Americans and newly arrived immigrants make a similar contribution, proud of the past and confident in the future.



Visiting the Park ▼

The Statue of Liberty National Monument is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Extended hours are in effect on weekends during the spring season and seven days a week in the summer. The American Museum of Immigration, an integral part of the statue, is housed in structural additions to the pedestal. Admission to the statue and museum is free. To make reservations for group tours, contact the information desk located in the base of the statue.

Getting There. Most of the year the Circle Line—Statue of Liberty Ferry, Inc., leaves from Battery Park in lower Manhattan every hour on the hour and returns from Liberty Island every hour on the half hour. On spring weekends and in the summer, boats leave Manhattan and Liberty Island every half hour. For ticket and schedule information, call 212-269-5755.

On the Island. Once you get to Liberty Island, follow the broad mall to the statue. Inside the lobby, on the left, is an information desk where you may pick up free brochures. Leaders of all groups should register at the desk and receive special group information.

From the lobby, proceed up the steps to the balcony level. To the left and one flight up is the American Museum of Immigration. To the right is the Statue of Liberty Story Room which leads to the entrance to the statue. This area tells how the statue was constructed. To avoid crowds, we urge you to visit the museum first.

You can reach the top of the pedestal by either elevator or stairs. The elevator, for which a 10-cent fee for all persons 16 and over is charged, goes only to the top of the pedestal. From this level, ascent to the statue's crown is by spiral stairway only. The climb is equivalent to 12 stories and those with physical difficulties are urged **not to attempt it**. Access is to the crown only. The torch is structurally secure, but it has been closed to visitors since 1916 because of the congestion that would result along the narrow, 13-meter (42-foot) ladder.

At the museum level at the foot of the pedestal is a promenade which is accessible from the lobby below. The promenade, situated above the original Fort Wood, surrounds the statue and has wayside exhibits describing the statue's environs.

Refreshments, post cards, and souvenirs of the statue are available in the refreshment building near the arrival dock. Books, for adults and children, relating to the statue and to immigration may be purchased in the statue lobby across from the information desk. *Rest rooms and public telephones* are in the statue lobby, on the balcony level, and also in the refreshment building. Personal belongings lost by visitors may be reported, or, if found, recovered, at the information desk.

Administration ▼

Statue of Liberty National Monument is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Address inquiries to the unit manager, Statue of Liberty National Monument, Liberty Island, New York, NY 10004. The American Museum of Immigration, Inc., a private organization which aided in the development of the museum, serves as a cooperating association for private assistance.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Some Facts. The sheer mass and size of the statue are difficult to comprehend, but a few figures and facts may help. The statue and pedestal have a combined height of 93 meters (305 feet). The statue alone stands 46 meters (151 feet) and weighs 204 metric tons (225 tons). The copper plates that form the outside skin are 2.38 millimeters (3/32 inch) thick. The circular stairway within the statue has 171 steps and the pedestal stairway has 167 steps.

