

## **The History of the Statue of Liberty**

The Statue of Liberty is more than a monument. She is a beloved friend, a living symbol of freedom to millions around the world. She is a tribute to the people who created her, to those who built and paid for her, to the ideals she represents, and to the hopes she inspires.

Visitors can now experience a special insider's view of the engineering marvel that is the Statue of Liberty. To better understand this monumental work of art, visitors can view inside the Statue through a glass ceiling, guided by a park ranger, enhanced lighting and a new video system. In addition, visitors can once again enjoy walking out onto the Statue's observation deck to see the panoramic views of New York City and the Harbour, and witness the Statue up close from her promenades on Fort Wood.

The Statue of Liberty National Monument officially celebrated her 100th birthday on October 28, 1986. The people of France gave the Statue to the people of the United States over one hundred years ago in recognition of the friendship established during the American Revolution. Over the years, the Statue of Liberty's symbolism has grown to include freedom and democracy as well as this international friendship.

Sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi was commissioned to design a sculpture with the year 1876 in mind for completion, to commemorate the centennial of the American Declaration of Independence. The Statue was a joint effort between America and France and it was agreed that the American people were to build its pedestal, and the French people were responsible for the Statue itself and its assembly here in the United States. However, lack of funds was a problem on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. In France, public fees, various forms of entertainment, and a lottery were among the methods used to raise funds. In the United States, benefit theatrical events, art exhibitions, auctions and prizefights assisted in providing needed funds.

Meanwhile in France, Bartholdi required the assistance of an engineer to address structural issues associated with designing such a colossal copper sculpture. Alexandre Gustave Eiffel (designer of the Eiffel Tower) was commissioned to design the massive iron pylon and secondary skeletal framework which allows the Statue's copper skin to move independently yet stand upright. Back in America, fund raising for the pedestal was going

particularly slowly, so Joseph Pulitzer (noted for the Pulitzer Prize) opened up the editorial pages of his newspaper, "The World", to support the fund raising effort. Pulitzer used his newspaper to criticise both the rich who had failed to finance the pedestal construction and the middle class who were content to rely upon the wealthy to provide the funds. Pulitzer's campaign of harsh criticism was successful in motivating the people of America to donate.

Financing for the pedestal was completed in August 1885, and pedestal construction was finished in April of 1886. The Statue was completed in France in July 1884 and arrived in New York Harbour in June of 1885 on board the French frigate "Isere" which transported the Statue of Liberty from France to the United States. In transit, the Statue was reduced to 350 individual pieces and packed in 214 crates. The Statue was put back together on her new pedestal four months later. On October 28th 1886, the dedication of the Statue of Liberty took place in front of thousands of spectators. She was a centennial gift ten years late.

The story of the Statue of Liberty and her island has been one of change. The Statue was placed upon a granite pedestal inside the courtyard of the star-shaped walls of Fort Wood (which had been completed for the War of 1812.) The United States Lighthouse Board had responsibility for the operation of the Statue of Liberty until 1901. After 1901, the care and operation of the Statue was placed under the War Department. A Presidential Proclamation declared Fort Wood (and the Statue of Liberty within it) a National Monument on October 15th, 1924 and the monument's boundary was set at the outer edge of Fort Wood. In 1933, the care and administration of the National Monument was transferred to the National Park Service. On September 7, 1937, jurisdiction was enlarged to encompass all of Bedloe's Island and in 1956, the island's name was changed to Liberty Island. On May 11, 1965, Ellis Island was also transferred to the National Park Service and became part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument.

In May of 1982, President Ronald Reagan appointed Lee Iacocca to head up a private sector effort to restore the Statue of Liberty. Fundraising began for the \$87 million restoration under a public/private partnership between the National Park Service and The Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., to date the most successful public/private partnership in American history. In 1984, at the start of the Statue's restoration, the United Nations designated the Statue of Liberty as a World Heritage Site. On July 5, 1986 the newly restored Statue reopened to the public during Liberty Weekend, which celebrated her centennial.