STATUE OF LIBERTY NATIONAL MONUMENT, consisting of the Statue, its base and the
land on which it is situated, Liberty Island, Borough of Manhattan. Erected
1886; sculptor Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi; engineer Gustave Eiffel; architect
Richard Morris Hunt.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1, Lot 101 in part.

On July 13, 1976, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public
hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Statue of Liberty
National Monument and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site
(Item No. 2). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the
provisions of law. Three witnesses spoke in favor of designation. There were
no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

I believe this enterprise will take on very
great proportions, if things turn out as I
hope they will this work of sculpture will
become of great moral importance.

The sculptor Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi wrote these prophetic words in 1871,
nearly fifteen years before his grand creation, the Statue of Liberty, was
completed. The statue was intended to symbolize man’s enduring belief in liberty,
and to commemorate the long-standing friendship between the United States and
France. It is, moreover, a monument to the idealism, perseverance, generosity,
and hard work of people both here and in France who, like Bartholdi, had faith
in the “great moral importance” of the statue; with the passage of time the
significance of the Statue of Liberty has deepened and expanded, until she has
become the primary symbol of American liberty, independence and freedom.

Standing in New York harbor, she has greeted millions of immigrants arriving in
America, and thus has come to symbolize the hope for a better life in a new
homeland, free from tyranny and oppression.

Although Liberty has become quintessentially American, the idea for the
statue originated in France. It was first suggested by Edouard-Raoul Lefebvre de
Laboulaye (1811-1883). Laboulaye was an historian, author, and the foremost
French author on American constitutional history. A great admirer of America,
he had published a three-volume history of the United States, a satirical story
“Paris in America,” and numerous articles espousing the Union cause during the
Civil War. He was the principal figure of a group of French intellectuals who,
during the Second Empire, advocated Republican rule for France. They viewed
American government as exemplary and took pride in the role played by French-
men such as Lafayette in the formation of the American republic.

Thus, the initial idea from which the Statue of Liberty resulted was in
keeping with Laboulaye’s sentiments and political philosophy. At a dinner given
by him in the summer of 1865 at his estate at Glatigny, near Versailles,
Bartholdi, who was one of the guests, listened to a discussion concerning
gratitude between nations. Laboulaye, emphasizing the friendship between France
and America, commented, “If a monument to independence were to be built in
America, I should think it very natural if it were built by united effort, if
it were a common work of both nations.”

Historical events at the time, especially in France but also in the
United States, made the construction of such a monument an action of potential
political significance. In America, the Civil War had just ended with the
republic intact, but President Lincoln had been assassinated. The common people
of France were profoundly disturbed by this tragic event, so much so that a
public subscription was initiated to fund a gift to Mrs. Lincoln which would
express the sympathies of the French people. A gold medal was made and inscribed
with the words “Dedicated by the French Democracy to Lincoln”. This tribute was
opposed by the French monarchy than in power; the medal had to be struck in
Switzerland and smuggled to the American embassy in France. Republicans such as
Laboulaye, who opposed the monarchy of Napoleon III, no doubt deeply resented
this act of suppression, directed against a memorial to a leader of a democracy.
LaBoulaye must have recognized that the construction of a great monument to Liberty would constitute a statement of strong political belief, one which would strengthen the image of republicanism in France. Thus, the construction of the Statue of Liberty had distinct propagandistic overtones. By 1871, after much political turmoil, the ends sought by Laboulaye and other Republicans were achieved—monarchy was overturned and the Third Republic founded.

By 1871 positive steps toward the creation of the statue were taken. Bartholdi, who never lost interest in the project, had however, been occupied in the political difficulties of France. He fought in the Franco-Prussian War and witnessed the heartbreaking loss of his native Alsace to the enemy, 1871, the war at an end, he determined on the advice of Laboulaye to visit the United States. He sailed in June on the Parcival, armed with instructions and letters of introduction, and well-prepared to study America’s reactions to the proposed monument. He travelled extensively—as far west as San Francisco—enjoying all that he encountered, He met with many prominent men, including President U.S. Grant, Senator Charles Sumner, and Henry Ward Lockefell. Everywhere he discussed the statue he received enthusiastic response. Upon his return to France in the fall he was able to report positively on American interest; he had, in addition, selected the site for the monument—Bedloe’s Island in New York harbor, at the threshold of the New World.

The precise theme of the monument had also been determined—a statue of colossal proportions entitled “Liberty Enlightening the World”. Liberty was to shed a guiding light on Europe—and especially France—from the shores of America where she was already firmly enshrined. Bartholdi began making a series of small studies in clay. In these one can follow the gradual formulation and refinement of the figure which from the very beginning depicted a draped female figure holding a torch aloft. Marvin Trachtenberg in his excellent study The Statue of Liberty (1976) has pointed out that Liberty bears a striking resemblance to an earlier project—never realized—on which Bartholdi had been at work in the late 1850’s. This was to be a lighthouse on the Suez Canal in the form of a female figure holding a torch in her upraised hand, and entitled “Progress; Egypt Bearing Light to Asia”. Bartholdi himself was never eager to discuss this similarity. Clearly he had found it expedient to adapt the unfilled Suez project, on which he had worked intensely, to a new use in America. The transition was, in any event, gracefully accomplished.

In 1871 when Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi (1834–1904) began to work in earnest on the Statue of Liberty, he was thirty-seven years old. He had been born in Colmar, a city in Alsace and came from a respected middle class family. Raised by his widowed mother, a strong-willed woman, Bartholdi remained deeply attached to her throughout his life—the face of the Statue of Liberty was modeled after hers. Bartholdi had a sound artistic training, first studying with the painter Ary Scheffer, a well-known Parisian society portraitist, and later with the sculptors J. F. Soltoux and Antoine Etex. His first major commission, in 1859, was for an over life-size portrait of General Jean Rapp, a native of Colmar. In 1856 the young Bartholdi made a pleasure trip to Egypt where he was deeply impressed by the monumental sculptures of antiquity—their permanence and “imperturbable majesty”. Thereafter, in his own work he expressed a love for the colossal, the most dramatic example done before the Statue of Liberty being the great granite Lion of Belfort (1875–1880) which was a monument to the heroic defenders during the Franco-Prussian War of that Alsatian town. This monument also reveals the second theme which characterized much of Bartholdi’s sculpture. After the loss of his homeland to the Prussians, he became an ardent patriot and believer in freedom. The themes of his work reflect his political idealism. Two examples are in New York City, the statue of Lafayette in Union Square and the monument to Lafayette and Washington in Morrisania Park.

By 1875 Bartholdi was ready to begin the actual construction of the statue. The funding of this great enterprise was the responsibility of a group formed in November of 1875, the French-American Union. This group, headed by Laboulaye, numbered in its ranks many men who not only contributed money but also helped with the administration of the project. They decided that France should contribute the statue, America, the pedestal on which it rests. It was hoped that the statue would be ready in time for presentation in 1876, America’s centennial year; but the fundraising was a laborious process and the statue itself was a work requiring much patience, meticulous labor and calculation. At a great banquet in the Hotel du Louvre, the fundraising campaign was initiated. Large donations were made by cities, including Paris and Le Havre, and the Free Masons made a
The first clay models of the Statue of Liberty were only a few inches high; the actual statue was to be 151 feet tall, the head alone ten feet wide. As money was collected, Bartholdi, directing a team of skilled craftsmen, began the complicated process of construction. They worked in Paris within the cavernous ateliers of Barye, Gauthier & Co., in which colossal statues had been assembled, most notably the Vergeinspteter by Millet of 1865. Liberty was to be made from sheets of beaten copper, only 3/32 of an inch thick. This metal was chosen for its relative lightness, and yet the statue weighs approximately one hundred tons. A clay model 1.25 meters high was enlarged twice to about 11 meters in height, roughly one fourth the size of the finished work. Then, section by section, this model was enlarged to full-scale, a formidable task involving more than 9000 measurements for each enlargement. From a set of full-scale plaster fragments, carpenters then constructed wooden molds upon which the copper was hammered into shape. More than 300 separate sheets of copper were riveted together to form Liberty.

This enormous figure of very thin copper was not self-supporting. It required a system of internal bracing. Colossal statues in former times had been constructed around massive heavy supports; for example, the 17th-century statue of St. Carlo Borromeo, over 23 meters tall, is built around an enormous masonry pier. The great engineering advances of 19th century made a new approach possible for the Statue of Liberty. The first structural specialist consulted was the eminent E. E. Viollet-le-Duc, with whom Bartholdi had studied. Viollet-le-Duc suggested an ironwork structure above a system of compartments filled with sand. This scheme was not, however, employed since Viollet-le-Duc died in 1879; the responsibility for the interior structure of Liberty was passed on to Gustave Eiffel, a contemporary of Bartholdi and the most brilliant French engineer of his day.

Gustave Eiffel (1832-1923) began his career working for railroad companies and was especially concerned with the construction of iron bridges, such as the pont du Garabit, a spectacular structural triumph achieving its beauty through frankly expressed design and vast scale. He was also involved in the design of exposition buildings—including the one in which Liberty’s head was placed at the Paris Exposition of 1878— as well as railroad stations and department stores. He is, of course, best remembered for his tower in Paris, erected for the Paris Exposition of 1889—a magnificent iron structure with millions of parts and a total weight of 10,000 tons. He was never surpassed in his field in the design of ironworks and in the building of steel structures. The Statue of Liberty presented an entirely new problem in design for Eiffel. Not only must the interior structure support the great weight of the copper shell including the upthrust arm, but also, since the statue was to be built afloat in New York harbor, it must be capable of withstanding high winds, moisture and changes of temperature. Eiffel designed a central wrought-iron pylon with eight iron girders placed at the four corners from which supplementary angle beams project for the attachment of bracing and secondary structures. Diagonal bracing reinforces the entire pylon. An asymmetrical steel girders forms the core of the tower. From this central tower a lightweight trusswork system is joined to the interior of the copper shell. This trusswork was an especially ingenious aspect of the design; the individual iron members are flexible and act like springs which allow for thermal expansion and contraction as well as resistance to wind pressure. This internal framework supports each section of the copper statue independently, and no copper plate places weight upon another. If the iron of the framework and the copper of the statue were in direct contact, an electric current would be generated. This phenomenon is called galvanic action. To guard against it Eiffel included insulation composed of asbestos impregnated with shellac. He also included a double staircase which leads up 168 steps to the head which contains a series of windows beneath the nose of the crown. The arm supporting the torch was also provided with a stairway (closed since 1915).
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While Bartholdi and Eiffel were at work in Paris, Americans were also at
work planning the pedestal and raising funds. In 1877 Congress had agreed to
accept the statue and provide a site, but, as in France, the Federal Government
did not contribute to expenses. Patrons including prominent New Yorkers such
as William Evarts as Chairman, Henry F. Spaulding, Treasurer, and
Richard Butler, Secretary, still the American public remained apathetic, even
skeptical, despite benefit stage performances, an art auction, a poetry contest,
and other appeals. This lack of enthusiasm was in part the result of misappre-
ensions on the part of the American public, the most prevalent being that the
statue was a gift to New York and not the nation. By 1885, only half the money
needed had been collected, almost all had already been spent, the pedestal was
unfinished, the situation grim indeed.

It was at this juncture that Joseph Pulitzer, owner and editor of The New
York World newspaper, took a strong interest in the statue. Pulitzer, a native
of Hungary, came to America in 1864, fought in the Civil War, then married
and became active in politics. By 1883 he was able to take over The World, and
began a highly successful campaign to make it "the people's paper". Pulitzer
in March of 1885, called the inability to raise funds for the Liberty project a
disgrace, severely criticized the rich of the country for not coming to
the rescue, and appealed to the American people to contribute. He
disclosed the names and the amounts of donation, however small, and in less than five months over
121,000 donors had contributed the $100,000 needed.

The Federal government authorized General W. T. Sherman to designate the
site for the monument, and in accordance with Bartholdi's wishes he selected
Bedloe Island. The eleven point star-shaped Fort Wood had been built on the
island as part of New York's defense system for the War of 1812, and it was
agreed that the pedestal for the statue should be erected atop. The American
Committee appointed General Charles Stone as chief engineer and Richard Morris
Hunt as architect.

Charles Pomeroy Stone (1825-1887) fought in the Civil War and from 1870 to
1885 served in the Egyptian Army. He also worked in both Virginia and Florida
as an engineer and there gained valuable experience which equipped him well in
dealing with the Liberty project.

Excavation began in April of 1883, and work progressed more slowly than
anticipated since the Fort was more solidly built than old plans and drawings
had suggested. At the center of the Fort the foundation was laid. This consisted
of an enormous, almost solid, tapering block of concrete ninety-three feet deep
and ninety-one feet square upon which was to rest the pedestal itself. The
cornerstone was laid in August of 1884, but construction had to be halted soon
after for lack of funds. Work resumed after Pulitzer's campaign of 1885. The
pedestal has thick concrete walls with stone facing. To solidly anchor the
statue on this massive base, Stone laid great pairs of steel I-beams horizontally
in the walls at the foot of the pedestal and a second matching set, at the top.
Brought iron eye-bars were carried down through the base to anchor Eiffel's
structure to the steel girders.

Although Bartholdi himself had prepared plans for the pedestal, the decision
to incorporate Fort Wood made a new design necessary. The celebrated New York
architect Richard Morris Hunt designed his services. Hunt (1820-1895) was the
first American to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. New York's most
prominent architect during the later 19th century, he is best remembered for
his opulent city chateaux and grand Newport houses commissioned by the rich and
fashionable of New York. He also designed numerous commercial buildings such as
No. 479-482 Broadway located within the Soho-Cast Iron Historic District, and
buildings for cultural institutions, including the Fifth Avenue section of the
Metropolitan Museum of Art, a designated New York City landmark.

Liberty had already been completed while construction of the pedestal
continued. The statue was temporarily erected in Paris while it caused great
excitement, and was then disassembled, carefully packed in hundreds of specially
designed crates, and loaded on board the ship Jézéра, lent by the French govern-
ment. The Jézéра arrived off Sandy Hook in May of 1885 and soon after her arrival
the erection of the statue began. The base was completed in April of 1884 and
a grand inauguration ceremony took place on October 28, 1886. The face of
Liberty was draped with the French flag, and Borthwick himself loosed the
unveiling cords. President Grover Cleveland accepted the statue in a moving
speech in which he stated,"We shall not forget that Liberty has made her
too, nor shall her chosan sister be neglected."

Since 1886 Liberty has majestically surveyed the harbor. With the passage
of time the statue has acquired a handsome green patina which contrasts
effectively with the brown granite of the pedestal. Liberty directs her gaze
to sea, her right arm bearing aloft the torch, her left clasping a tablet
incribed July Fourth, 1776—the date of the founding of the American republic.
This stately female figure is clothed in classical draperies, a mantle fastened
at her left shoulder. She wears sandals and tramples a broken shackles, a
gesture representing triumph over tyranny. She has classical, severely hand-
some features, and her hair is bound in an elaborate bun at the nape of the
neck. A radiant crown adorns her head, which like the torch is brilliantly
illuminated at night. Liberty is best viewed from a passing ship for only then
can one fully appreciate her monumental dignity and the subtleties of her pose.
She appears to stand proudly erect and still if seen frontally, while from the
left, one is aware of the dynamic and dramatic forward thrust of her body.

The pedestal, a monumental architectural form, raises Liberty nearly ninety
feet above Fort Wood. Hunt was faced with the task of assimilating his design
to both the fortress and the statue—the base must dominate the fort while
overwhelming the statue above. His admirable solution is a boldly-scaled, four-
sided structure, executed in rusticated and smooth faced granite, with forceful
neo-Grec detail. The entire rusticated scale including the double stairways
at the north and south facades are now obscured by the recent museum addition.
Doorways at each side are surmounted by heavy unadorned projecting pediments
and flanked by smooth pilasters with circular shields. A frieze of forty
shields, symbolizing the forty states then in the Union, encircles the base
below a base-molding with widely spaced pedimental motifs, which echo the form
of the doorway pediments. Above this is the shaft of the pedestal, treated
identically on all four sides, and consisting of a deeply recessed loggia set
above stone panels and flanked by heavily rusticated walls at the corners. The
smooth stone panels were originally planned to contain inscriptions. The four
piers of the loggia are incised in the manner of triglyphs and have capitals of
simplified Doric form. A narrow continuous molding separates the panels from
the loggias and lends emphasis to the batter of the walls. The rustication
flanking the loggias is beautifully treated with projecting rough-hewn blocks
which contrast effectively with the deeply recessed joints. An additional
refinements is the beveled effect at the corners. This rusticated masonry is
in keeping with the scale of the old fort below.

An observation platform behind a bold parapet, punctuated with arched
uprights, crowns the pedestal. From this vantage point one has a magnificent
view of the harbor and, gazing upward, an astonishing glimpse of Liberty in
all her colossal splendour.

During Liberty's ninety-year history a number of additions and changes
to the monument have been made. In 1903 the famed poem "The New Colossus",
written by Emma Lazarus in 1883, was incribed on a tablet and affixed to the
pedestal. Elevators were first installed in 1908-09. The torch was redesigned
in 1916 and the original copper replaced with yellow-tinted glass. This change
was executed by Guston Borglum, the sculptor well-known for his monumental
presidential portraits carved in the living rock of Mount Rushmore in South
Dakota. A new exterior lighting system has recently been installed in honor
of the Bicentennial celebration. In 1956 plans for the American Museum of
Immigration at the base of the statue were announced, and the museum was
opened in 1972. The monument was first placed under the Jurisdiction of the
National Park Service in 1933, and is today beautifully maintained under its
direction.

Millions of Americans have visited the Statue of Liberty, and today she
continues to amaze and delight the crowds that daily cross from New York to
the island by ferry. Liberty stands as a reminder of international friendship,
of the abiding belief in freedom, as well as of the ideals which Americans have
long cherished. The symbol of American liberty and of our heritage, she is a
truly grand and inspirational figure.
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The New Colossus.

Emma Lazarus (1849-1887), a member of a wealthy New York family, began writing poetry in her early teens. Ralph Waldo Emerson encouraged her work and she published numerous volumes of both poetry and prose. The persecution of Russian Jews during 1879-83 deeply distressed her and when refugees to America began arriving in New York she helped to organize relief efforts. In 1883 she composed "The New Colossus", a stirring poem which cost the Statue of Liberty in the role of a welcoming and sheltering "Mother of Exiles". The final five lines of this inspirational poem have become so famous that millions of Americans know them by heart.

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-hand
Glow 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!"

History of the Island

Renamed Liberty Island in honor of the Statue in 1856. This small island, approximately 12 acres, is one of a group located in New York Harbor near the mouth of the Hudson River. First called Minnissay by the Indians, it has at times been known as Great Oyster, Love, Kennedy's, and Corporation Island as well as Bedloe's Island. The name held longest, Isaac Bedloe a "select burghe" of New Amsterdam, owned the island in the 17th century. His daughter Mary sold it in 1752, and it was then used at various times as a quarantine station. In 1746 Archibald Kennedy purchased the island and built a summer residence there. During the Revolutionary War it was used as a refuge for Tory sympathizers.

When plans were made by the Federal government to erect fortifications in New York Harbor, the Island was selected as a suitable site. A land battery in the shape of an eleven-point star was constructed between 1806 and 1811 on top of old existing fortifications. After the War of 1812 it was named in honor of the war hero Colonel Eleazer D. Wood. Fort Wood and the entire Island were under the control of the War Department until the Liberty project was undertaken. When Liberty was completed the land on which she stood was managed by the Lighthouse Board until 1901 when it reverted to the control of the War Department. In 1937, by Presidential proclamation, the National Park Service was granted jurisdiction over the island. While located within New Jersey territorial waters, the Island itself has been considered since the late 17th century a part of New York City. An agreement of 1834 provides that the Island is in New York State above the mean low-water mark, and in New Jersey below it, thereby granting New Jersey riparian rights.

Selected Bibliography

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FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and
other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that
the Statue of Liberty National Monument has a special character, special historical
and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural
characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the
Statue of Liberty, located in New York Harbor, is a world famous monument, intended
to symbolize Franco-American friendship as well as man's enduring belief in
liberty, that the statue, a colossal figure of great dignity and grandeur, was
a gift from the French people to America and was the work of the renowned
Alsatian sculptor Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi and the celebrated engineer Gustave
Eiffel, that Liberty is a work of both beauty and structural ingenuity, that the
imposing pedestal provided by Americans was designed by the prominent New York
architect, Richard Morris Hunt, and constructed atop Fort Wood under the super-
vision of the engineer General Charles P. Stone, that Liberty has greeted millions
of immigrants to America, and that with the passing of time her significance
has deepened and expanded until she has become the primary symbol of American
freedom.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 63 of the Charter of
the City of New York and Chapter 9 of the Administrative Code of the City of
New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the
Statue of Liberty National Monument, consisting of the statue, its base and the
land on which it is situated, Liberty Island, Borough of Manhattan, and designates
as a related Landmark Site that part of Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1,
Lot 101 which contains the land on which the described structure is situated.