

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

The Statue of Liberty is found at the entrance to New York Harbor on a small island known as Liberty Island.

The official name of this copper and steel structure is “Liberty Enlightening the World.” The statue is of a woman with a book in one hand and a torch held high in her other hand. It stands on top of a giant pedestal. The entire structure is 305 feet (about 93 meters) tall from the ground to the tip of the torch.

The statue was a gift from the people of France to the people of the United States to celebrate America’s independence and its democratic way of life. It has come to represent political freedom for new immigrants to America and is known around the world.

Ordinary citizens of both countries paid for the project by donating to fund-raising campaigns. American people paid for the pedestal, and French people paid for the statue.

Construction began in the 1880s. The statue was built in France and then broken down into 350 pieces, which were packed into 214 crates and shipped to the United States in July 1884. The ship arrived in New York Harbor a year later. It took four months to put the statue back together and place it on the top of the pedestal.

The completed statue and pedestal were dedicated by President Grover Cleveland on October 28, 1886. A million people attended the parade and other festivities that were held that day to celebrate the event.

In October 1924, the Statue of Liberty became a national monument. In 1965, Ellis Island, a famous New York entry point for new immigrants to the United States, became part of this national monument.

A restoration project on the statue took place from 1984 to 1986 at a cost of \$87 million. During this time, UNESCO named the Statue of Liberty a World Heritage Site. The site reopened on Liberty Weekend, July 3–6, 1986, 100 years after the original dedication.