

The Statue of Liberty

Located in New York Harbor, the Statue of Liberty is one of the most recognizable landmarks in the world. But what is it doing there? And where did it come from?

The Statue of Liberty was a gift to America from the French in 1886 as a representation of international friendship. The French sculptor Auguste Bartholdi was commissioned to design the statue. The statue was completed in France in 1884, almost ten years after it was commissioned. The statue was transported in 350 individual pieces which were packed in 214 separate crates. Once the American funded and American made pedestal was completed, it took four months to reassemble the statue. Finally, on October 28, 1886, President Grover Cleveland dedicated the Statue of Liberty, an event celebrated by bands, parades, speeches, and fireworks.

The Statue of Liberty quickly became a famous landmark. For many immigrants who came to the United States through New York, it was their first sight of their new country. For others, it symbolized the idea of freedom that America was built on. The statue depicts a woman in a robe, representing Libertas, the Roman goddess of liberty. She has a crown on her head with seven points, said to represent the seven seas or the seven continents of the Earth. She is holding a stone tablet in one hand which reads July 4, 1776 in roman numerals, honoring the date of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In her other hand, she holds high a flaming torch covered in gold leaf. The Statue of Liberty itself is covered in a layer of copper. Originally, the statue was the same bright copper color as a new penny, but after less than 20 years of standing out in the sun and the rain the copper began to oxidize, turning her the green color we recognize today. The statue weighs 450,000 lbs or 225 tons, and stands over 151 feet or 46 meters high, not including the pedestal she stands on. With the pedestal, from the ground to the tip of the torch, the Statue of Liberty stands as tall as a 22 story building!

Millions of people visit the Statue of Liberty every year. Now nearly 135 years old, the Statue of Liberty has long been a symbol of hope and welcome to people seeking freedom and a new life in America, as well as a symbol of the friendship between France and the United States. It is also a World Heritage Site, which means that it is considered so special and important that it should be protected and preserved for people all around the world to enjoy.