

Statue of Liberty.  
 Photographer: Williams, M. Woodbridge "Woody", ca. 1965 (National Park Service Historic Photograph Collection)

Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, a French sculptor, designed the external form of the Statue of Liberty, for the internal support of which Gustave Eiffel devised a remarkable frame. Richard Morris Hunt, an American architect, planned her base.

Physically, the Statue of Liberty, dedicated in New York Harbor in 1886, is a hollow 46-m (151-foot) figure consisting of sheets of hammered copper hung on an iron structural framework; the sheets are riveted so as to make the surface, from a distance, appear continuous. She rests on a 27-m (89-foot) pedestal of granite and concrete atop a massive concrete foundation set 6 m (20 feet) deep into the center of former Fort Wood. Fort Wood, an 11-pointed star-shaped battery, was built for the defense of New York Harbor in 1808-11, and modernized in the 1840s.

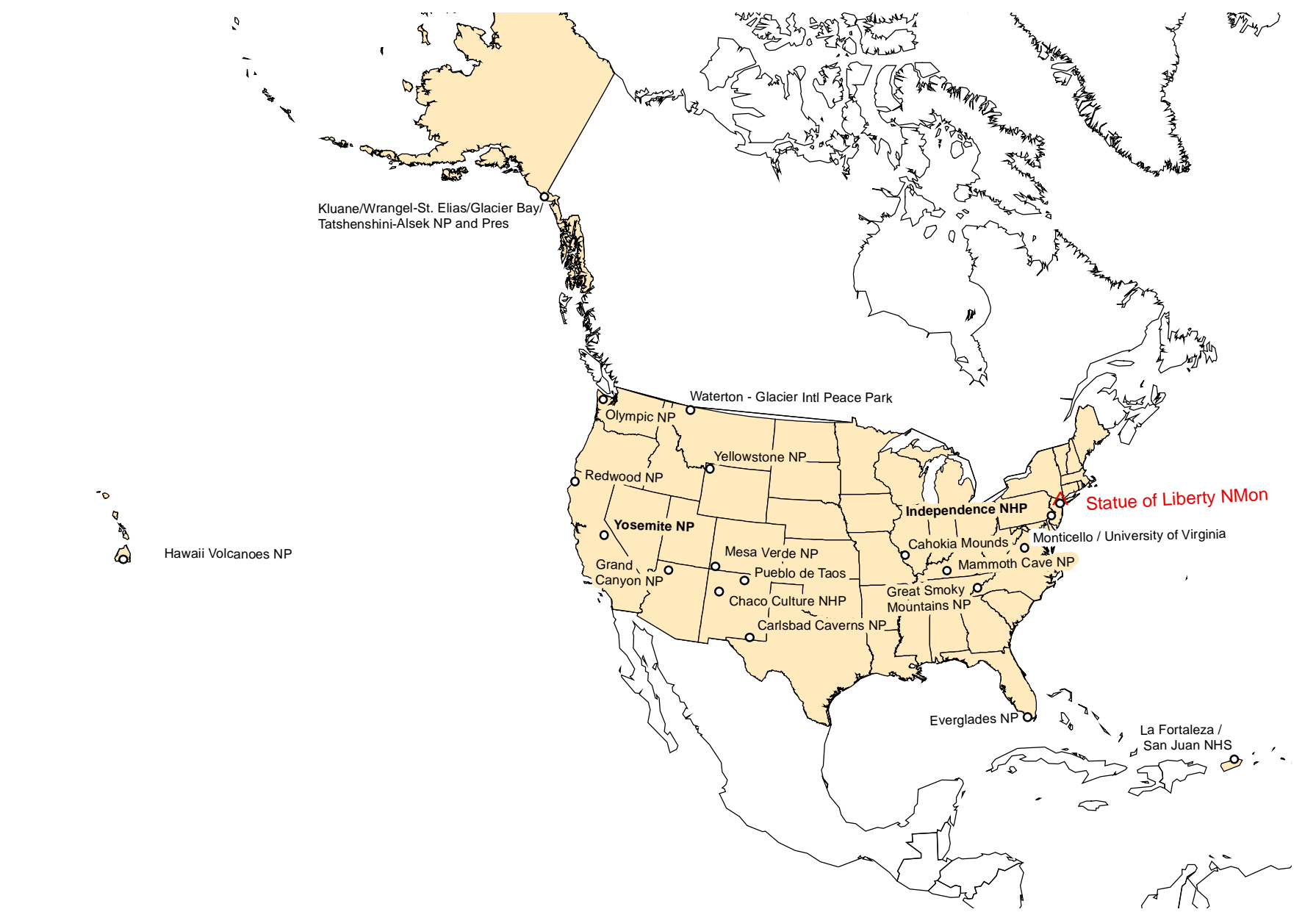
The Statue appears draped in a Roman toga. She clasps the uplifted torch of freedom in her right hand and cradles a tablet or "book" marked with the Roman date July 4, 1776 (the date of the United States Declaration of Independence), in her left arm. She is caught in mid-stride, stepping forward from the broken shackles of slavery. Part of the chain lies in front of her right foot, the heel of which is lifted as in walking. The other end of the chain, which appears broken, rests in front of her left foot.

The Statue of Liberty is the prime feature of Liberty Island (officially known as Bedloe's Island until 1956), a flat 5-ha (12-acre) island in the upper bay of New York Harbor, within the territorial waters of New Jersey. The island above the mean low-water mark is under the jurisdiction of New York State. Liberty Island is approximately 0.6 km (3/8 mile) offshore from Jersey City, New Jersey, where the State has recently established Liberty State Park to enhance the setting of the Statue, and 2.6 km (1-5/8 mile) from the Battery, the southern tip of Manhattan Island. Liberty Island is accessible by regularly scheduled ferry service from both Jersey City and Manhattan.

The Statue of Liberty is a triumph of late 19th-century art and engineering, embodying the philosophical ideals of the Enlightenment. At the time of her creation she personified the spirit and aspirations, as well as the technical and artistic talent, of France. She celebrates a tradition of colossal statuary that hails from antiquity and which found renewed expression in the 19th century.

The Statue commemorates the alliance of France and the United States in the American War for Independence, which fundamentally altered world history. She endures in the closing years of the 20th century as a symbol of two centuries of Franco-American friendship and cooperation. Ironically, this gift of the French people to the American people, which has become perhaps the most treasured symbol of American nationality, patriotic ideals, and tradition of refuge, was received sceptically by the American nation.

The Statue's sculptural exterior pays tribute to her classical origins and provides the image that has given her a multi-faceted symbolism. The Statue's interior is a harbinger of the future in engineering, architecture, and art. Thus, despite her figurative links to the giant wonders of antiquity and her expression of a reassertion of the colossal spirit in the era of her creation, she incorporates elements that augur the 20th century in technology and artistic method. These aspects are also intricately related to the intent of her design, which deliberately envisioned her as both a symbol and a functional aid to navigation.



Statue of Liberty: Longitude 74°02'42 - 74°02'53 W / Latitude 40°41'10 - 40°41'40 N

