The colossus of Bedloe's Island, 225 tons of copper and iron, towers 300 feet above New York Harbor. A French gift, it was dedicated in 1886.

Anna McManus removing lipsticked initials from interior of the statue. A cage recently erected around the spiral stairway forestalls many scribbling vandals.

Lighted by a system of incandescent and mercury vapor lamps, the torch is a beacon to approaching ships. Here a workman replaces wind-smashed bulb.
THE LADY WE CAN’T AFFORD TO FORGET

By BLAKE EHRlich

We haven’t done right by Miss Liberty. So the tall goddess still stands amid unsightly clutter, instead of the beautiful bower designed for her. And she brings in more cash than she costs us!

The sleek luxury liners are back from the wars now bearing their cargoes of returning movie stars and arriving diplomats, whose pictures in the papers look a lot different from those of home-coming troops or war brides or refugees. But there is one moment when almost all of them are exactly alike, when it stops mattering—if only for a second—exactly who they are. This is the moment when they get their first view of the Statue of Liberty.

In another second Miss Diana La Dore will again be a reigning celebrity and Mrs. Prochnick will resume her anxiety about her DP’s passport, but for a moment—There’s that lifting smell of the shore and the first craning sight of the green-gray smudge—land! Then, after the shrilling of the tugs, there are the towers of Manhattan, glittering and singing up into the sky—New York! And then, in midstream, at the foot of the skyscrapers—Miss Liberty! And that’s the moment. America! HOME!

Somehow, this piece of sculpture seems to say what all the quadrillions of words have tried to say about America. To the world, its form has come to symbolize the hopes, promises, rewards and contradictions which are our country. And it has a special significance now.

I felt all this as I came home again from Europe recently, and after I’d got settled, I took the ferry out to Bedloe’s Island to visit the Lady With the Lamp. About 600,000 others had the same idea this record year, and almost as many in preceding years. Of the millions who have made the visit in the last five years, including many world leaders, probably the best remembered by the staff is a girl who came one winter’s day.

It was a nasty cold day. No visitors on the first boat, except one girl. She stayed outside the statue, leaning against the pedestal parapet. She didn’t look well, and a guide asked her if she felt all right. She said yes, yes, of course, but she looked kind of queer and the guide stayed on. They talked about the bad morning and she said she was worried about it. Her husband, a science technician, had just taken off for England, where V-1 bombing was at its peak. The weather over the Atlantic must have been foul. She’d been up all night. Obviously, she’d done a lot of crying too.

“I’ve been waiting since early morning for the ferry to bring me here,” she said. “I just wanted to remind myself why he had to go.”

The Statue of Liberty is, from a purely statistical point of view, a 225-ton assemblage of copper and iron, reaching 300 feet ten inches above sea level on a twelve-acre diamond-shaped island. The figure’s index finger is eight feet long, her waist thirty-five feet thick. According to the guidebook, the statue is a “gift from the French people to the people of the United States, commemorating the alliance of the two nations during the American Revolution in achieving the independence of the United States, and attests their abiding friendship.” The statue portrays Liberty as a woman stepping from broken shackles. In her right hand is held aloft the torch of Freedom, and in the left is a tablet representing the Declaration of Independence and inscribed, in block letters and Roman numerals, “July 4, 1776.” (Continued on Page 31)
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(Continued from Page 31)

The site, Bedloe's Island, has been longed to the Indians, the Dutch, the British, the French, the City of New York and the United States. It has been the location for a farm, a saltpit hospital, a quarantine station, a dike, a signal station, a radio station, a military post, and was used from 1793 to 1796 as a hospital base for the French fleet.

The idea for a monument to inter above them, but behind her most of the ceremonies. Sculptor Bartholdi was squat sheds and tin-roofed raising. He transmitted his enthusiasm to the French citizenry, who responded generously with the necessary funds, and to a descendant of Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi, who immediately set sail for America to select a site. The statue was supposed to be a 100th-anniversary present, on July 4, 1876. But Congress didn't authorize President Hayes to set aside land for it until a year later. The French commissioned by sending over the right arm, holding the torch, for the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia. By the time the whole statue had been completed, we had not yet subscribed enough money to pay for a pedestal on which to place it.

Joseph Pulitzer, fiery publisher of the New York World, blew up. In a furious newspaper campaign he roused about public indifference, and soon others began to echo him. In a matter of five months the funds was full, and a year later, after completion of the pedestal, the monument was dedicated, October 28, 1886.

Liberty is made of copper plates three-sevenths of an inch thick, hung on an iron skeleton designed by Gustave Eiffel, who engineered the tower which is the principal landmark of Paris. Bartholdi's original clay model was about ten feet high. From this he built up a thirty-six-foot figure, which was then marked off into sections. Each portion was again painstakingly enlarged, finally to the full 152 feet, and carpenters made exact wooden sections by section. Artisans hammered the copper plates into shape on the wood frames.

Awaiting completion of the pedestal, the outermost of the piled-up plates weathered and turned green, while the sections underneath stayed a rusty copper color. The statue the godess wore what any South Pacific veteran would now recognize as a jungle camouflage suit, splattered with brown and green. President Grover Cleveland at the dedication and the French ambassador headed the list of top-hatted dignitaries at the ceremonies. Sculptor Bartholdi was also there on the hunting-draped platform for the dedication of the statue to which he had devoted ten years of his life. The mighty lady towered above them, but behind her the island was crowded with a jumble of squat sheds and tin-roofed barracks of the army garrison and hospital, all built on the plan of the sculptor had dreamed, but the rest of his plan for a monument had not been carried out. It has not been carried out to this day.

Bartholdi's 1874 sketches show Bedloe's Island terraced and landscaped into a little jewel box for the statue. Although the statue itself, having first been maintained as an aid to navigation under the jurisdiction of the Light-
The official story is that the torch has "been closed to the public for many years," but it turns out it may never have been open at all. Recently, a Mrs. Flannagan, whose first name the Park Service is mortified not to have caught, visited the island. Her husband was appointed lighthouse keeper there in 1892, she said, and the torch wasn't open then.

The beacon isn't the only part of the monument hung with Keep Off signs. There are also the old guardhouse cells in the fort. Their iron-studded oak doors close on windowless, four-foot-wide rooms. On the inner jamb of one is carved, "Drunk again, by hell!" The cells provide a dandy place to store spare electric-light bulbs. The tourists are all gone from the island by nightfall, when the lights come on. Illumined by batteries of lights blazing from the eleven star points of the fort, the statue is an impressive spectacle. As a work of art, Bartholdi's masterpiece has not compelled much admiration. But as a gleaming symbol in the darkened harbor, it has the power to evoke deep emotion.

First attempts at floodlighting the dull copper surfaces, with the equipment of the time, failed in the nineteenth century. But by 1916, when the copper had weathered to an even gleen, and technical devices had improved, it worked pretty well. These lights were a source of gratification to Joseph Pulitzer, who had raised the money for them through another campaign in the old World. A couple of years ago the Westinghouse Corporation installed a new system of mixed incandescent and green mercury-vapor lamps to bring out the green sheen and create a flame effect in the torch. The cost was paid by the company's experimental account. Now proved and accepted, the floodlights are run at Government expense. The flames, however, are still under experiment, so Westinghouse continues to carry the torch.

Electricity bills average about $450 a month. The phone bill constitutes another household expense. If you dial REctor 2-1286, a female voice will answer, "Hello; Statue of Liberty." This will not be the statue speaking, but secretary Minnie Stein, one of the monument's twenty-three employees. These people, whose salaries range from around $1000 for janitors to $2020 for guides, are also a considerable budget expense.

Watching the crowds—as many as 6000 persons a day during the heavy August season—answering their questions and restoring lost property and mislaid offspring can be a grueling business. The day I was there, three men were out sick, primarily from exhaustion. Their absence naturally piled more work on those remaining. And these days there is a smaller staff to carry an increased work load. The public's questions, no matter how intelligent, sound inane after the thousandth time. By the end of September, innocent inquiries are likely to elicit some surly answers.

Seven guides and their families live on the island, and their green-gray brick houses are part of the unmonumental clutter which keeps the public restricted to the statue corner of Bedloe's. The guides are somewhat restricted, too—if they don't want to live there, they can quit the service.

It's not bad, they say, in summer, with cool breezes and a good view, but in the cold months when the breezes become howling winds and the water gets rough and the fog closes in and the air vibrates with the myriad harbor warning signals, it is not ideal. No matter what the season, they cannot get a doctor to come out to the place. After the last ferry—five P.M. in winter, seven in summer—the only transportation is water taxi, an expensive proposition on a salary of $2020 a year. It works out pretty adventurously for the island's two school-age youngsters, though; they have to leave before the ferry's first run, so every morning at 8:15 a water taxi calls for them, and books in hand, they chug across the bay. The ferry was hoisting at the pier when I fell into conversation with a young man who wore an Army discharge button. He was Japanese.

"First visit to the statue?" I asked.

"No," he said. "I was here yesterday too. I've only got three days. Got to get back tomorrow."

He was from Milwaukee, a student at Marquette. His outfit had been trained out in that area, and then shipped to the New York zone for overseas embarkation.

"I thought that would be my chance to see the Statue of Liberty. We didn't get out of camp into New York before we sailed, though, and when we shipped out, it was from down the bay somewhere, or maybe Brooklyn. Anyhow, there was a blackout and it was night, and we were kept below decks. Just didn't have a chance.

"Well, when we got orders to come home from the ETO, I thought sure this time I'd see the Statue of Liberty. I was really excited; it would have meant more this time. Because, you know, whether you've seen the statue or not, overseas you never forget about her. But the Army landed us at Norfolk. Then separation center and home and school. But I finally made it. I've had a good long look."

I told him his story might be good for this article, and I asked his name.

"It's Joe," he said, and grinned. "Just put me down as Joe."