

Copyright Lore

■ *Frank Evina*

Since the copyright registration and deposit system was centralized in the Library of Congress in 1870, over 30 million creative works have been registered for copyright protection. One of the most famous sculptural works of art ever registered, and perhaps the largest, is the Statue of Liberty.

Designed and executed by French sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, the Statue of Liberty was presented by the people of France to the people of America to honor the great friendship between the two nations. The statue's significance has broadened over the years, and it is now recognized throughout the world as a symbol of liberty and freedom. Erected on Bedloe's Island in New York Harbor and dedicated on Oct. 28, 1886, the statue has stirred the emotions of millions.

On Aug. 31, 1876, the Copyright Office issued copyright registration number 9939-G for the "Statue of American Independence" as the "Statue of Liberty" was first named. The copyright claim was filed in America's centennial year, a full 10 years before the statue was erected in New York Harbor. Deposited with the application were two rare images. The first is a photograph of the artist's final study model, believed to be executed in terra cotta. The second image is an artistic

rendering of how the statue would appear against the New York skyline after it was finally erected on the pedestal designed by architect Richard M. Hunt. This second image has great significance because it shows a very early version of the statue that most people would not recognize. In the original design, the Statue of Liberty is shown holding in her left hand a broken chain and shackle, which represent freedom newly achieved. Bartholdi later made a major change to his design by placing the chain and shackle, symbolically broken by Liberty, at her feet. He then positioned the familiar tablet, inscribed "July IV, MDCCLXXVI" (July 4, 1776), in her left hand.

In 1984, curators working on the Copyright Office exhibit "By Securing to Authors: Copyright, Commerce, and Creativity in America" discovered this copyright with rare attached documentation in remote storage in Landover, Md. The historic images described above are on permanent display in the exhibit on the fourth floor of the Madison Building, along with documentation for the copyright on the pedestal. ©

In 1876, Bartholdi deposited this photo of a model for the Statue of Liberty (right) and a photo of an artistic rendering of the statue in place on Bedloe's Island (below).

