Dear {Salutation},

Birthdays are a time for giving gifts. On our nation’s birthday, I thought it appropriate to look into perhaps the most recognizable gift our country has every received, the Statue of Liberty.

Lady Liberty is one of the world’s most recognizable symbols of freedom. The Frenchman, Edouard de Laboulaye was the originator of the idea. During a dinner party at his home near Versailles, France, de Laboulaye introduced the idea to a young sculptor named Frederick Augusta Bartholdi and the other party guests. These groups of Frenchmen, as well as many others, were especially drawn to the idea and possibility of democracy in France.

The French populace was very distraught over the death of President Lincoln, a living symbol of freedom. A collection (no more than 2 cents per donor to protect the integrity of the gift) was taken, and a gold medal was given to the President’s widow with the message “Tell Mrs. Lincoln that in this box is the heart of France.” The Medal was inscribed in French the following:

Dedicated by French democracy to Lincoln, twice-elected President of the United States – honest Lincoln who abolished slavery, re-established the union, and saved the Republic, without veiling the Statue of Liberty.

It was in this same sentiment that the Statue of Liberty was born. Designed to be a joint project between the two nations, the U.S. was to build the base and the French were to build the statue (the entire statue was paid for in donations, it cost the French government nothing).

The Statue was intended to be a beacon of the power of democracy and freedom to the rest of the world. Most visitors to the Statue will never notice the broken shackle on the stepping right foot of the statue. This broken shackle symbolizes the Statue’s freedom from bondage and slavery. The stepping right foot of the Statue is also symbolic of the Statue’s forward progress into the future. The Statue is symbolically lighting the path to freedom. The torch symbolizes that knowledge, education, and enlightenment are essential to obtaining freedom. The crown has seven spikes. These spikes represent the seven seas and the seven continents on the globe. The windows in the crown represent the heaven’s rays of light to the seven seas and continents. The tablet in the left hand of the Statue represents the laws that our nation was founded upon. The tablet’s shape is that of a keystone symbolizing that without law, our nation and way of life would not prevail. The pedestal of the Statue was made of thirteen layers of granite to symbolize the 13 original colonies of our nation. The shields that sit low on the base of the statue represent the individual states in our country.

Prior to building the Eiffel Tower, Gustave Eiffel was contracted to build the framework of the Statue. The unique interior framing of the Statue is perhaps the most impressive part of the Statue. The framing allows each individual piece of the Statue to hang independently of each other; no piece of the exterior hangs from the piece above it or places pressure on the piece below it. His unique system was used to help each piece of the Statue move independently to withstand the high winds and elements found in New York Harbor. This system of building is also another great example of our nation. Each of us as citizens is free to move independently; we are free to go where we want, when we want. We are free to withstand the storms in our lives in the way we see fit. We are also free to stand united. If one of the pieces of the Statue gives out, it allows for increased pressure and strain on the other. Much like this Statue, we are independent but we are stronger as a whole. We are united in our independence.

May you enjoy this Independence Day, and remember the freedom and independence we are allowed.

Sincerely,

References:

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/hh/11/hh11b.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/stli/historyculture/index.htm>