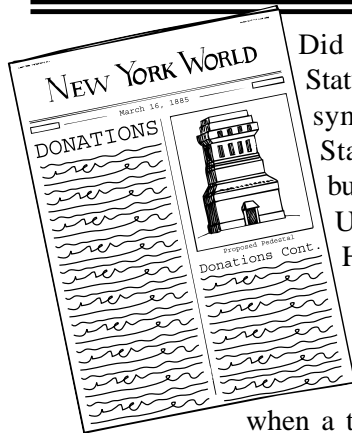


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# The History of the Statue of Liberty



Did you know that the Statue of Liberty, that great symbol of the United States, was designed, built, and given to the U.S. by the French? How did this happen?

France and the United States had been good friends since 1777

when a treaty between the two nations sent France into the Revolutionary War against Britain. The Marquis de Lafayette was a famous French volunteer in the Revolutionary War, and Admiral de Grasse with a French fleet of ships helped defeat the British General Cornwallis at Yorktown in the last major battle of that war.

France not only supplied leadership and troops to the American Revolution, but also provided financial support. A major political party in the U.S. supported the French Revolution and favored the French in foreign policy. The French Revolution took many of its ideals from the earlier American revolution. The popular U.S. ambassador to France, Benjamin Franklin, also helped to promote American ideas and friendship. It was from this long-standing friendship that the idea of a gift to the United States arose.

Edouard de Laboulaye, a well-known French teacher and author of several books about the United States, had a dinner party at his house in 1865. It was at this party that de Laboulaye proposed some kind of a monument to be built as a tribute to the U.S. The famous sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartoldi was at the party and was very enthusiastic about this idea. However, it was not until the defeat of the Emperor Napoleon III in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 and the creation of a new French Republic that the political climate was right to begin the monument for the U.S. Before that, the Emperor would not have allowed the building of a statue honoring liberty and equality. He was an absolute monarch, in some ways even more of a tyrant than George III of Britain had been during the American Revolution.

Bartoldi next sailed to the United States to talk about his statue. He was on a ship with immigrants aboard, and witnessed the hardships of their journey which might have reinforced his idea that the statue should honor freedom and equality. He landed in the U.S. on June 21, 1871, and spoke to important people in the government and ordinary people about donating the land and raising money to build a pedestal for the statue. Bartoldi wanted the statue to stand on Bedloe's Island (now called Liberty Island) in New York Harbor. He thought that would be the perfect place for the statue to welcome travelers and immigrants.

Drawings and models of "Liberty Enlightening the World" had begun to take shape in 1875 when Bartoldi's attention was changed to another project. The President of France asked the sculptor to create a statue of the Marquis de Lafayette. This was to be given to New York City to thank the U.S. citizens for their support of France during the Franco-Prussian War. This work was to be completed by the U.S. centennial in 1876. Lafayette's statue was finished and put on a pedestal in Union Square. While this delayed Bartoldi's plans for the Statue of Liberty, also showed that France and the U.S. could cooperate on a large project such as Bartoldi was proposing.

However, the effort to raise money in the U.S. for the pedestal did not go well. Finally, Joseph Pulitzer, the owner of the *New York World* newspaper, challenged people to donate the money. Pulitzer was an immigrant from Hungary who had risen to wealth and great influence in the U.S. On March 16, 1885, he asked school children, families and ordinary people to send in their pennies, nickels and dimes to the *World*. He guaranteed that the name of every donor would appear in his newspaper. Five months later, the additional \$102,000 necessary for building the pedestal had been raised.

The pedestal was completed, and the pieces of the Statue of Liberty assembled. On October 28, 1886, President Cleveland unveiled and dedicated Lady Liberty.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# *The History of the Statue of Liberty Questions*

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1. What were three reasons that the French had for liking and being grateful to the United States?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What was the major reason that the United States had for liking and being grateful to France?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Who was the subject of the first statue that Bartoldi designed and built for the United States?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Extra Credit Historical Research:** How did the subject of the statue in question 3 show the history of the friendship between the U.S. and France? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. According to the reading, what was the reason why the Emperor Napoleon III would not have wanted a statue built in France honoring liberty and equality? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Extra Credit Historical Research:** The slogan of the French Revolution of 1789 had three words in it. Two of the words were *liberty* and *equality*. What was the third word? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Thought Question: How might Bartoldi's shipboard journey with immigrants to the U.S. have strengthened his belief in building the Statue of Liberty? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Thought Question: What might have been Joseph Pulitzer's major motive (besides the desire to sell more newspapers) in raising money for the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty? A clue is in the reading. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Extra Credit:** Which side won the Franco-Prussian War in 1870? Was it the French ("Franco") or the Germans ("Prussian")? A clue is in the text of this reading. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Thought Question: Which of the following two groups would have been more likely to migrate to the United States and start a new life: Europe's nobility and wealthy people or poor farmers and industrial workers? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# *Building the Statue of Liberty*

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*Frederic Auguste  
Bartholdi*

Building the Statue of Liberty was a huge job that took many people and a long time to complete. Frederic Auguste Bartholdi designed the statue. Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel (who later designed the Eiffel Tower in Paris) created the inner structure to support the tall statue. Gaget, Gauthier and Company did the metal work. Bartholdi finished his model for the statue in 1875, but it wasn't until 1884 that the Lady was completed and not until 1886 that she was placed in New York Harbor.

Because Lady Liberty was to be 151 feet tall, Bartholdi started with a series of small-scale models first. When he had a full-sized model, he had to divide it into sections because the statue was still too large for any building to hold it. From the plaster sections, the workers made large wooden forms in the same shapes. They put copper on the wooden forms and hammered it to fit the wood. This technique is called repoussé (RAY-POOH-SAY).

Eiffel designed the iron structure that supported the copper statue. This had to be very sturdy. Although the copper was only  $\frac{1}{8}$ " to  $\frac{3}{32}$ " thick, the outer "skin" weighed thousands of tons. The sheets of copper were bolted to the iron structure with rivets.

The arm holding the torch and Liberty's head were the first parts of the statue that were ready. Bartholdi sent the arm to the U.S. in 1876 to help celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The builders had the head displayed in Paris in 1878 in an effort to raise more money to continue the statue. (Tradition says that the model for Liberty's face was Bartholdi's mother.)

Richard Morris Hunt in the U.S. designed the pedestal for the statue. Liberty was sent by ship in more than 200 boxes. Workers assembled the many pieces to complete the Statue of Liberty as we know it today.



*Alexandre-Gustave  
Eiffel*