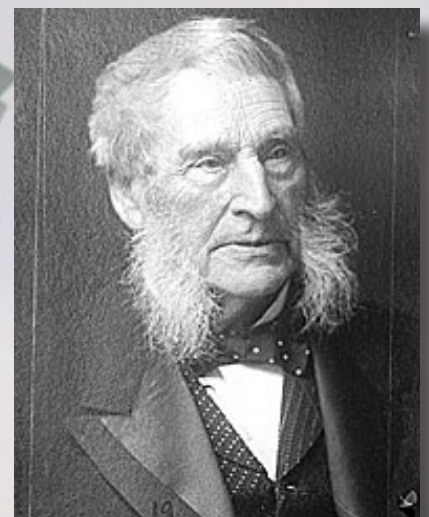
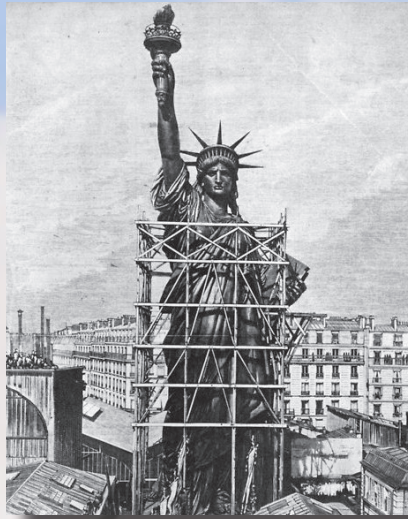


How the Statue of Liberty Was Built





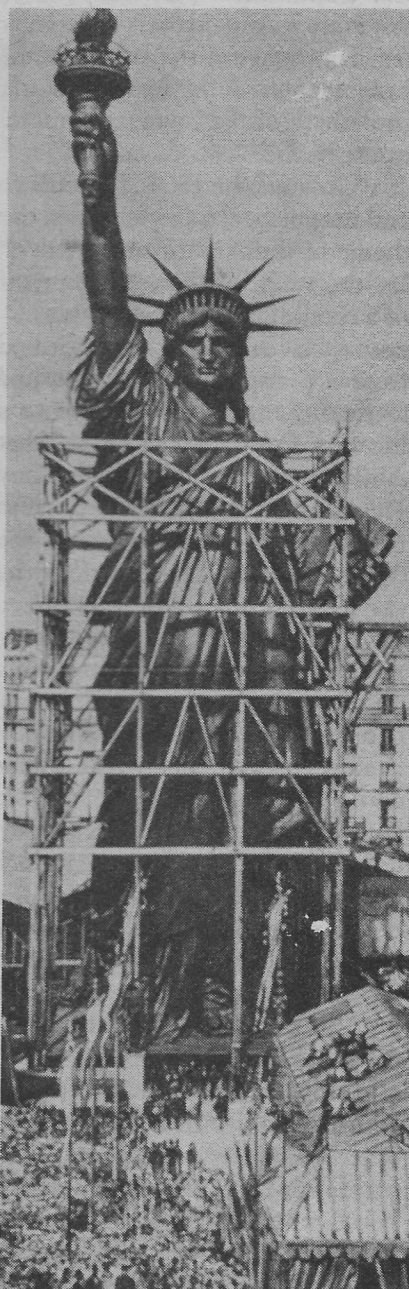
How the Statue of Liberty Was Built

Every year, tens of thousands of Americans and visitors to this country visit New York City's harbor for a look at the famous Statue of Liberty. But although the sculpture of "Liberty Enlightening the World" is well known across the globe, the history of the statue is not.

The real story of the Statue of Liberty is one of a transatlantic conspiracy to spread the ideas behind the American Revolution back to the European continent where they were born.

The statue was the brainchild of the French republican Edouard-René Lefebvre de Laboulaye (1811-1883). Laboulaye saw himself as the heir of the Marquis de Lafayette, charged with carrying on the French-American alliance as the cornerstone of French foreign policy. As president of the French Anti-Slavery Committee, Laboulaye played a crucial role in keeping the French from intervening in the Civil War on the side of the Confederacy.

But Laboulaye's life-long goal was to recreate an American republican government in his native France, based on the principles of economic growth and cultural advancement elaborated by Washington, Franklin, and Alexander Hamilton. He was the driving political force behind the establishment of the Third French Republic, which finally rid France of its monarchy. With the founding of the new republic in 1875, Labou-



Liberty delivered to the American ambassador in Paris, July 4, 1884.

laye was called upon to draft its body of constitutional law. Laboulaye's Third Republic prevailed until the pro-Nazi traitors of the Vichy government took over France in 1940.

It was Laboulaye's idea to build the statue of "Liberty Enlightening the World" as a gift to the United States on its 100th anniversary in 1876. His motive was not only to strengthen the century-long French-American friendship, but to use his organizing drive for the construction of the giant monument as a means to educate the French people in the American System and the U.S. Constitution.

His purpose was to shine the light of reason on France, and to establish a new French republic.

A New France

Laboulaye's commitment to the American System stemmed from his conviction that it was the only means by which France could be saved from the perpetual swing of the pendulum from the side of the monarchists to the anarchist Jacobin mobs that threw France into upheaval first during the revolution and again in 1830 and 1848.

1847, the year preceding Laboulaye's first lecture at the College of France, had seen monarch Louis Philippe flee from France, the collapse of an unsuccessful provisional government and, finally, the installment of Louis Napoleon, Napoleon Bonaparte's



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nephew, as president. Louis Napoleon, no more than a figurehead for the policies of Britain's Lord Palmerston, was soon to crown himself emperor.

From the very first time he stepped onto the lecturn at the College of France, Laboulaye challenged his students to see themselves as the leaders who would be responsible for the creation of a new France. No longer could the citizens of France, he said, surrender themselves to a monarchy that claimed as its divine right the power to make the laws that governed them. But to begin to rationally manage its own affairs, the citizenry must put aside the customs and traditions of ordinary political life and reach far back into history for an understanding of the foundations upon which successful civilizations are built.

This was not an easy task, Professor Laboulaye cautioned. It was a process that required leaders to determine the governing principles, or eternal laws, upon which specific laws and legislation for a successful society must be based.

A short time after Louis Napoleon crowned himself emperor of France in 1852, Laboulaye remarked that George Washington had resisted the desire to become a monarch but Caesar of Rome had succumbed. When his remark was reported to the authorities, Laboulaye's American history class was shut down, and he was forced to teach Roman jurisprudence for twelve years. During this period, Laboulaye set to work on his three-volume *History of the United States*, which detailed Washington's leadership qualities for the French, a population that had been subjected to a string of Caesars. Laboulaye was also to translate Benjamin Franklin's au-

tobiography into French, after helping to locate the original manuscript in Paris.

Laboulaye and the Civil War

With the coming of the U.S. Civil War, Laboulaye's support of the traditions of the American Founding Fathers took on world-historical importance. As president of the French Anti-Slavery Committee, Laboulaye turned the eyes of France toward the bloody battle in defense of the besieged American republic.

Up until the 1860s, Laboulaye and his political allies had used the theme of the American System to lay the basis for the establishment of a republic in France. Now they saw their campaign transformed from a pedagogical one designed to further their aims at home to a life and death fight to ensure that America was not destroyed. They were determined to prevent France from intervening in the Civil War on the Confederate side.

French textile interests were anxious to maintain relations with the southern cotton-growers. More important, Louis Napoleon decided to take advantage of the civil strife in the United States to launch an invasion of Mexico.

Mexico City fell to the French as Lee entered Pennsylvania, and on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg, Mexico was declared a "Catholic Empire" under the French puppet, Austrian Archduke Maximilian.

Napoleon knew he could continue to control Mexico only with Confederate support. The major obstacle to this conspiracy was Lincoln's wholehearted support for Mexican republican leader Benito Juarez, from whom Maximilian had usurped state power. With every rumor of sup-



Above, René Laboulaye, defender of the French-American alliance forged by Washington and Lafayette. Right, Union diplomat John Bigelow, who collaborated with Laboulaye to prevent French aid to the Confederacy.

port for Juarez from the Lincoln administration, the French government threatened to bring France into the war against the Union.

Laboulaye spared no effort to make clear that French support for the Confederacy would be tantamount to a French alliance with its most despised enemy—Great Britain. Laboulaye's pamphlet, "The United States and France," argues this point, and details for the French population the British conspiracy behind the outbreak of the Civil War, a story that has been all but forgotten even in the United States today.

Laboulaye recalled the global anti-British strategy embedded in the American-French alliance, inspired by the Marquis de Lafayette, that had created the United States nearly a century earlier: "When Louis XVI gave his assistance to the insurgent Americans, what was his intention but to avenge the insult that we received in Canada and to raise up on the shore of the Atlantic a people who



would one day come into competition with England and would dispute with her the empire of the seas? Read the correspondence of M. de Vergennes; it was understood as early as 1780 that it was not a few millions of men who were emancipated; it was a new world that France called into life."

Laboulaye's pamphlet, reproduced by Union diplomat John Bigelow, was distributed widely throughout France and the rest of Europe. It was immediately translated in the United States, where it sold out as fast as it came off the printing presses.

Laboulaye's polemics helped to create a pro-Union faction among European governments, best represented by the Russian Czar Alexander II, who threatened military reprisals against any European nation that dared to intervene in the U.S. conflict. Laboulaye and his allies accomplished their goal. France did not interfere in the Civil War.

The assassination of Abraham Lincoln only days after the Union

victory brought an outpouring of grief from the French people. John Bigelow was entrusted with delivering to Mrs. Lincoln a gold medal, paid for my contributions of no more than 2¢ by thousands of French citizens. The medal was inscribed with the message that President Lincoln had saved the republic "without veiling the statue of liberty."

The Monument

In 1865, shortly after Lincoln's death, Laboulaye began organization for the construction of a monument, jointly by the French and Americans, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the American Revolution eleven years hence. He called together his close political friends, among them the heirs of the Marquis de Lafayette, at a gathering which also included the sculptor Frederick Auguste Bartholdi whom Laboulaye had befriended while campaigning for a seat in the French National Assembly from Alsace.

The two decades between Laboulaye's conception of the monument project and the erection of the Statue of Liberty in New York City included difficult times for France. In the early 1870s the Paris Commune uprising began, and Laboulaye saw his country once again being pulled apart. He was as disgusted by the British-run Jacobin mobs that led the 1871 Paris Commune revolt as he was with the monarchy the rebels unseated.

The same day that the anarchists of the Paris Commune were hung, the sculptor Bartholdi left for America to organize support for the statue. Back home in France, Laboulaye and his collaborators planned a campaign to gain political power for their republican faction.

The campaign for the statue

became a diabolical method of organizing for the American System in France. Laboulaye and friends first formed the French-American Union in 1874-75, and used it to gather funds for the project at the same time as they built a national republican power base.

Over 100,000 Frenchmen contributed to the construction of the statue, and one hundred eighty cities were represented on the contributors lists. Moreover, 300,000 people visited the statue while it was under construction in Paris.

Laboulaye was thus successful in focusing the politics of hundreds of thousands of his fellow Frenchmen away from the manipulated battles between the monarchists and the anarchists. Instead, French citizens were encouraged to look across the Atlantic toward America, where the Franco-American alliance had created the world's greatest republic. Just as he had in his first lecture at the College of France, Laboulaye demanded of Frenchmen that they understand and act upon the eternal principles of natural law as the basis for their self-government.

Finally, he succeeded.

The Third Republic

In 1875, Laboulaye's republican faction gained a foothold in the French government when Laboulaye was elected to the National Assembly after two unsuccessful campaigns. When Laboulaye entered the assembly, he faced a figurehead president, Marshall MacMahon, who was treading water to hold onto power until it could once again be transferred back to the monarchy. Two-thirds of the National Assembly backed the president, and supported a restoration. The monarchists, how-



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ever, were divided in their own ranks into three warring camps.

Laboulaye's republican faction took full advantage of the divisions within the ranks of the monarchists, counting on the base of support they had mobilized within the population as a whole. On January 25, 1875, Laboulaye took the floor of the National Assembly and passionately proposed the Wallon amendment for the establishment of a third French republic. He challenged the monarchy's competence to rule, and warned that if the delegates did not back his motion foreign intervention and domestic upheavals resulting from the lack of real government would destroy France.

He quoted fewer American examples than usual, yet he was living the Founding Father's role.

"His whole life for this hour,"

said one observer of Laboulaye's speech. After it was over, "the theatre was hushed. Eyes moist. Rows of deputies silently rose and held out their hand to him." Two days later, the Third Republic was established by a vote of the National Assembly.

Liberty Enlightens the World

Laboulaye's commemorative statue was not completed in time for the celebration of the U.S. Centennial. But one piece of Bartholdi's masterpiece—the outstretched, light-bearing arm of Liberty—was completed and shipped to Philadelphia for the 1876 exhibition, where hundreds of thousands of Americans saw it on display.

On October 24, 1881, the 100th anniversary of the British surrender at Yorktown, U.S. Ambassador to France Morton accept-

ed the Statue of Liberty in a formal ceremony in Paris. "This work," he told the French foreign minister, "is the product of the noblest of sentiments which can animate man. It is colossal in its proportions, and we hope that it will grow greater still in its moral worth, thanks to the remembrances and the sentiments which it is to perpetuate."

In 1883, after Laboulaye had died at the regrettably early age of 62, Ferdinand Lessups, the architect of the Panama and Suez canals, took over as head of the French-American Union and saw through the completion of the Statue of Liberty. On October 26, 1886, more than two decades after Laboulaye had conceived it, "Liberty Enlightening the World" was raised over the New York Harbor.

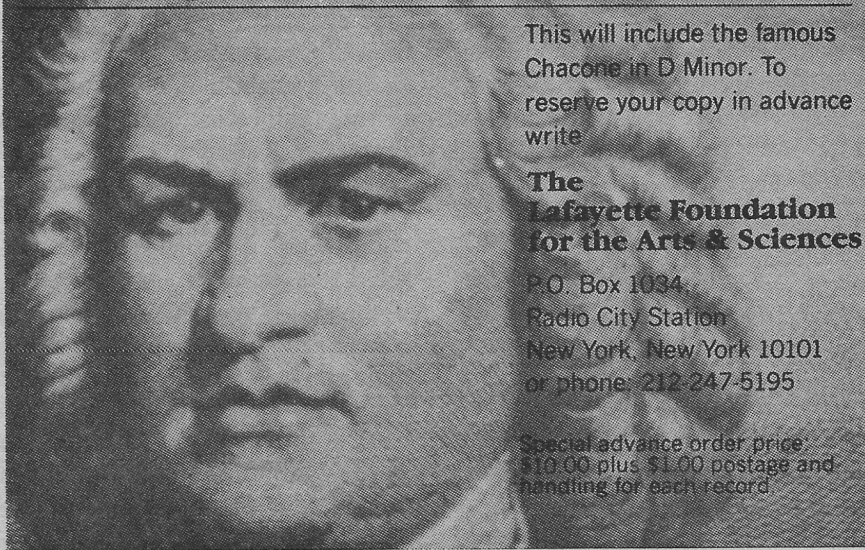
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