

EDITORIAL

Mother of Exiles

Her vital statistics are colossal. Her age, alone, makes her venerable. But it is all she stands for that's worth laying down your life for. Millions have done just that.

Dreams of a monument to commemorate the American and the French Revolutions were introduced by Edouard de Laboulaye to a group of his friends in 1865, but it was Frederic August Bartholdi (1834-1904), a sculptor, who fathered the Statue of Liberty. Commissioned by Laboulaye's group to explore possibilities, Bartholdi set sail for New York.

As his ship entered the mouth of the great Hudson River, the young Frenchman stood on deck to watch the panorama of New York Harbor. On the surface of the broad expanse of water between Staten Island and the Battery, side-wheelers, tugs, square-riggers, sloops, coasting schooners, and even steamboats made the harbor busy. Through morning mist rose New Jersey's palisades on the western shore. On the east, Fort Lafayette, Battery Park, the spire of Trinity Church, and the city itself crowded massively behind wharves lining mid-Manhattan Island.

Bartholdi's ship swung to her berth as his own thoughts swung to the people who had come, wave after wave of them, to establish the New World, to build families and great cities, to strike roots deep into fertile soil, and to risk all in the battle against oppression. Even as his ship was made fast alongside a wharf on North River, the sculptor envisioned an enormous statue presiding over the entrance to this harbor.

During his visit to America, Bartholdi's vision took shape and form. When he returned to Paris, his enthusiasm ignited that of Dr. Laboulaye and his associates and, in 1875, when the Franco-American Union was formed to raise funds for the statue, Bartholdi and Gustave Eiffel were already at work, Bartholdi shaping the copper plates by hammering them over

wooden forms, and Eiffel constructing the statue's steel framework.

In Paris, on July 4, 1884, the Statue of Liberty was presented to the U.S. minister to France, then dismantled, crated, shipped, and rebuilt on Bedloe's Island. On October 28, 1886, President Grover Cleveland officially dedicated the statue on that island in New York harbor.

She stands there still, already more than a hundred years old. Her centennial will be celebrated on the Fourth of July, 1986. Today, restoration of the Statue of Liberty is underway for the years have not been kind. Her copper plates are corroded, the arm that holds aloft the torch is weakened, the crown that adorns her brow is cracked. While she was built originally for considerably less than a million dollars, forty-five million must be raised to restore her. Those dollars will come from contributions, large and small.

Symbol of freedom to the world, the Statue of Liberty welcomes all. She has done so for ninety-eight years. To assure that she continues to do so, all who love liberty may participate in her restoration and preservation. Address envelopes to The Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 1986, N.Y., N.Y. 10018.

As you write your check, ponder the words of Emma Lazarus:

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp," cries she with silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

This, the Mother of Exiles, LIBERTY. Who among us, who indeed, owes her no homage?