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The monument would be an sincere gift to America, but Laboulaye was also making a virtue of necessity. He knew that a strong symbol of liberty was too inflammatory to be tolerated by the emperor within the boundaries of France. Bartholdi saw that New York Harbor, as a major entry point to America, had the right symbolic value.

While Bartholdi was in America, events in France helped to make the statue a reality. After Napoleon III was de-throned following the defeat of France by Prussia in 1871, monarchists and republicans contended for the nation's soul. Laboulaye and other republicans saw the statue as the best way to establish the idea of a republican France. The plan to build the statue was announced in late 1874, a few months before France again became a republic. Even

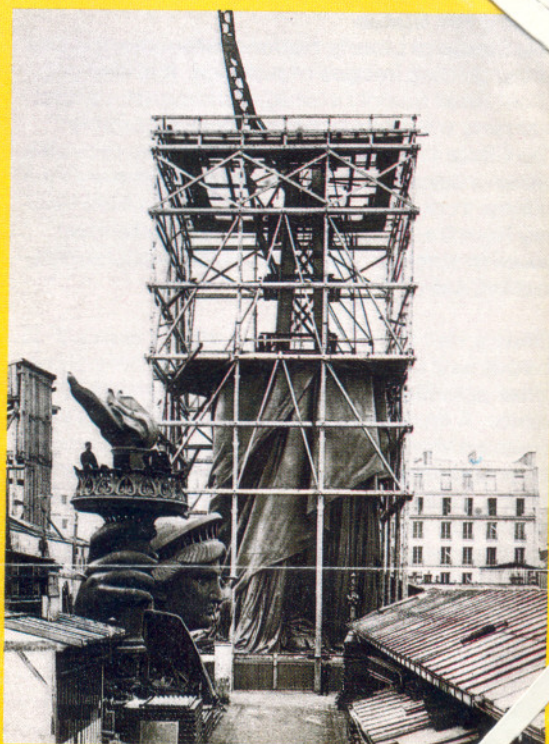
then, liberty was precarious and the republicans knew the concept would have to be burned into the national consciousness with a powerful image. Bartholdi, the man given the task, was an academic sculptor driven by two obsessions, liberty and immortality. Inspired by ancient colossi, especially in Egypt, he wanted his statue of Liberty to be overpowering. He also had in mind the Colossus of Rhodes when he envisioned the monument at the entrance to a harbor.

After creating Liberty in a 1.25-meter clay model, Bartholdi began fabricat-



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ing the statue in 1875. He enlarged the model in plaster several times until he had 300 full-sized sections. The skin of the statue was formed by the *repoussé* process, in which copper sheets 2.5 mm thick were hammered into shape against wooden forms matching the contours of the plaster sections. The engineering problems were solved brilliantly by Gustave Eiffel (left), already known for his daring bridge designs. A huge central wrought-iron pylon supported a secondary framework to which the statue's skin was attached with flexible iron bars. The skin thus "floated" on the pylon, strong enough to withstand high winds, yet resilient enough to expand and contract with changes in temperature. After its completion in June 1884, the statue stood in Paris until it was dismantled and sent to America early in 1885.



Musee Bartholdi - Colmar

FREE MASONRY AND THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

The numerous incised markings on the pedestal are MASONIC SYMBOLS according to a tablet on the base.

The foundation stone was laid by the GRAND MASTER of NEW YORK STATE.



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