

Mother of Exiles: The idea of a monument as a gift from France to America representing the ideals of liberty, freedom and democracy was conceived by Édouard René de Laboulaye in 1865 at the end of America's Civil War that ended American slavery. Laboulaye, a French jurist, poet, author, professor of law, and anti-slavery activist, was extremely knowledgeable of American politics and admired the U.S. Constitution.

He fiercely opposed the system of slavery that dehumanized human beings and savagely separated families in exchange for free labor, wherever it existed. That year, he became president of the French Emancipation Committee that aided newly freed slaves in America.

He intended the monument to serve as a symbol of these ideals suppressed in France by Napoleon III. He hoped it would inspire the French people to call for their own democracy in its repressive monarchy. His friend and fellow abolitionist Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, renowned sculptor of more than fifty colossus statues and monuments, sculpted Laboulaye's idea into a woman fashioned after *Libertas*, the goddess of freedom once worshipped in ancient Rome, most notably among emancipated slaves.

Development of the monument would signify the friendship and peaceful relationship between France and America - allies in the American Revolution. The statue would be 100% French while the pedestal, 100% American. The French would be responsible for the funding, construction, transportation and erection on site of the statue, the U.S. to be responsible for the funding, design and on-site construction of the pedestal. The project became a significant part of the next twenty years of Bartholdi's life.

During these two decades, Europe's industrial revolution (begun in the late 1700s), was spreading to the United States. The lack of Americans prepared to work in factories, abetted by their unwillingness, offered opportunities to other, other-than-American, industrial workers. Europeans and Asians emigrated to answer America's demand for laborers. But this influx of poor on U.S. shores was not to the taste of the American-born who rebelled against what they called the dregs of Europe.

Also during these two decades, after a century-long epidemic of violent anti-Semitism throughout Russia and modern Ukraine, pogroms against the Jews began. More than 200 pogroms occurred in 1881 that set off a mass exodus of Russian Jews; most emigrated to the United States.

Also during these two decades, in 1882, a law adopted in New York to protect the vote was initiated to establish border controls and create retention areas in which migrants should wait before approved to enter the U.S. territory. This law created the country's largest immigration control center. It planted the seed of a new cause célèbre that would align itself with Laboulaye's ideals of American freedom, liberty and democracy his gift was created to represent: that of immigration.

Also during these two decades, and also in 1882, as plans continued to move forward on the building and funding of the colossal statue, an idea was born to a woman in America to hold a fundraising auction of original art and literary works donated to raise funds for the pedestal.

The woman, playwright and novelist Constance Harrison, was one of the New York literary elite. Entrants included Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Walt Whitman, and Mark

Twain. Harrison invited another woman of the New York literary elite to enter, the highly respected author/poet Emma Lazarus.

Lazarus was a descendent of the first Sephardic Jewish immigrants to the new world forced out of Spain during the Inquisition. Her great-great-uncle, Moses Seixas, intensely corresponded with George Washington on religious liberty in the early days of America.

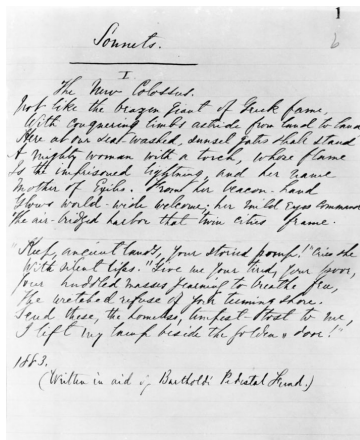
Lazarus was immensely moved by the plight of the Russian Jewish refugees. She had dedicated a number of her published essays and poems to Russian Jews and Jewish immigrants and personally assisted many refugees. Often she would visit those whom immigration officials had quartered in overstuffed, unsanitary barracks on Ward's Island.

Lazarus declined Harrison's invitation saying, "I have no thought, no passion, no desire, save for my own people," and she expressed doubt to create on order.

Harrison, a descendent of an early Virginia family related to the Fairfaxes and Jeffersons, herself, had experienced the pains of human suffering. During the Civil War she had been exposed to battles in Virginia including the destruction of her own home. She challenged Lazarus to think of the Russian refugee and wrote to Emma:

"Think of the goddess of liberty, standing on her pedestal yonder in the bay and holding the torch out to those refugees you are so fond of visiting at Ward's Island."

Two days later, Emma Lazarus submitted a 105-word sonnet, "*The New Colossus*."



"Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air bridge harbor that twin cities frame.
"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!"

Her title, *The New Colossus*, implies there was an old colossus, and indeed there was. It was of a mighty male standing in the Greek harbor of Rhodes celebrating their victory over Cyprus, as a symbol of defiance commanding those unwanted to stay away.

Now we have the new colossus: Lady Liberty - *Mother of Exiles*. *Give me*, not a command, a request, *your tired ... the wretched refuse*, those refused elsewhere, are welcome, those tossed about, *tempest-tost, send to me*, here as she lifts her lamp beside, not a fence nor a wall, but a *golden door*. *Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp* (your wealthy). A mighty woman, gentle, with not a weapon but a torch lighting a new way, *The New Colossus*.

At the dedication ceremony of the statue in 1886, *The New Colossus* was not recited nor mentioned. Two years later, when Lazarus died at age thirty-eight, her *New York Times* obituary did not mention her sonnet.

In 1901, another woman, Georgina Schuyler, one of Lazarus's closest friends, a direct descendant of Alexander Hamilton, concerned the sonnet might fade into obscurity, lobbied for two years to have it engraved onto a bronze plaque and affixed to Lady Liberty's base as a tribute to her friend.

Albeit engraved and in plain sight, it was basically overlooked for decades until the 1930s when her words were rediscovered as the U.S. turned away Jewish refugees trying to flee Hitler due to immigration quotas and the fear they could be Nazis.

Her words were rediscovered again, almost one hundred years later on the 2018 Fourth of July celebration of America's independence as a democracy when, in a public display to accentuate the dehumanizing savage separation of immigrant parents and caged children in America by the U.S. government, another woman climbed the pedestal to touch the gift conceived in 1865 representing the ideals of liberty, freedom and democracy, the new colossal statue, Lady Liberty - *Mother of Exiles*.

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