

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

# Waiting for Miss Liberty

By Barbara D. Krasner  
2015

*The Statue of Liberty is a large sculpture on Liberty Island in New York Harbor. In this informational text, Barbara D. Krasner discusses the construction of the sculpture, which was dedicated on October 28, 1886. As you read, take notes on problems people encountered as they constructed the Statue of Liberty.*

- [1] From the shores of Rouen, France, sculptor Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi watched the *Isère* steam toward the Atlantic Ocean. His 214 wooden crates were on board. “Goodbye, my daughter, Liberty,” he said. “At last you are going home.”

The waiting was over.

The idea for a statue as a gift of freedom and friendship from France to the United States had excited Bartholdi for 20 years. But it had frustrated him, too.

## Designing the Statue

Things went fine at first. Bartholdi scouted<sup>1</sup> America for the perfect location. He spotted a small island in New York Harbor. “In this very place shall be raised the Statue of Liberty, as grand as the idea which it embodies,<sup>2</sup> casting radiance<sup>3</sup> upon the two worlds,” he wrote. Then he got down to work. He designed the statue to look like his mother. He selected iron and steel for the frame and copper for the statue itself. He worked with the best engineers in the world to make her tall and proud.



*"1876: The Statue of Liberty's right arm and torch on display at the Philadelphia Exposition." by Courtesy of the Library of Congress is used with permission.*

- [5] But soon a lack of money delayed his progress. He had wanted to complete his statue in time to help America celebrate its 100th birthday — the year of liberty — at the 1876 Philadelphia Exposition.<sup>4</sup> But all he had to show was the statue’s right arm and torch. Later, these stood in front of New York City’s Madison Square Park.

1. **Scout (verb):** to search for someone or something  
 2. **Embody (verb):** to give a visible form to an idea, quality, or feeling  
 3. **Radiant (adjective):** shining or glowing brightly  
 4. the first official World’s Fair in the United States

The world kept waiting for Miss Liberty. There still wasn't enough money to build her or her pedestal.<sup>5</sup>

France promised to pay for the statue. By 1880, France collected the money from more than 100 towns and cities and 100,000 people.

America promised to pay for the pedestal. It was a huge job. Some might even have said it was colossal.

Famous American artists, writers, and actors donated their works to an auction in 1883. More than 1,000 people received invitations to the auction and an exhibition. On the opening night, the head of the Pedestal Fund said, "Here is everything charming, ... elegant, ... beautiful, and ... splendid. It is such an exhibition as our country never saw before."

[10] But the exhibition and its auction failed to raise enough money.

## The Statue Comes Together

Hungarian immigrant Joseph Pulitzer, owner of *New York World* newspaper, came up with an idea. He printed daily pleas for money. He wrote, "The statue, the noble gift of our young sister republic is ready for us ... and we stand haggling<sup>6</sup> and begging and scheming in order to raise enough money."

Pulitzer's plan worked.

Money poured in from all over America from rich and poor and children, too. Jane M. gave 50 cents and wrote, "I am only a sewing girl, but I am in full sympathy with your effort." Another child scribbled, "I am a wee bit of a girl, yet I am ever so glad that I was born in a time to contribute... When I am old enough, I will ask my Mama and Papa to take me to see the statue, and I will always be proud that I began my career by sending you one dollar to aid in so good a cause." The *World* printed the name of each person who contributed, down to the last penny.

Finally, Miss Liberty could have her pedestal.

[15] Now it was time to build.

Once in New York, Bartholdi's crates traveled by barge to Bedloe's Island. There, small railway cars carried them on makeshift tracks to the foot of the pedestal. It took workers several months to put Miss Liberty together, using a system of numbers, letters, and symbols that had been marked on each piece back in France.

At last, two sets of steel beams locked into the Statue of Liberty's steel skeleton as it rose to its full height of 151 feet on top of its 89-foot pedestal. Nothing could shake the statue loose.

And on October 28, 1886, hundreds of thousands of people huddled<sup>7</sup> under their umbrellas in the rain and wind for the statue's dedication. And there was President Grover Cleveland accepting this gift from France — *Liberty Enlightening the World* — on behalf of the United States.

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5. the base on which a statue is mounted

6. attempting to decide on the price of something

7. **Huddle (verb):** to crowd together

She was well worth the wait.

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## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which statement identifies the central idea of the text?
  - A. Despite challenges, people failed to give up on the construction of the Statue of Liberty until it was completed.
  - B. France took on the irresponsible project of constructing the Statue of Liberty without any idea of how much it would cost.
  - C. People helped fund the construction of the Statue of Liberty because they wanted immigrants to be greeted by something when they arrived.
  - D. The construction of the Statue of Liberty took longer than expected because people lost interest in the project.
  
2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to part A?
  - A. "In this very place shall be raised the Statue of Liberty, as grand as the idea which it embodies, casting radiance upon the two worlds" (Paragraph 4)
  - B. "France promised to pay for the statue. By 1880, France collected the money from more than 100 towns and cities and 100,000 people." (Paragraph 7)
  - C. "Money poured in from all over America from rich and poor and children, too. Jane M. gave 50 cents and wrote, 'I am only a sewing girl, but I am in full sympathy with your effort.'" (Paragraph 13)
  - D. "It took workers several months to put Miss Liberty together, using a system of numbers, letters, and symbols that had been marked on each piece back in France." (Paragraph 16)
  
3. Which of the following describes the structure of information in the text?
  - A. The author compares the expectations people had for the Statue of Liberty to people's opinions after it was built.
  - B. The author describes the process it took to construct the Statue of Liberty and then the success of the final product.
  - C. The author describes what the Statue of Liberty means to be people today and then how it came to be.
  - D. The author compares what the Statue of Liberty meant to people in the past with what it means to people today.
  
4. Which of the following identifies the author's purpose in the text?
  - A. to reveal the close friendship that France had with America in the past
  - B. to emphasize how important the Statue of Liberty is to people immigrating to America
  - C. to inform people of the lengthy process required to construct the Statue of Liberty
  - D. to question whether or not the construction of the Statue of Liberty was worth the trouble

5. How did Americans feel about the construction of the Statue of Liberty?

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