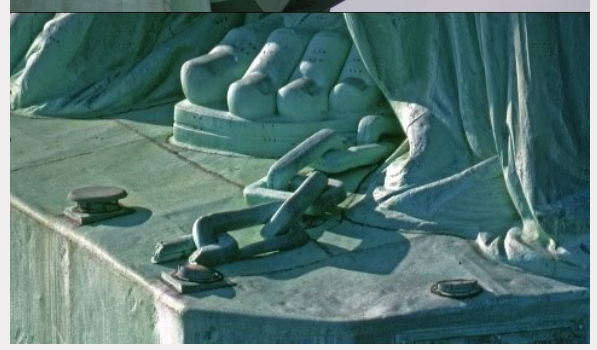


**SOURCE A - 1870**



**SOURCE B - TODAY**



TAGS:

*Statue of Liberty*

*American Identity*

## STATUE OF LIBERTY – 1865 THROUGH 1875

### SOURCE

**Source A:** An early model, or maquette, of the Statue of Liberty circa 1870 (MCNY Collections)

**Source B:** The completed Statue of Liberty how it appears today

### BACKGROUND

The Statue and its meanings have a long and complicated history. Today people associate the statue with immigration, but that was not always the case. The differing meanings of the statue in turn appear in different models of the statue as the idea developed over the 1870s. In fact, it would take over twenty years between the idea of the Statue and its installation in New York.

When the Civil War ended in 1865, Edouard de Laboulaye, a French legal historian, celebrated the abolition of slavery. He had long admired the American Constitution and American history, but strongly believed that slavery was inconsistent with American ideals of liberty. He wanted to create a statue to celebrate the country and the end of the Civil War. Laboulaye persuaded his friend a sculptor and fellow abolitionist, Frederic Auguste Bartholdi to create a statue as a gift to America.

Bartholdi's early model of the statue shows her holding broken chains in her left hand, symbolizing abolition. But as Bartholdi traveled America, trying to win acceptance for the idea and to fundraise for it, he and Laboulaye shifted focus to the idea of a shared history of revolutions, France's in 1789 and America's in 1776. That idea seemed to gain the most traction in appealing to a broad swath of Americans. Bartholdi replaced the chains in the statue's hand with a tablet with the date of the revolution. He kept broken chains at the Statue's feet. She came to be called "Liberty Enlightening the World."

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

*As you read the source consider how it informs these questions:*

- Which version of the statue do you prefer? Why?
- It took over 20 years between the conception of the Statue and its installation. To what extent were Bartholdi's and Laboulaye's ideas affected by the passage of time? To what extent were they affected by the need to gain popular support of the statue?
- Why do you think most people at the time were most interested in the construction and engineering of the statue as opposed to the meaning or interpretation of the statue?
- Bartholdi referred to the statue as "Liberty Enlightening the World." What do you think this meant?

### HISTORICAL NOTES

*Definitions of terms used in the source.*