Statue of Liberty: Icon of Freedom and Hope!

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Introduction

Since its dedication in 1886, the Statue of Liberty (Liberty Enlightening the World) has been a recognized symbol of America and American ideals throughout the world.

Standing on Liberty Island (Bedloe’s Island) in New York Harbor, it is truly monumental in size rising over 300 feet above the water.

It was the first image of America for the millions of immigrants that arrived by ship during the succeeding decades.

An image of freedom and hope and the promise of a better life.
Statue of Liberty History

- Presenting a gift representing Republican ideals to the people of the United States was first conceived by Edouard Laboulaye in 1865.
- Laboulaye was a writer, statesman, and leader of the Republican movement in France.
- He later was instrumental in founding the Third French Republic in 1875 after the defeat of Napoleon III by the Prussians.
- The group headed by Laboulaye hired Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, a young sculptor, to create an artistic “gift of significance.”
Statue of Liberty History

- Prior to receiving the commission from Laboulaye, Bartholdi had traveled to Egypt to view the construction of the Suez Canal.
- Bartholdi proposed a lighthouse of significant proportions be erected at the entrance to the canal.
- Due to hard economic times in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, the lighthouse was not funded.
- Bartholdi’s design for the lighthouse featured a robed Egyptian peasant woman carrying a torch. Light would emanate from both the torch and the woman’s crown.
- It is said that Bartholdi modeled the lighthouse after the Roman goddess Libertas, the goddess for freedom from slavery.

Stamp Issued in 1985
As Part of the Statue of Liberty Centennial
Statue of Liberty History

- With the Laboulaye commission Bartholdi had a chance to build his “lighthouse”.
- Prior to starting work on the Statue, Bartholdi visited the United States to pick a location for the Statue. The site he picked is the present Statue’s location (Liberty Island formerly Bedloe’s Island)
- Bartholdi was so impressed by the size of America, that he was determined to create a statue of monumental proportions (much larger than the lighthouse proposed for the Suez Canal).
- Given the size of the proposed Statue their were two major problems: 1) physical support for such a large statue, and 2) finding enough money to complete the project.
- The physical support problems were resolved when Bartholdi hired Gustav Eiffel (later to build the Eiffel Tower) and George Koechlin (Eiffel’s Chief Engineer) designed the support armature and the frame work to hang the Statue’s copper skin.
Statue of Liberty History

- For the funding, due to the enormous cost (About $530,000 US dollars), it was decided that France would pay for the Statue and the United States would pay for the pedestal. A joint French-American Committee was formed.

- Fund raising efforts began in both countries. France was more successful in their efforts although construction problems and lack of timely funding slowed Statue construction. The Statue was originally supposed to be given to the United States in 1876 for its Centennial celebration.

- The American committee (pedestal committee) was headed by William Evarts a well respected legislator. Its secretary was Richard Butler. Pedestal funding lagged significantly. It was not until Pulitzer and his newspaper took over the fund raising campaign that enough money was finally raised.

- The pedestal was design by noted American architect Richard Morris Hunt.

- By 1884 the Statue of Liberty was completely assembled, towering above the streets of Paris. It was officially presented to the American Ambassador (Levi Morton) on July 4, 1884.
Statue of Liberty History

- Fund Raising in the United States
- Fund raising in Paris

Centennial Exposition 1876
Philadelphia, PA

Paris Exposition 1878
Statue of Liberty History

- Correspondence from France to the American Statue of Liberty Committee
Statue of Liberty History

- The Statue of Liberty was then dismantled into 350 pieces and packed into 214 crates. The crates were shipped to New York aboard the French frigate *Isere* where they arrived and were placed in storage for almost a year before the pedestal was completed.
- Re-assembly of the Statue took four months and the Statue was dedicated on October 28, 1886 by President Grover Cleveland.
- The Statue served its physical design function of being a lighthouse from 1886 until 1902.
- It was the first Lighthouse in the United States to use electricity to power the light.
- At the time of its dedication, the Statue of Liberty’s light could be seen from almost 40 km off shore.
First Stamps

- First United States postage stamps depicting the Statue of Liberty were issued in 1922
- First postage stamps in the world depicting the Statue of Liberty were issued by Uruguay in 1919. They marked the end of World War I.
Imagery-Semiotics

- Statue Elements
  - Statue appearance many associate with Libertas, the Roman Goddess of freedom from slavery
  - Torch signifies enlightenment ("Liberty Enlightening the World")
  - Seven spikes in crown often interpreted as representing the seven continents and the seven seas
  - Tablet marks the date of our independence, but is also keystone shaped indicating knowledge
  - Left foot tramples broken shackles, signifying our wish to be free
  - Right foot raised indicating she is moving forward (to carry her message to the world)
  - Enormous size represents vastness of the United States
Imagery-Semiotics

- Symbols of New York
Imagery-Semiotics

- Symbols of America

Spain Scott No. C56
Imagery-Semiotics

- Symbols of Freedom and Hope

Philippines Scott No. 572
Early Uses

- Allies Post Card

- French Poster Stamps

*Type I. A second card exists with Russia replaced by Costa Rica*
Early Uses

- War Savings Certificates
NWLDA*

- NWLDA was formed in 1908 to promote the liquor industry and protect it from the growing anti-liquor sentiment caused by the Temperance Movement.
- The NWLDA stamps were sold to liquor distillers and wholesalers to raise money for anti-tamperance activities.
- Dealers would then place these stamps on their invoices and correspondence to signify their support of the NWLDA lobbying efforts against the passage of the 18th Amendment.

*National Wholesale Liquor Dealers Association*
NWLDA*

- Original Model

*National Wholesale Liquor Dealers Association*
NWLDA*

- Panes of 25

- Unknown plate layout, but probably 4 panes wide by three panes high.

- Each pane of 25 represents a single month.

- Example April 1917.

*National Wholesale Liquor Dealers Association*
NWLDA*

- Image Comparison: NWLDA Stamps, Original Engraving, and the First United States Postage Stamps

*National Wholesale Liquor Dealers Association*
Defense Series of 1940

Ordered sold by the US Government in place of current regular issues!

Alert Americans to War threat in Europe and the need to be Prepared!
Liberty Series Design

Sold from 1954 to well into the 1970s!
US Bicentennial (1976)

- Twenty nations issued stamps featuring the Statue

Niger (Scott Nos. 352-353, C269-C271)
Statue Centennial (1986)

- Over 56 nations issued stamps featuring the Statue

Stamps feature period views of the Statue

- The United States and France issued a common design.
“United We Stand”

- Over 30 nations issued remembrances to the victims of September 11, 2001. Many of these were in the form of sheetlets of four, containing images of the Statue of Liberty on the stamps and/or the sheetlet margin. Many had the common theme “United We Stand.”
Summary

- Since its beginning, the Statue of Liberty has been a symbol of America and its ideals.
- The Statue on the representational level has been a symbol of New York City, the United States, and the ideals of freedom and hope.
- Such messages have been portrayed on postage stamps from 1918 to the present day. Over 650 stamps have been issued worldwide.
- Poster stamps and other Cinderella stamps have used the Statue image to convey similar messages since its dedication in 1886.
- The Statue of Liberty sends a powerful positive semiotic message regardless of its interpretation or intended stamp design representation.