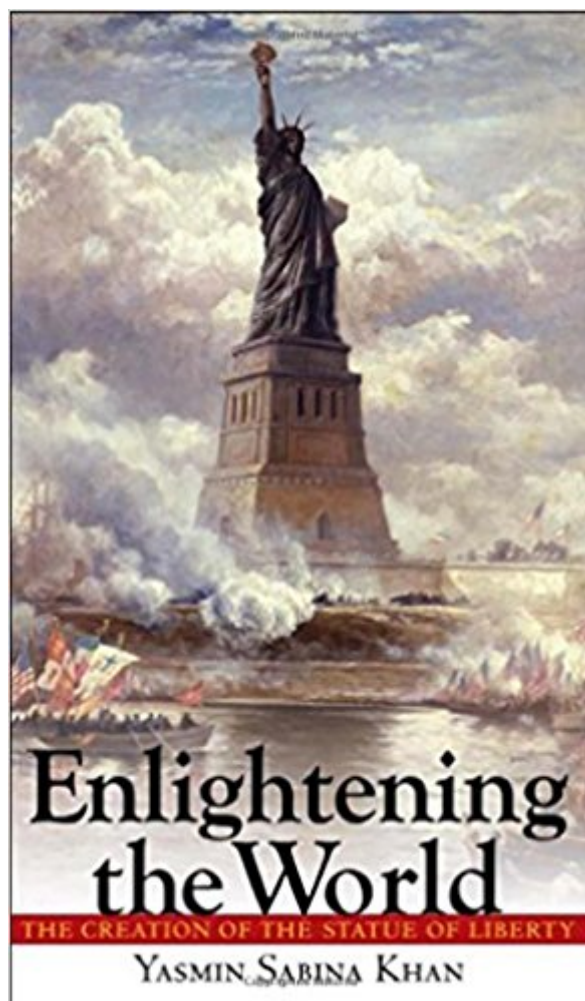


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# Enlightening The World: The Creation Of The Statue Of Liberty



## Synopsis

Conceived in the aftermath of the American Civil War and the grief that swept France over the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, the Statue of Liberty has been a potent symbol of the nation's highest ideals since it was unveiled in 1886. Dramatically situated on Bedloe's Island (now Liberty Island) in the harbor of New York City, the statue has served as a reminder for generations of immigrants of America's long tradition as an asylum for the poor and the persecuted. Although it is among the most famous sculptures in the world, the story of its creation is little known. In *Enlightening the World*, Yasmin Sabina Khan provides a fascinating new account of the design of the statue and the lives of the people who created it, along with the tumultuous events in France and the United States that influenced them. Khan's narrative begins on the battlefields of Gettysburg, where Lincoln framed the Civil War as a conflict testing whether a nation "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal . . . can long endure." People around the world agreed with Lincoln that this question "and the fate of the Union itself" affected the "whole family of man." Inspired by the Union's victory and stunned by Lincoln's death, Édouard-René Lefebvre de Laboulaye, a legal scholar and noted proponent of friendship between his native France and the United States, conceived of a monument to liberty and the exemplary form of government established by the young nation. For Laboulaye and all of France, the statue would be called *La Liberté éclairant le Monde* "Liberty Enlightening the World." Following the statue's twenty-year journey from concept to construction, Khan reveals in brilliant detail the intersecting lives that led to the realization of Laboulaye's dream: the Marquis de Lafayette; Alexis de Tocqueville; the sculptor Auguste Bartholdi, whose commitment to liberty and self-government was heightened by his experience of the Franco-Prussian War; the architect Richard Morris Hunt, the first American to study architecture at the prestigious École des Beaux-Arts in Paris; and the engineer Gustave Eiffel, who pushed the limits for large-scale metal construction. Also here are the contributions of such figures as Senators Charles Sumner and Carl Schurz, the artist John La Farge, the poet Emma Lazarus, and the publisher Joseph Pulitzer. While exploring the creation of the statue, Khan points to possible sources "several previously unexamined" for the design. She links the statue's crown of rays with Benjamin Franklin's image of the rising sun and makes a clear connection between the broken chain under Lady Liberty's foot and the abolition of slavery. Through the rich story of this remarkable national monument, *Enlightening the World* celebrates both a work of human accomplishment and the vitality of liberty.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Despite countless publications on New York harbor's Statue of Liberty, no previous study has detailed its complex history. Independent scholar Khan ably fills this gap with a lucid account connecting France's widespread grief over Abraham Lincoln's 1865 assassination with that country's own struggles to establish a lasting democracy. Khan shows how Édouard-René Lefebvre de Laboulaye, a legal scholar and celebrant of French-American friendship, led others to design and construct what was officially called Liberty Enlightening the World. Other principals included the distinguished sculptor Auguste Bartholdi; visionary engineer Gustave Eiffel; prominent architect Richard Morris Hunt; and powerful publisher and fund-raiser Joseph Pulitzer. Khan sketches their lives plus that of Emma Lazarus, whose famous sonnet was added to the statue's pedestal in 1903. Khan suggests that the statue's crown of rays may derive from Benjamin Franklin's image of a sun rising over the new republic and that the broken chain under Lady Liberty's foot symbolizes slavery's abolition after the Civil War. Also intriguing were denunciations by women and African-Americans alike of the opening-day ceremonies as exaggerating the nation's commitment to liberty for all An important book for general audiences. B&w photos. (Mar.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Two decades ago, disturbing results of a survey indicated that French high-school students knew more than their American counterparts about the Statue of Liberty. This excellent account of the conception, design, and construction of The Lady can remedy that imbalance. Khan has earned degrees in civil and structural engineering. She begins by describing the political and cultural

context in both the U.S. and France following the Civil War. Considering the apparent disdain for the U.S. shown by many contemporary French intellectuals, it is useful to be reminded that America was viewed as a beacon of progress and liberty to many French people a century ago. The concept of a monument to that liberty was promoted by a legal scholar, Édouard-René Lefebvre de Laboulaye, and Khan eloquently describes how the concept turned into reality over a span of 20 years. Along the way, she provides many fascinating vignettes and portraits of several of the key political and artistic personalities who contributed to the project. This is a beautifully written tribute to a great monument and to those who made its creation possible. --Jay Freeman

My favorite "text" on the Statue of Liberty. Well written and covers so much more than most books on the "lady." Not only is it great from an historical point of view but the author seems to have a real feel for the Statue and "building" and planning a large project like this.

The book provides valuable insight as to how and why the Statue came into being. The fact that the statue ever came to America is a sheer miracle and the author's historical review details why. A must read if you want to know the entire story of this iconic creation.

Great read! Highly recommend!

I ordered this book as a gift and it arrived quickly and as promised. I would definitely order from this vendor again.

Excellent research. This is the first book with serious research about the history of the statue of liberty. One learns what was happening in the USA and France before and at the time of the construction of the Statue of Liberty. We thank the author for her contribution to American History.

Unknown in total. Given as a gift to a civil engineer. Sabina Khan seems to be as brilliant as her father.

This book provides in-depth details about people associated with the construction of the Statue of Liberty that I have never found in any other book. It's for the person who really likes details about historical events that you never learned in school.

An excellent but thin survey of the people and the forces behind the creation of the Statue of Liberty. The author gives us brief biographical sketches of the French citizens - Eduoard Laboulaye, Auguste Bartholdi, Gustave Eiffel - whose passion for liberty in their own country and their admiration of what they saw in the American experiment energized them to offer the most magnificent gift any one nation has ever given another (that didn't have warriors hidden inside...). We also get biographical sketches on the Americans who worked on the other side of the Atlantic - Richard Morris Hunt, chief among them, but also Joseph Pulitzer - to make sure there was a strong reception and a home for Lady Liberty once she arrived. Emma Lazarus's story is all too briefly told, reflecting her own shortened life, but how her famous poem came about is an enjoyable companion to the engineering tales shared in this book. The overarching theme of how self-government in the young American republic inspired those in France yearning to establish a similarly enduring one gives powerful meaning and reason to why the citizens of one nation would be so moved as to give the other nation, and the world, an eternal symbol of liberty.

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