

#109 The French Connection – Auguste Bartholdi’s Statue of Liberty and Alsace-Lorraine

Alsace-Lorraine. One reason we are covering Alsace-Lorraine in some depth is because of its association with Auguste Bartholdi, the sculptor of the Statue of Liberty.



Auguste Bartholdi. Bartholdi (*pictured*) was born in the city of Colmar, in Alsace. Throughout the 1860’s, Bartholdi worked on well-received patriotic monuments for Colmar. As an officer in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, he took part in the defense of Colmar. Bartholdi was desolate over the French defeat and the loss to Germany of his beloved Alsace. From 1871-80, Bartholdi would sculpt a piece called the *Lion of Belfort*, a monument celebrating the resistance of the people of Belfort, France, to the Germans in the Franco-Prussian War.

Also in 1871, Bartholdi made his first trip to America, to promote the idea of a colossal statue of *liberty* as a gift from the French to the American people, in honor of the American centennial of American independence. Historians make the point that the French loss of Alsace to the Germans in 1871 only enhanced Bartholdi’s understanding of the importance of liberty.

[On July 4, 2004, Colmar, France, in the region of Alsace, dedicated a smaller, 12-meter high replica of the Statue of Liberty to honor the centennial of Bartholdi’s death on October 4, 1904.]



The *Lion of Belfort* is a sculpture by August Bartholdi, architect of the *Statue of Liberty*, located in Belfort, France. It is a monument celebrating the resistance of the people of Belfort, France, to the Germans in the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian War.

Key Understanding: *Auguste Bartholdi’s Statue of Liberty and Alsace-Lorraine.* The Franco-Prussian War, which resulted in Auguste Bartholdi’s Alsace being ceded to Germany by France, is a part of the story of the creation of Bartholdi’s *Liberty Enlightening the World*, the Statue of Liberty. The point is that the Franco-Prussian War division between France and Germany of the Charlemagne Split was a part of the French-American Union, or *French Connection*, that was the central theme of Lady Liberty. Thus, the two events together of the Franco-Prussian War and the creation of the Statue of Liberty exhibit the theme of a French-American Union vs. Germany, which would manifest itself fully in World Wars I and II.

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