



Smithsonian  
*Donald W. Reynolds Center for  
American Art and Portraiture*  
*National Portrait Gallery*

# News

**Media Only:** Bethany Bentley (202) 633-8293

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**Media website:** <http://newsdesk.si.edu>

## **Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery Marks the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War with Seven Exhibitions**

The National Portrait Gallery will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, fought from 1861 to 1865, with seven exhibitions, many of which draw heavily on the permanent collection. These rotating presentations, which mark each year of the war, complement the installation of objects from the Civil War that are on long-term display in the exhibition "American Origins."

In addition, the building that houses the museum at Eighth and F Streets N.W., served as a Civil War barracks and hospital to Union soldiers and hosted Lincoln's second inaugural ball March 6, 1865, as the war was nearing its conclusion.

### **The Death of Ellsworth**

April 29, 2011, through March 18, 2012

Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth, the first Union officer to be killed in the Civil War, commanded a volunteer regiment that participated in the occupation of northern Virginia May 24, 1861. Ellsworth's death at the hands of a local innkeeper in Alexandria made headlines throughout the country. He was made a martyr and served as an inspirational figure for the North throughout the course of the war. Francis E. Brownell, the soldier who mortally avenged Ellsworth's assailant, bequeathed several artifacts to the Smithsonian Institution. Objects on view include Alonzo Chappel's historic painting *Death of Ellsworth* and memorial lithographs that were produced throughout the war in Ellsworth's memory. NPG curator: James Barber.

### **The Confederate Sketches of Adalbert Volck**

March 30, 2012, through Jan. 21, 2013

Having come to the United States in 1848 in the wave of immigration from Germany after its failed revolution, Adalbert J. Volck settled in Baltimore. Unusual for the politically liberal German émigrés, Volck sided with the Confederacy. Volck, a dentist by trade, served the southern cause in several ways, including smuggling medical supplies to Virginia across the Potomac. However, Volck's most significant contribution to the Confederate cause was his production of pictorial propaganda that

vilified President Abraham Lincoln, northern abolitionists and Union soldiers. While his major publication, *Sketches from the Civil War in North America*, had a small circulation, the etchings reveal the Confederate mindset and contemporary southern opinion. NPG curator: Wendy Wick Reaves.

### **Mathew Brady's Photographs of Union Generals**

March 30, 2012, through May 2015

Although Mathew Brady may be best known for his photographic documentation of the Civil War, his New York and Washington galleries also did a brisk business throughout the conflict by producing studio portraits of the ever-changing roster of Union army generals. Featuring modern albumen prints made from the original Brady negatives in the National Portrait Gallery's Frederick Hill Meserve Collection, this installation will include portraits of many of the North's military leaders, from George McClellan and Ambrose Burnside to William Tecumseh Sherman and Ulysses Grant. NPG curator: Ann Shumard.

### **The African American Experience during the Civil War**

Feb. 1, 2013, through March 2, 2014

Drawing principally from images in the National Portrait Gallery's collection, this exhibition will explore the roles that individual African Americans played during the Civil War and will focus attention on the impact of President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Among the featured stories will be those of Frederick Douglass, Martin Delaney, Sojourner Truth and Gordon, who escaped from enslavement on a Louisiana plantation to join a black regiment and fight for the Union. NPG curator: Ann Shumard.

### **Washington During the Civil War**

March 1, 2013, through Jan. 26, 2014

This exhibition will use photographic reproductions to show Civil War activities around the Patent Office Building—now home to the National Portrait Gallery and Smithsonian American Art Museum—as well as other recognizable locations in and around the District of Columbia. A display of the forts that surrounded and protected the District, as well as large-scale views and maps of the city will also be shown. NPG curator: James Barber.

### **Grant and Lee**

March 14, 2014, through April 19, 2015

The Civil War rivalry between generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee is one of the most memorable in American military history. Lee was a polished and seemingly invincible Confederate commander until he encountered Grant, a rough-hewn upstart, in the Virginia campaigns of 1864 and 1865. Ultimately, the Union would prevail, in part with the adoption of a total war philosophy of destroying both armies and resources. This exhibition considers the personal lives and professional rivalries of Grant and Lee through paintings, photographs, documents and associative objects. NPG curator: David C. Ward.

### **Alexander Gardner**

Oct. 10, 2014, through March 1, 2015

Feb. 5, 2015, marks the 150th anniversary of Alexander Gardner's "cracked-plate" portrait of President Abraham Lincoln. Arguably the most iconic likeness of the 16th president today, it was

created by a man whose life and photographic career remain relatively undocumented and underappreciated. This oversight is notable, as Gardner (1821–1882) was perhaps the most progressive photographer of the Civil War era. He was influential not only in advancing photographic portraiture beyond traditional compositional conventions, but also in realizing photography’s power as a documentary tool. In his mind, photographs were more than static likenesses but were active images capable of conveying narrative and recording history. The author of the first American photographic book, a leading contributor of photographic views to the illustrated press and a dedicated abolitionist, Gardner was a pioneer in his field. NPG curator: Frank H. Goodyear III.

## **National Portrait Gallery**

The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery tells the history of America through the individuals who have shaped its culture. Through the visual arts, performing arts and new media, the Portrait Gallery portrays poets and presidents, visionaries and villains, actors and activists whose lives tell the American story. The National Portrait Gallery, part of the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture, is located at Eighth and F streets N.W., Washington, D.C. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Website: [npg.si.edu](http://npg.si.edu).

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