



Alexandria Times

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Marking Time

Rare ceramic pitcher on display

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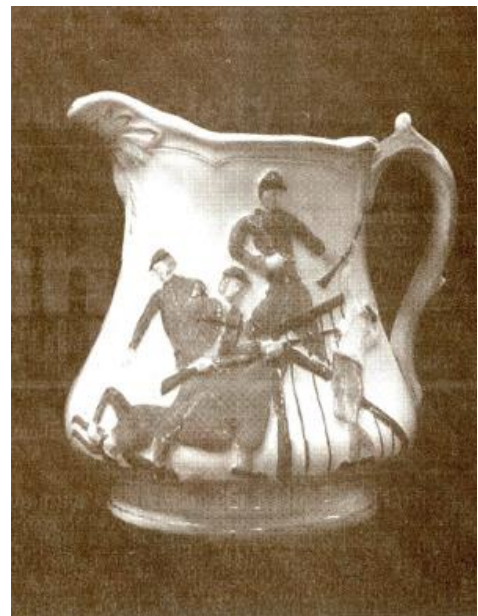
Image: Ceramic pitcher marks death of Union Colonel Elmer Ellsworth in Alexandria. Photo, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, Office of Historic Alexandria.

A ceramic pitcher at Fort Ward Museum is doubly significant in American history. The pitcher's design depicts the death of Union Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth in Alexandria, the first Union officer to be slain in the Civil War. The porcelain pitcher was also the first piece of pottery made in the United States to commemorate a specific historical event.

Crafted by the Millington, Astbury and Poulson in Trenton, N.J., the 8 1/2-inch pitcher is believed to be modeled by Josiah Jones. The polychrome artwork shows Ellsworth's shooting death at Marshall House after he removed a Confederate flag from the hotel during the early days of Alexandria's Federal occupation. The scene also shows the death of Ellsworth's assailant, innkeeper James W. Jackson, who was shot to death in the stairwell by Ellsworth's soldiers.

Marshall House stood at the corner of King and Pitt streets and was torn down in the 1960s when three blocks of King Street were redeveloped during urban renewal efforts.

Fort Ward Museum acquired this rare piece in 2003 and it is on public display at the museum with other Ellsworth-related collection items. To learn more about Ellsworth and Alexandria's occupation during the Civil War, visit Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site at 4301 West Braddock Road or online at www.fortward.org.



"Out of the Attic" is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as "Marking Time" and explored Alexandria's history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into "Out of the Attic" and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.

These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by Amy Bertsch, former Public Information Officer, and Lance Mallamo, Director, on behalf of the Office of Historic Alexandria.