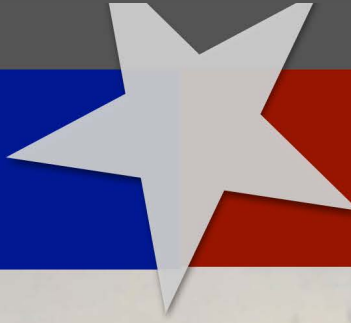


Presidential Series  
Field Trip Enhancement Program



# Paint Like Ike



This program is generously funded by the  
**Robert E. and Patricia A.  
Schmidt Foundation**



# Paint Like Ike

## Introduction:

Shortly before D-Day, General Eisenhower outlined instructions for the most comprehensive effort in history by an army to fight a war while also trying to minimize the damage to cultural treasures; a program known as the Monuments Men. Just after World War II, Ike was introduced to the hobby of painting, which he enjoyed for the rest of his life.

In this lesson, students will view Eisenhower's easels, paint kit, several of his complete works, and one of Ike's incomplete paintings. Students will "paint like Ike" to finish that painting while learning about Eisenhower's efforts to save art from Hitler.

## Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to the qualities of a primary source.
- Students will examine General Eisenhower's involvement in the Monuments Men operation.
- Students will learn about the painting hobby of Dwight D. Eisenhower.
- Students will engage in painting a landscape.

## Acknowledgements:

This lesson was produced in October, 2015 by the Eisenhower Foundation, Mitzi Bankes Gose, writer. Special thanks goes to William Snyder, Curator of the Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum and Boyhood Home for sharing this lesson idea, his expertise, and his patience. Thanks to Kathy Struss, Audio/Visual Archivist for the Eisenhower Presidential Library. Thank you to Emily Miller and Robin Black of the Eisenhower Foundation for editing. Thank you to Karen Cooper for her art education expertise and for allowing us to pilot this with her art classes at Eisenhower Elementary School in Abilene, Kansas.

- 3 Lesson Plan
- 4 **Ike's paintings**
- 10 **Paint Like Ike**
- 12 **Saving Art from Hitler**
- 14 **Share it!**
- 15 Credits

**Time Requirement:** Three - four

hours **Grade Range:** 6th - 12th grades

## National Curriculum Standards:

### National Core Arts Standards

- Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding

### National Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

- Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-8.7: Integrate visual information

### National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: Culture
- Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change
- Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

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# LESSON PLAN

## **Materials Needed:**

- Make copies of the unfinished landscape on page 11 (one per student).
- Print out or make Keynote of the images, paintings, and documents provided throughout this lesson.
- Acrylic paints
- Paint brushes of assorted sizes
- Paper plates (or painter's palette)
- Paper towels
- Cups of water

## **Directions:**

1. Discuss Ike's painting hobby using the information on pages four through seven and the images and paintings on pages four through nine.
2. Share the information and images about Ike's unfinished landscape painting and paint kit that is on display at the Eisenhower Presidential Museum from page ten.
3. Distribute a paper plate (or painter's palette) with paint daubs, paper towels, paint brushes, and cups of water to pairs of students.
4. Present basic painting techniques for students to use on the top third (sky portion) of Ike's unfinished landscape. Facilitate student painting.
5. While allowing the paintings to dry, discuss the mission and outcome of the Monuments Men of World War II using the information, images, documents, and step one on pages 12 and 13 (primary source documents from the Eisenhower Presidential Library).
6. Present basic painting techniques for students to use on the middle third (tree/hills portion) of Ike's unfinished landscape. Facilitate student painting.
7. While allowing the paintings to dry, discuss and facilitate step two presented on page 12 ("Hitler the Artist Defines Degenerate Art").
8. Present basic painting techniques for students to use on the bottom third (foreground) of Ike's unfinished landscape. Facilitate student painting.
9. While allowing the paintings to dry, discuss and facilitate discussion and/or a homework assignment using step three presented on page 12 (*What is the value to society in protecting art and other cultural treasures?*).
10. Proudly share student paintings to social media pages using #ILikeIke and @EisenhowerFoundation (see page 14). Create an exhibit for parents!



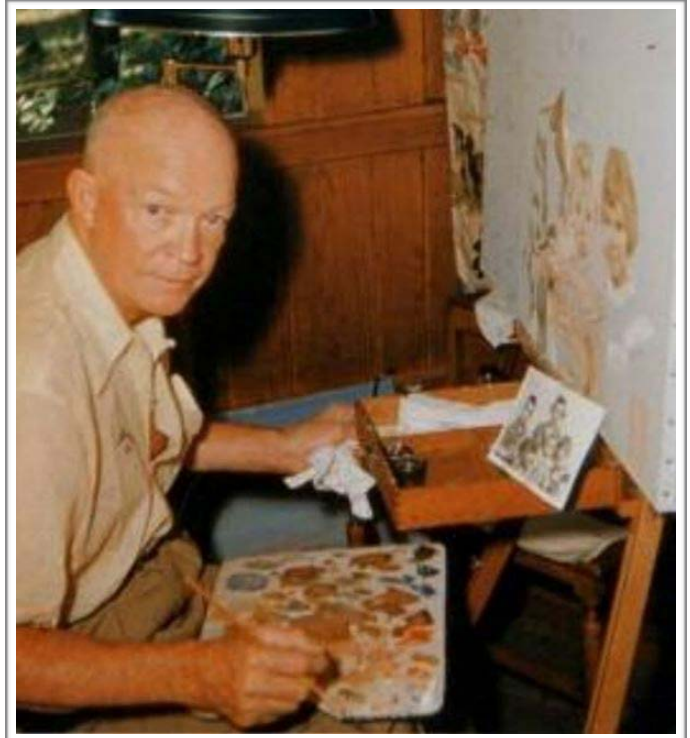


# Ike's Paintings

Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Ike," began painting soon after the end of World War II. When he began his position as President of Columbia University, Eisenhower watched as his wife, Mamie had her portrait painted by artist Thomas E. Stephens. When it was finished and the two of them left the room, Ike felt inspired to try his hand at painting. He picked up the artist's palette, with its remaining paints, affixed a white dust cloth over a box, and began to reproduce the portrait of Mamie. According to Ike in his memoir *At Ease, Stories I Tell to Friends*, when Stephens and Mamie returned "I displayed my version of Mamie, weird and wonderful to behold, and we all laughed heartily."

However, Stephens encouraged Eisenhower to continue painting and soon sent him a complete set of oil paints. Ike wrote that the set included "everything I could possibly need—except ability—to start painting. I looked upon the present as a wonderful gesture and a sheer waste of money. I had never had any instruction in painting; the only thing of possible help was a working knowledge of linear perspective, a subject we had studied at West Point."

So it was in 1948, at the age of 58, that Eisenhower set up his first paint



Eisenhower painting from a photo of his grandchildren while vacationing at Camp David, August 1, 1954.



*Mexican*, 1953. Ike painted this portrait from an advertisement. It was one of Mamie's favorite paintings.

easel in a top floor “penthouse” of the Presidential Mansion they were living in at Columbia University and began to paint in his spare time. This retreat provided Ike the privacy and quiet he craved. He wrote that after he opened the paint set he found “that in spite of my complete lack of talent, the attempt to paint was absorbing.”

Eisenhower’s first attempts were copies of photos and other paintings, especially landscapes and portraits. He destroyed nearly all of them. He then moved on to painting live portraits and landscapes, and gave several of them as gifts. He wrote, “I’ve tried many landscapes and still lifes but with magnificent audacity, I have tried more portraits than anything else. I’ve also burned more portraits than anything else.”

Eisenhower’s painting hobby continued through his assignment in Paris as Supreme Commander of NATO, and his two terms as President of the United States. He established a studio in a small, private room on the second floor of the White House where his paints and canvas were always out and ready for any spare minutes that he could stop in to paint. According to Kenneth S. Davis, author of *The Eisenhower College Collection: The Paintings of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, Ike told an interviewer he would sometimes



*Deer at Watering Pond, 1952.*



*Princess Anne, 1957.*



*Byers Peak Ranch, no date.*



“dash in for a bare two minutes to put just a spot of color here or there on a work in progress; yet at other times— on a rainy Sunday afternoon, for instance, when he could not play golf— he painted for hours.”

Painting was also a hobby shared by friend and British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, and the two shared letters that included comments on their latest paintings.

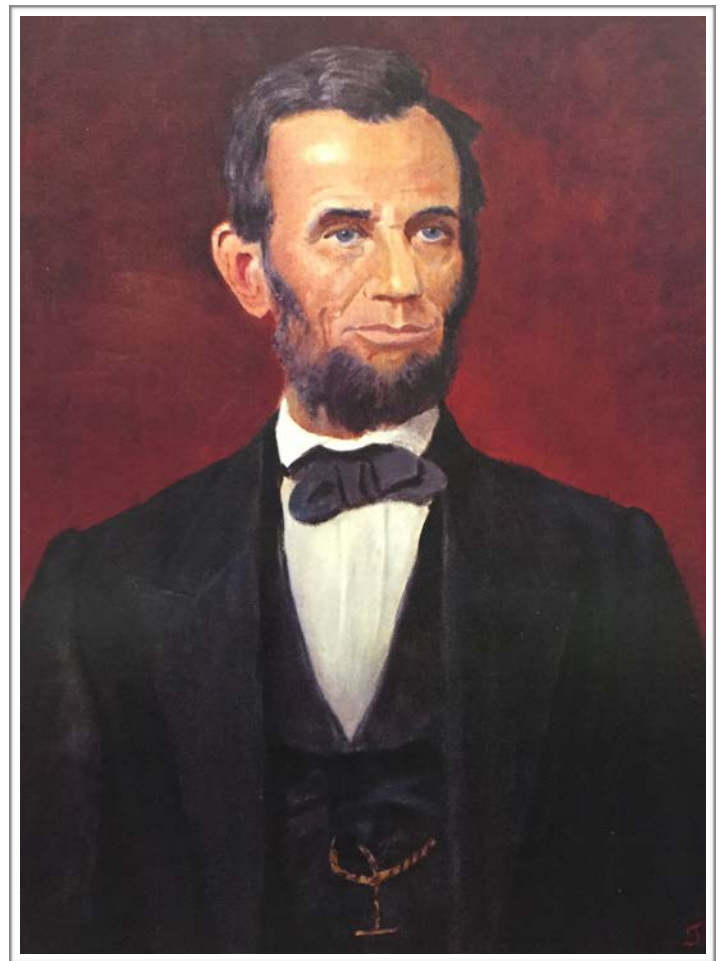
After his presidency, Ike and Mamie retired to a farm near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. There, Ike continued his hobby of painting on an enclosed sun porch.

One estimate suggests that Eisenhower completed almost 300 paintings in the last 20 years of his life. However, he did not consider himself an artist or a painter of any skill. He insisted it was just a hobby, and that his painting contained no social or political commentary. He painted solely for pleasure and relaxation. According to Davis, Ike told a *New York Times* reporter in 1967, “[Painting] is the best way in the world to relax. You put the surface of your mind on the canvas while the rest of your mind is making decisions.”

Eisenhower’s career had centered around civilizations in conflict, and it appears his tranquil paintings provided balance. Throughout the years



*The Red Barn*, 1958. This painting was reproduced as a Christmas card for members of the White House staff and friends of the First Family.



*Portrait of Lincoln*, 1953. Eisenhower greatly admired Lincoln and painted several portraits of him. This one was used as the White House Christmas card in 1953.

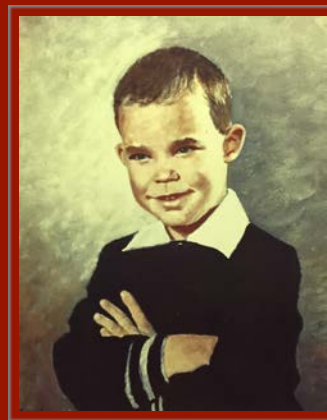
of his hobby, Ike's paintings continued to be literal portrayals of landscape or people he admired; simple subjects that pleased him. Just two years prior to his death, Eisenhower wrote in *At Ease*, "After eighteen years, I am still messy; my hands are better suited to an ax handle than a tiny brush. I attempt only simple compositions. My frustration is complete when I try for anything delicate. Even yet I refuse to refer to my productions as paintings. They are daubs, born of my love of color and in my pleasure in experimenting, nothing else. I destroy two out of each three I start. One of the real satisfactions is finding out how closely I come to depicting what I have in mind—and many times I want to see what I am going to do and never know what it will be."



*The Bavarian Church, 1958.*



*White Church in the Country, 1962.* Eisenhower painted this while vacationing in the desert of Palm Springs, California. He then gave it as a gift to his former Vice-President, the current sitting President and Mrs. Richard Nixon. It hung in the family quarters of the White House during the Nixon presidency.



*Grandson David Eisenhower, c. 1953.*



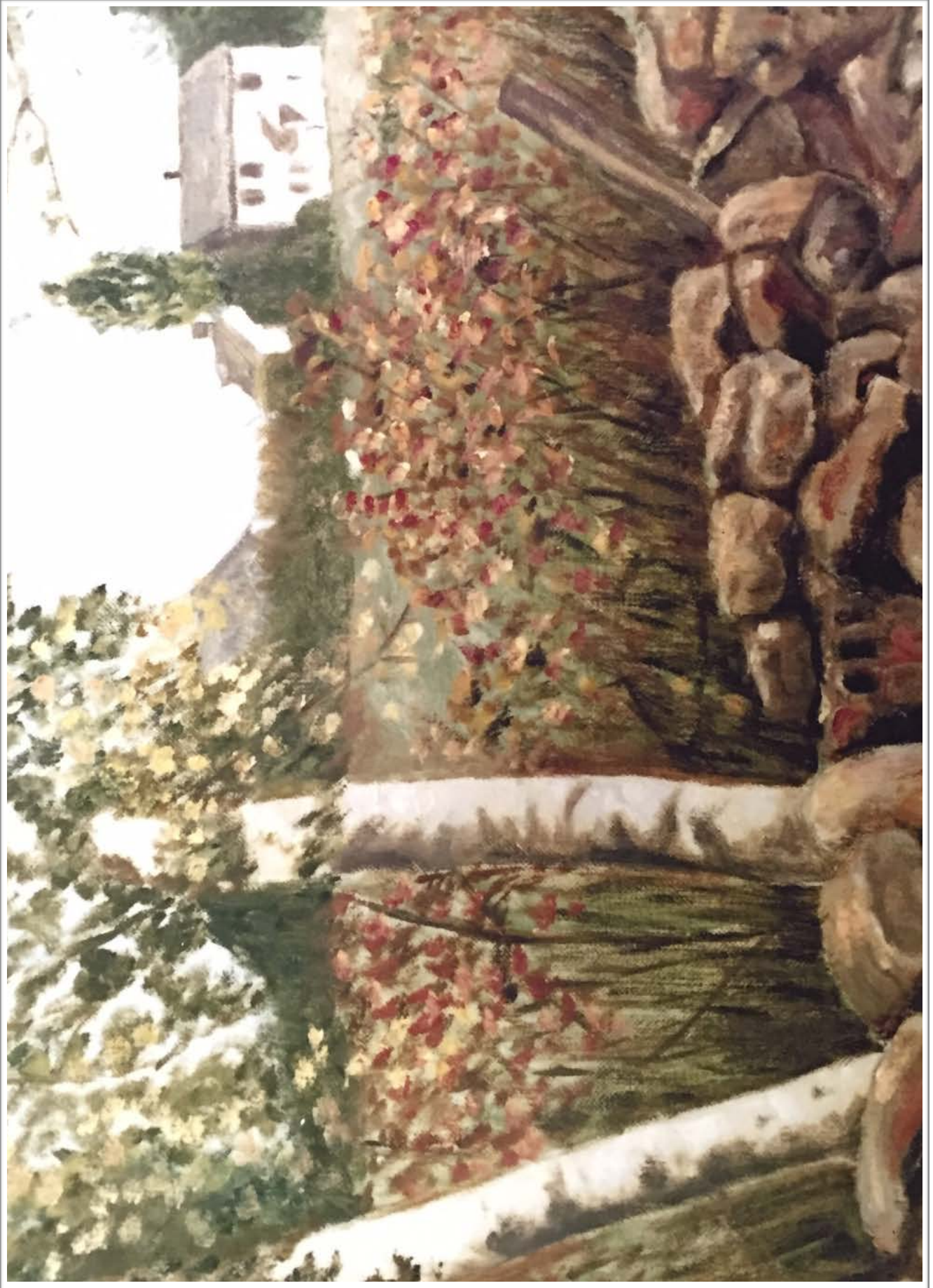
This is a photo of the sunroom in the Eisenhower's home at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where Ike liked to paint. One of his last paintings—of Culzean Castle in Scotland—still stands on display.





Photo of Ike painting is courtesy of the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum.





Landscape with Stone Fence and Farm House, c. 1955.

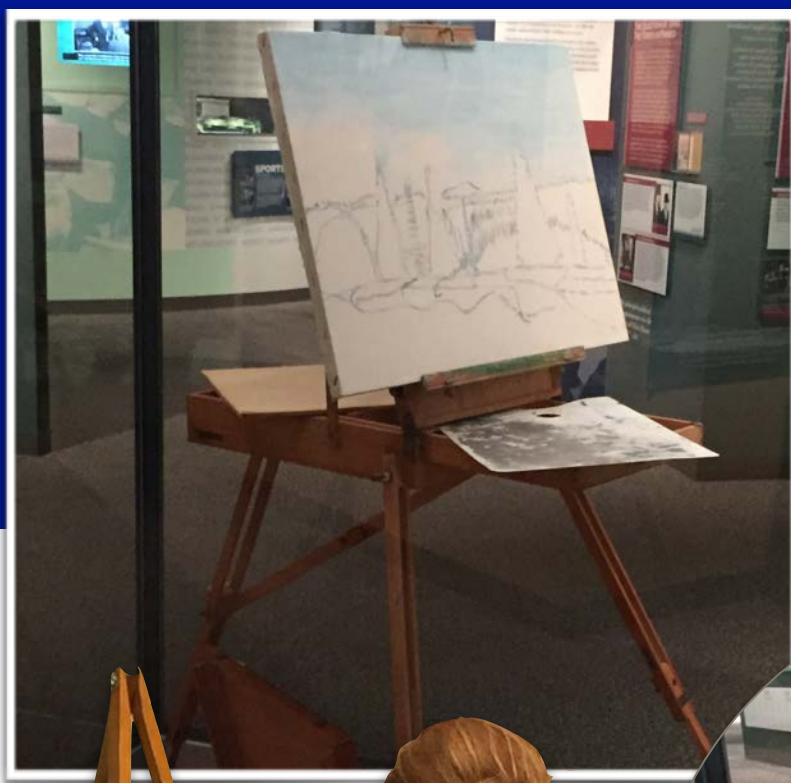




# Paint Like Ike

Eisenhower continued to paint until his health prevented him from doing so. When he died on March 28, 1969, he left four unfinished paintings. We would like to see you finish what Ike started!

Print out the unfinished landscape and show how you would complete it. Ike preferred painting with oils, but you can use acrylics or watercolors if that is easier. If you want to enlarge and print it to its original size, that is 18" H x 24" W.



(left) On display at the Eisenhower Presidential Museum is Ike's easel, paint kit, and unfinished landscape.

(below) The paint kit is made of pine; the interior has five compartments and the lid has grooves for a sketchpad and palette. Its contents include shellac, rulers, charcoal, and various oil paint tubes.







# ● Saving Art from Hitler

The Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives program, often referred to as the Monuments Men, was an international group established in 1943 that worked under the Civil Affairs and Military Government Sections to help protect cultural property during and after World War II. Their mission was to identify art, architecture, monuments, and archives that needed to be preserved; work with Allied commanders to limit damage to these cultural resources; work with local officials to stabilize and repair damages to monuments and architecture; identify and locate art, archives, and other cultural resources that had been removed by German forces; gather recovered works into staging areas for identification and preservation; and return the works to their legitimate owners.

During World War II, General Eisenhower issued orders, first in December 1943, which instructed soldiers that they were “bound to respect monuments so far as war allows.” On May 26, 1944 — shortly before the D-Day invasion — he outlined his instructions for the protection of historic monuments and cultural centers in war areas. In this he stated in part, “It is the responsibility of every commander to protect and respect these symbols whenever possible.” This was the most comprehensive effort in history by an army to fight a war while also trying to minimize the damage to cultural treasures and monuments.

After leading the successful liberation of Europe from the grips of Hitler’s Nazi forces, Eisenhower recalled for an audience at the Metropolitan Art Museum on April 2, 1946, “Another view of the fate of art in war was presented to our soldiers when, at long last, we penetrated to the heart of Naziism. There, in caves, in mines, and in isolated mountain hideouts we found that Hitler and his gang, with unerring instinct for enriching themselves, had stored art treasures, filched from their rightful owners through conquered Europe.”



April 12, 1945

General Dwight D. Eisenhower inspects art treasures looted by the Nazis and stored in the depths of a salt mine in Germany along with gold, silver, and paper currency. The mine was captured by U.S. Third Army troops. Behind DDE are (left) General Omar Bradley and (right) Lt. General George S. Patton.

1

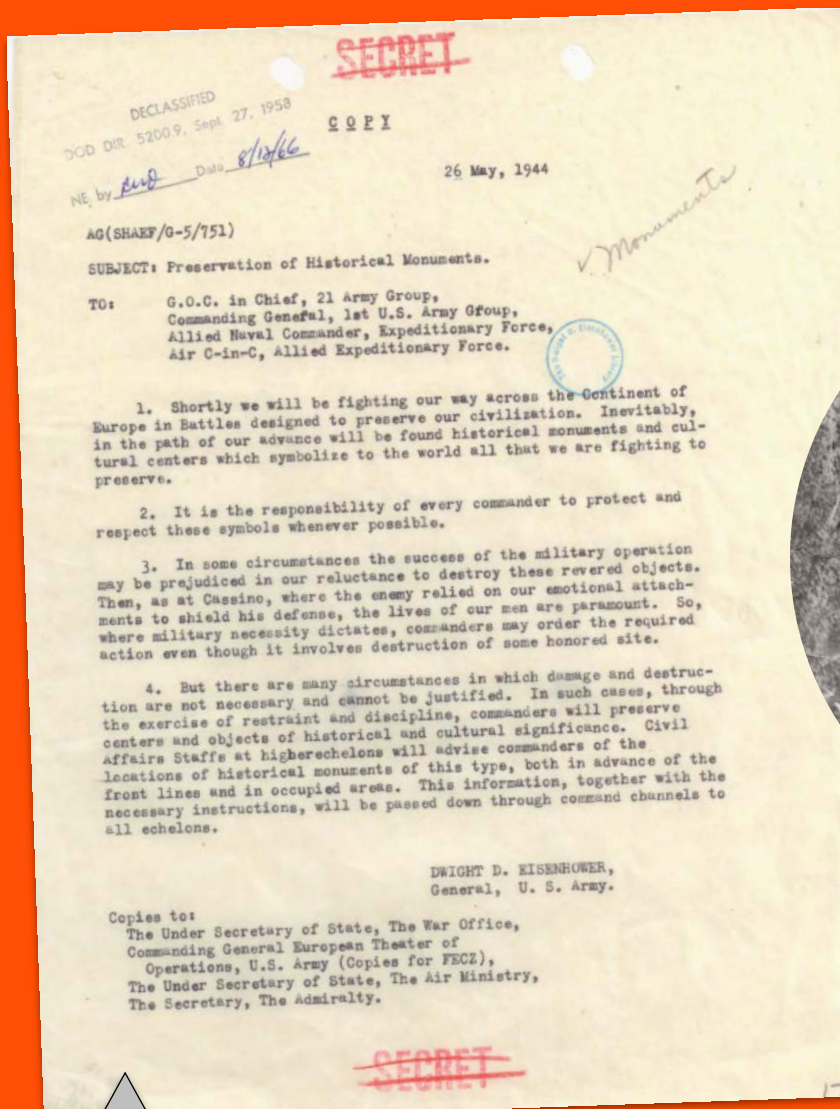
Examine these primary sources (and more) for yourself from the archives of the Eisenhower Presidential Library: [EisenhowerFoundation.net](http://EisenhowerFoundation.net)

2

Learn a bit about why Hitler ordered the destruction and theft of art by watching the video clips titled "Hitler the Artist Defines Degenerate Art" at [MonumentsMen.com/lesson-plans/degenerate-art](http://MonumentsMen.com/lesson-plans/degenerate-art). (Or complete the whole lesson!)

3

Create a short video that addresses the question: *What is the value to society in protecting art and other cultural treasures?*



This photo of Tivoli, Italy, is from a document containing many photographs showing the locations of important historical, cultural, and religious monuments in Italy. General Eisenhower commanded Allied troops to avoid them whenever possible in bombing raids.



“Even for the roughest of soldiers there is more of ancient Egyptian history to be felt and understood in a lonely, graceful column rising against the sky in a naked field than there is in all the descriptive matter that was ever written on the subject.”

— from *Notes for Use at Luncheon Given by Metropolitan Art Museum, April 2, 1946.* Dwight D. Eisenhower

“Shortly we will be fighting our way across the Continent of Europe in Battles designed to preserve our civilization. Inevitably, in the path of our advance will be found historical monuments and cultural centers which symbolize to the world all that we are fighting to preserve.”  
—Dwight D. Eisenhower, General, U.S. Army





# Share It!

We would love to display your finished paintings on our social media pages! #ILikeIt



@EisenhowerFoundation



@EisenhowerFound





## Credits

### Page Three

- Photo of Eisenhower painting: 67-83-14; Painting at Camp David; Maryland, August 1, 1954; U.S. Navy photo courtesy of the Eisenhower Presidential Library.
- Painting: *Mexican*, 1953. National Park Service, Eisenhower Historic Site.

### Page Four

- Painting: *Deer at Watering Pond*, 1952. Private collection.
- Painting: *Princess Anne*, 1957, courtesy of the Eisenhower Presidential Museum.
- Painting: *Byers Peak Ranch*, no date. Private collection.

### Page Five

- Painting: *The Red Barn*, 1958. Private collection.
- Painting: *Portrait of Lincoln*, 1953, courtesy of the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum.

### Page Six

- Painting: *White Church in the Country*, 1962. Private collection.
- Painting: *Grandson David Eisenhower*, c. 1953. Private collection.
- Painting: *The Bavarian Church*, 1958. Private collection.
- Photo: Sunroom at Gettysburg Home, courtesy of the National Park Service, Eisenhower National Historic Site.

### Page Seven

- Photo of Ike painting: Courtesy of the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum.

### Page Eight

- Painting: *Landscape with Stone Fence and Farm House*, c. 1955. Private collection.

### Page Nine

- Photo: Eisenhower's easel and unfinished painting, c. 1969, on display at the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum.
- Photo: Eisenhower's painting kit, on display at the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum.

### Page Ten

- Painting: Eisenhower's unfinished painting, c. 1969, courtesy of the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum.

### Page Eleven

- Photos: Students participating in and display of the project, courtesy of the Eisenhower Foundation.

### Page Twelve

- Photo: United States Army Signal Corps photo, courtesy of the Eisenhower Presidential Library, 66-78.

## Page Ten

- Document: Memorandum from General Dwight D. Eisenhower regarding preservation of historical monuments in Europe, May 26, 1944 [Eisenhower's Pre-Presidential Papers, Principal File, Box 13, Bradley Omar N. (6); NAID #7505528], located at the Eisenhower Presidential Library.
- Photo within document: The Ancient Monuments of Italy, Part II, March 19, 1944 [Lauris Norstad Papers, Box 14, The Ancient Monuments of Italy Part II; NAID #16911769], located at the Eisenhower Presidential Library.
- Quote within document: Notes for Use at Luncheon Given at Metropolitan Museum of Art, April 2, 1946 [Eisenhower's Pre-Presidential Papers, Principal File, Box 192, Speeches November 1945 - April 1946 (1); NAID #7583544], located at the Eisenhower Presidential Library.

## References

Davis, Kenneth S., and Frieda Kay Fall. *The Eisenhower College Collection: The Paintings of Dwight D. Eisenhower*. Los Angeles: Nash, 1972.

“Degenerate Art.” *Monuments Men.com*. Robert Edsel. Web. 2 October, 2015. <[www.monumentsmen.com/lesson-plans/degenerate-art](http://www.monumentsmen.com/lesson-plans/degenerate-art)>.

Eisenhower, Dwight D. *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*. Fort Washington, PA: Eastern Acorn Press, 1967.

“Monuments Men and the Allied Effort to Save European Cultural Heritage.” *Eisenhower.Archives.Gov*. National Archives and Records Administration. Web. 10 October, 2015. <[Eisenhower.Archives.Gov/research/online\\_documents/monuments\\_men.html](http://Eisenhower.Archives.Gov/research/online_documents/monuments_men.html)>.