

# COLLECTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

*The Nation's Ward* by Edward V. Valentine, 1868



## ERA

Reconstruction, Post Reconstruction,  
Late 19th Century

## THEMES

Racist Caricatures

## CITATION INFORMATION

*The Nation's Ward* sculpture, 1879,  
Edward V. Valentine  
The Valentine Museum, 1879.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How does this piece's title, *The Nation's Ward*, add to its meaning?
2. What stereotype is this popular sculpture by Edward Valentine using?
3. How did this piece of commercial art help support the Lost Cause narrative?

## CONTEXT

Edward Valentine created *The Nation's Ward* in 1868. A young boy had come to his studio selling coal and Valentine asked him to model for the piece. We do not know if the boy was paid to be the model. The finished piece shows a boy looking up possibly in adoration or gratitude. The title of the piece suggests that this African American boy will not be able to take care of himself and must rely on the country to support him. This false idea that African Americans were unable to support themselves outside of slavery was a core part of the Lost Cause myth.

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*The Nation's Ward* sculpture, 1879,  
Edward V. Valentine  
The Valentine Museum, 1879.



Image of young boy, 1868, Papers of  
Edward Valentine,  
The Valentine Museum.