

Discovery of the Mississippi by De Soto

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William H. Powell's painting, *Discovery of the Mississippi by De Soto* depicts Hernando de Soto's encounter with the Mississippi River in 1541. De Soto was the first European to view the river. In the painting, de Soto appears in armor on a white horse, approaching a vista of the large river. De Soto is flanked by armored men carrying spears and flags. A group of American Indians stand and kneel next to the path on which de Soto is riding. Two of the women appear to be frightened, and one of the men is holding a peace pipe. In the background, Indians in canoes are rowing in the water. In the foreground on the right, a group of European men are planting a crucifix in a freshly dug hole. In the foreground on the left, another group of Europeans are wheeling a cannon. The painting was commissioned by the United States Congress to hang in the Rotunda in the U.S. Capitol building in 1847. Powell (1823-1879) was the last artist to be commissioned by the Congress for a painting in the Rotunda.



Citation (Chicago Style):

Powell, William H. "Discovery of the Mississippi by De Soto." Oil on canvas. 1855. 12' x 18'. Washington, D.C. Capital Rotunda. <https://www.aoc.gov/explore-capitol-campus/art/discovery-mississippi-de-...>

Read the related article: The De Soto Expedition
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