

## THE CHAMBER

The Senate Chamber is the center of activity for lawmakers serving in the upper body of the Legislature. The room measures 68 feet by 70 feet and features a rich fabric ceiling displayed 50 feet above the floor of the room. It's described by its creator, architect Egerton Swarthout, as a large and lofty room, perfect acoustically, dignified in treatment with a semi-circular colonnade of richly-veined marble, resting high upon a marble base. The dais is where the presiding officer directs debate and maintains decorum during session.



The dais is encircled by a wraparound desk made of the same Missouri hardwood. This desk provides a work area for the Secretary of the Senate, who is required by the Missouri Constitution to maintain a journal of all Senate proceedings. The desk also serves as the work station for the Secretary of the Senate's staff. The President's chair is made of hand-carved American Walnut. This chair features three-dimensional renderings of bears to complement the Senate clock, which is located above the dais in between two columns.

## MARBLE WALLS AND COLUMNS

The most distinctive feature that defines the Senate Chamber are the 16 towering columns that support the ceiling of the great room. These columns stand atop polished walls made of Carthage Marble blocks, which were taken from the Phenix Quarry in Greene County. The columns, topped by ionic capitals, are made of polished New Hampshire marble. The marble in the columns is one of the few materials used in the Capitol that is not from Missouri. Twelve of the columns stand in front of the upper galleries. Four columns rise behind the president's dais, framing the rostrum and the painted-glass window of Hernando DeSoto displayed behind it. The columns were integral to Charles A. W. Rinschede of New York, who was responsible for coordinating the decorations of the chamber.



## UPPER GALLERIES



The tiered galleries of the Senate chamber provide a vantage point from which citizens can observe lawmakers working on the Senate floor. The gallery seats 255 onlookers and is also accessible to those with disabilities. Each wood-backed seat is upholstered in neutral colors and is framed by hunter green steel. Cast iron uprights with detailing in gold paint serve as aisle caps for each row. The wrought iron railings surrounding the three galleries and flanking gallery staircases were carefully cleaned and polished to a stately bronze-like finish during a comprehensive restoration in 2001. Gallery doors, walls and fixtures were also restored to their original condition during the renovation.

## FRETWORK AND MOULDING



A tasteful combination of classic millwork and intricate bas-relief is found throughout the Senate Chamber. The ornamental patterns in the chamber are carved in plaster and wood. During the restoration process, each segment of every carving was carefully stripped, cleaned and recoated in the closest possible finish. Moulding, in an array of scrolled fretwork and varied patterns, serves to define the chamber's interior borders. As with the carvings, each inch of millwork was carefully stripped, cleaned and painstakingly refinished. In order to ensure the authenticity of the newly applied finishes, Senate historians documented and compared the chamber's interior prior to the restoration with archived accountings and photographs.

## LIGHTING, FURNITURE AND CARPETING



A carefully planned combination of skylights and chandeliers illuminate the upper chamber and highlight the magnificent stonework, marble columns and rich walnut furnishings that grace the room. The chamber is home to many fine examples of wood craftsmanship in addition to the dais. Individual American Walnut desks provide seating for the 34 senators who serve in the upper chamber; these desks are original to when the Capitol was completed in 1917. To maintain the historical integrity of the chamber during its renovation, the carpeting was replaced with Exminster wool carpeting from England. A pattern was added to highlight the effect of the floor covering the room that mimics the interior Senate dome.



Key periods of Missouri history are depicted on four murals and a painted glass window in the Senate Chamber.

### ARTWORK IN THE CHAMBER

Richard E. Miller, an American Impressionist and native of St. Louis, painted the murals in 1915 - which stand among an impressive collection of his work displayed throughout the United States and Europe. Miller later painted a small mural above the governor's elevator, which shows the first Missouri Capitol building. Miller also designed the painted-glass window above the presiding officer's chair. The window, made by Paris-Wiley of New York, shows the landing of Hernando Desoto, the first European to set foot on Missouri soil.

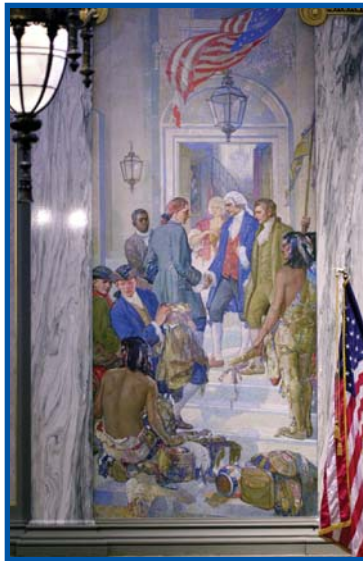


The mural is the only work by the artist in the Capitol, outside the Senate Chamber. The window represents the beginning of DeSoto's historic expedition in search for gold through the Ozark Mountains. He is shown as a majestic figure in armor on horseback, having just completed the long journey by sea. With hopes of finding land rich with gold, he is pressing forward with his men. Indians stand on the shore, awaiting his arrival. The painted window represents European exploration of the New World.



**Daniel Boone at the  
Judgment Tree:  
The Colonial Period**

Regarded as a brave pioneer and hunter, Boone is seated at the base of the famous Judgment Tree, with his gun across his knee. He is watching the accusers who have brought a culprit before him, a man with hands bound. Missouri at the time was under Spanish rule (note the Spanish flag in the background) and Boone held the position of Syndic, or Commandant of the Femme Osage District. He was judge, jury and sheriff, and could order the guilty party whipped, banished or killed. Historical accounts say his decisions were widely accepted as fair.



**Jefferson Greeting  
Lewis and Clark:  
The Territorial Period**

President Thomas Jefferson commissioned Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the Louisiana Territory soon after buying the expanse of land from France for \$15 million in 1803. The land we now know as Missouri, was acquired by the United States in the Louisiana Purchase and became the 24th state when admitted to the Union in 1821. Jefferson is seen here on the porch of the White House after Clark (shaking Jefferson's hand) and Lewis (standing to the right of Clark) returned from exploring the Louisiana Territories.



**Blair's Speech at  
Louisiana, Missouri:  
The Civil War Era**

Credited with keeping Missouri in the Union during the Civil War, Francis P. Blair was a Union general. He later campaigned for a U.S. Senate seat. The mural depicts his campaign speech in Louisiana, Mo., in which he was sent word that he would be assassinated upon his arrival. No attempt was made to kill him, but a confrontation did ensue, initiated by a heckler in the audience. Blair's commanding presence held the crowd in check and he finished his speech. In 1871, Blair was chosen by the Missouri Legislature to serve as a U.S. senator.



**Benton's Speech at  
St. Louis:  
The Era of Westward Expansion**

For years, U.S. Sen. Thomas H. Benton tried to persuade Congress to appropriate funds to build a railroad from St. Louis to the Pacific. Known for his lengthy speeches, he's shown in this mural addressing a mass gathering in the St. Louis Courthouse in 1849. The mural conveys the opposition of the crowd and the confidence of Benton upon the completion of his address. Sen. Thomas H. Benton was the grandfather of Thomas Hart Benton, who later painted the famous murals depicting Missouri's social history in the State Capitol's House Lounge.