

Mona Lisa Makes Debut Before American Art Lovers

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Still venturing history behind her smiling, the Mona Lisa went on display Tuesday in a country that was more interested in arrowheads than art when Leonardo da Vinci painted the enigmatic lady. But it is doubtful she is disturbed by her American debut. The Florentine matron has an ad-

There were Delaware Indians living along the banks of the Potomac River when da Vinci painted the portrait sometime during the period of 1503-06. About a million of the new inhabitants of the Potomac area and other sections of the United States are expected to visit her during her stay at the National Gallery here.

French Culture Minister Andre Malraux conducted the first group of visitors to a red carpet welcome for the Mona Lisa Tuesday.

Guests at the welcoming ceremony included President and Mrs. Kennedy and French Ambassador and Mme. Herve Alphand.

The portrait will be placed on public exhibition Wednesday for the first time in the United States. Sold for \$10,000.

The history of the Mona Lisa began when da Vinci painted the portrait of an Italian nobleman's wife on a piece of poplar wood. A few years later the portrait was sold to King Francis I of France for 4,000 gold ducats—about \$10,000.

Francis took the painting to his palace at Fontainebleau, near Paris, where it remained for over 150 years. Gradually his successors moved their headquarters to the famous Versailles Palace and in 1695 the painting followed. After an 11-year stay there, the Mona Lisa moved again, this time to a wing of the Tuileries Palace later to be known as the Louvre, Paris' world-renowned art museum.

In 1911, the long period of tranquility came to an end. An overly zealous Italian patriot, deciding that the work of an Italian master had no place in a French museum, he stole the famous painting.

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