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STONE AGE HALL, SOON TO OPEN, WILL SHOW ANCESTORS OF HUMAN RACE

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The Hall of the Stone Age of the Old World (Hall C) will be opened to the public this month. Its object is to present, for the first time in any museum, the most complete and interesting picture that present scientific knowledge permits, of the lives, cultures, and physical characters of prehistoric ancestors of the human race. The preparations have involved extensive travel and research, and the acquisition of archaeological collections from all parts of the world.

The general plan was worked out by the writer in collaboration with Dr. Berthold Laufer, Curator of Anthropology, with the generous cooperation of Abbé Henri Breuil, professor at the Collège de France and Corresponding Member of Field Museum.

In order to obtain data for accurate exhibits, it was necessary to visit many prehistoric sites. In June, 1927, Frederick Blaschke, the sculptor, accompanied the writer to Europe to make studies *in situ* for diorama groups. Abbé Breuil accompanied the expedition as technical adviser; a photographer and an artist also were taken. A scale model, motion and still pictures, and paintings of each site were prepared. No detail was overlooked, and all reconstructions in the hall are based on data obtained in this careful manner.

This expedition and three subsequent trips were financed by Trustee Marshall Field. Other contributors to the cost of the creation of this hall were Trustees Frederick H. Rawson and Silas H. Strawn.

Life-size human figures were made by Mr. Blaschke, under the direction of Sir Arthur Keith, Professor G. Elliot Smith, and Abbé Breuil. These restorations of prehistoric man are the finest ever made.

In the hall are eight diorama groups containing these sculptured figures. They are arranged in chronological order, each presenting a realistically depicted scene in the life of a prehistoric period. The painted backgrounds are the work of Staff Artist Charles A. Corwin.

Opposite the dioramas are cases of archaeological material, including objects of stone and bone, reproductions of human remains, and fossil specimens of fauna of each period.

Entering the hall from the west, the first diorama presents a scene of the Chellean period in northern France, approximately 250,000 years ago. Because of the meagerness of data on this period, the scene is shown appropriately in the dimness of silvery moonlight. Two Chellean hunters are huddled close to a fire in the shelter of a large rock. One of them is chipping flakes from a crude flint hand ax. In the background, on the opposite bank of a river, large elephants and other animals are silhouetted against the sky.



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The Beginning of Art

The urge for aesthetic expression seems to have first awakened in Aurignacian man, about 35,000 years ago. In this restoration, a group in the Hall of the Stone Age, a prehistoric artist is picturing his hand on the wall of a cave by blowing ochre around the fingers through a tube. Other hands and crude representations of animals are seen on the wall.

The next diorama shows a Neanderthal family in a rock shelter at Gibraltar about 50,000 years ago. The azure blue of the Mediterranean forms the background. It is believed that family life developed during this period.

The Aurignacian period, approximately 35,000 years ago, is represented by a scene in the cave of Gargas in southwestern France (see accompanying illustration). At that period, apparently, man's aesthetic sense first found expression, embodying perhaps the beginnings of art, magic, and religion. In the group a man, kneeling upon the floor, holds his left hand against the wall, and blows powdered red ochre around the fingers by means of a bone tube. On the wall are many negative impressions of hands, the fingers of which frequently appear to have been mutilated. The mutilation probably was done purposely for some ritual reason, similar to the practice of certain modern primitive peoples. The firelight and the sandstone lamp cast eerie shadows among the stalactites.

In the following scene a Solutrean sculptor of Eskimo type is portrayed carving the outline of a horse on a limestone block. In a semicircle behind him is a frieze of pregnant horses and bison cut in relief. Fertility rites were performed before this sanctuary at Le Roc, Charente.

The Magdalenian period, about 25,000 years ago, is represented by a reproduction of the bison of clay from the cave of Tuc d'Audoubert. This also is the symbol of a fertility rite, and one can picture the Magdalenians dancing around these models,

praying for increase of the herd of bison.

In a small case opposite lies the original Cap-Blanc skeleton — the only Magdalenian skeleton in the United States. The adjoining diorama is a reproduction of the Cap-Blanc rock shelter, where a frieze of horses, the finest sculpture of prehistoric times, was carved in high relief by Magdalenian artists.

The next diorama illustrates the beginning of the domestication of animals. This scene shows a wild boar hunt at Mas d'Azil, with hunting dogs holding the savage male boar at bay. Following this is a neolithic scene at Carnac in Brittany, where a priest is welcoming the birth

of a new day, as the rising sun casts long shadows behind the rows of standing stones. The last group of the series is a beautiful scene at Lake Neuchâtel, Switzerland. In the foreground two fishermen are dragging their net to shore. In the background are seen the snow-capped Alps in the light of early dawn.

The exhibits in this hall form a permanent record of the struggles and advances of prehistoric man from the earliest times to the dawn of the historical period.

Cellulose Lacquer

The term lacquer, formerly applied to certain forms of varnish made by dissolving shellac and other natural gums, has recently been extended to cover various preparations of so-called artificial resins and to varnishing solutions obtained by chemical treatment of cellulose. Cotton fibers furnish the most convenient kind of pure cellulose, and are generally used in the cheapest obtainable form—linters, useless for spinning. In Hall 28 an exhibit shows the various steps in the preparation of this type of varnish.



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