

NEW READING ROOM SERVES PUBLIC IN MUSEUM LIBRARY

The Library of Field Museum has a new reading room, more conveniently located than the old one, with improved lighting, more efficient arrangement, and other facilities adding to its usefulness and to the comfort of readers.

The change has been accomplished by reconstructing and refurnishing the former stack room as a reading room, and moving

it may be well to call attention to the fact that the Library of Field Museum, which now contains approximately 121,000 books and pamphlets on anthropology, botany, geology, zoology and related subjects, offers the largest reference collection in its special fields in Chicago. It is particularly rich in anthropological and ornithological works, with collections that rank among the fore-



The New Reading Room of Field Museum's Library

the book stacks into the former reading room. During the months this work has been in progress, there has been no interruption to the Library's services to scientists and to the public in general.

The new reading room is more easily reached by visitors arriving at the third floor on the passenger elevator, the entrance being close to the elevator landing. More effective and agreeable lighting for readers has been provided by installation of an entirely new system of fluorescent illumination from coves around a new lowered ceiling. New service counters, new office space for the librarians, and a new rubber tile floor all help to make the new reading room attractive and quiet, and add to the efficiency of the service provided by the Library personnel.

Revision of the arrangement of the Library's rooms has provided opportunity also to replace the wooden book stacks with modern steel ones, grained and stained like mahogany. The finding of books and pamphlets demanded by readers has been facilitated by installation of fluorescent lights in the stack room as well as in the reading room. Although all work in the stack room has not been completed, as some of it had to wait until transfer of reading facilities to the new room was accomplished, work is now progressing rapidly and, as in the work already finished, without any interruption of service to the public.

For those unacquainted with its facilities,

most in the world. Invaluable for research are the extensive series on its shelves of the proceedings, transactions and publications of learned societies, academies, and universities all over the world.

Strictly a reference library, the reading room is maintained to make the Library's resources available for the use of scientists, students, teachers, and others engaged in research work. These facilities are extended, on application, to laymen with problems requiring reference to the works in a scientific library. Amateur naturalists, and persons with hobbies involving the natural sciences, will find much of value in the Museum Library.

The Library is open weekdays from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M., except Saturdays, when it closes at noon; it is closed all day on Sundays and holidays.

Why Are Mummies?

Why are mummies? Because persistence of the personality after death was the chief tenet of the religion of the ancient Egyptians. Most of our knowledge of their daily life, as will be revealed by a visit to the Egyptian collections in Hall J, we owe to the efforts they made to provide for their welfare after death.

A collection of iron ores, together with models of three types of smelting furnaces, is on exhibition in Frederick J. V. Skiff Hall.

PREHISTORIC ELEPHANT TUSK

BY HENRY FIELD

CURATOR OF PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

In western Europe during the Second Interglacial period the climate appears to have been considerably warmer than at the present time. Contemporary sands and gravels of ancient river beds of England, France, and Germany have yielded bones, teeth and tusks. Remains of the straight-tusked elephant, the rhinoceros, and the African lion and hyena, indicate geographical connections with North Africa during this period. Among other animals which roamed northern Europe were several species of deer, including the Irish elk, wild cattle, and horses.

Some 250,000 years ago Chellean Man wandered over northern Europe. At the entrance to the Hall of the Stone Age of the Old World (Hall C) stands a vivid reconstruction of a Chellean scene beside the banks of the Somme River in northern France. Three large straight-tusked elephants are depicted on the background of the diorama. In an adjoining case is exhibited the right tusk of a large elephant of this type (*Hesperoloxodon antiquus germanicus*) excavated by Dr. E. Fraas from interglacial river-sands at Steinheim, on the river Murr, in Württemberg, Germany. This tusk, which measures 9 feet 4 inches along the inner curve, with a maximum diameter of 18 inches, is one of the finest specimens in existence and was purchased in 1930 from Dr. F. Krantz, at Bonn. It has been estimated that a large bull must have stood about 13 feet 4 inches at the shoulder—a height at least 18 inches greater than the largest recorded modern African elephant. The maximum circumference of both the prehistoric tusk and that of the longest African elephant recorded are approximately the same. The tusk of the modern elephant measured 2 feet 2 inches longer than that of the specimen of *Hesperoloxodon*. This is not an adequate comparison of lengths because part of the fossilized tusk, which was at least 1 foot 6 inches longer during life, is missing. As the prehistoric tusk is now fossilized ivory, no weight can be assigned, but the tusk of the largest African elephant weighs 236 pounds with a measurement along the inner curve of 9 feet and a maximum circumference of 2 feet 2½ inches.

The Chellean hunters, armed with clubs or axes, must have lived in constant dread of these great brutes as they trumpeted and charged through the forests.

A large specimen of lodestone, weighing about 400 pounds, and possessing unusual magnetic power, is on exhibition in Clarence Buckingham Hall (Hall 35). To prove its magnetism, a number of metallic objects have been placed with it, and are held clinging to it only by its attraction.



Field, Henry. 1941. "Prehistoric Elephant Tusk." *Field Museum news* 12(4), 5–5.

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Field Museum of Natural History Library

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