

## THE NEANDERTHAL GROUP IN THE HALL OF THE STONE AGE

Neanderthal man, represented in the second of the groups in the recently opened Hall of the Stone Age of the Old World (Hall C), was probably the first to seize a woman and protect her from animals and other men. Thus the beginnings of family life may be placed at the time of his existence, or about 50,000 years ago.

direction. Squatting beside the embers of the fire, the father of the family is watching mussels open as the heat penetrates the shells. His small five-year-old son, anxious to help, is bringing a small twig to replenish the fire. In a cleft in the rock the mother can be seen carrying her youngest baby on her hip.



**The Dawn of Family Life**

Life-size restoration of a Neanderthal family of 50,000 years ago in their rock-shelter at Gibraltar. Hall of the Stone Age of the Old World.

The Museum's group, prepared by the sculptor Frederick Blaschke, shows a Neanderthal family on the sandy platform outside the entrance to the Devil's Tower rock-shelter at Gibraltar. Silhouetted against the deep blue of the Mediterranean stands a young man with a wooden club in his hand. He is watching intently some movement on the beach below, since he and his family are open to attack only from this

The group was planned by Henry Field, Assistant Curator of Physical Anthropology. Staff Artist Charles A. Corwin painted the background.

Supplementing the exhibit is a collection of representative cultural objects of the period, some original Neanderthal skeletal fragments, and a series of casts of the more complete Neanderthal skeletons excavated in various localities of Europe.

### CHARMS USED BY THE PAPUANS

A few shavings of wood scraped from the back of a wooden image and mixed in the food of a person whose love is desired, will exert a charm that will make that person reciprocate one's affections, in the belief of certain natives of New Guinea. Similarly, they believe that shavings from another carved figure, mixed with the food of one's dog, will make him a better and braver hunter, in attacking wild boars.

These are but two of the many weird charms in which the wild Papuan natives place their faith—superstitions similar to those of many other primitive peoples. Various grotesque wooden figures they carve, a fine collection of which is on exhibition in Joseph N. Field Hall (Hall A), are invested with other specific powers of making different kinds of wishes come true. Some figures are believed to be "the abode of good spirits." Small ones are attached to bags, baskets, and ornaments, hidden in houses, and carried about on one's person.

### A Gypsum Cave Reproduction

A peek into subterranean depths, into a crystal cave, is made possible by an exhibit in Clarence Buckingham Hall (Hall 35). The exhibit is a reproduction of a gypsum cave, the original of which is located in Wayne County in southeastern Utah.

The Museum's cave is constructed with large gypsum crystals, remarkable for their

size, purity, and perfection of form. These were brought from Utah. Some of them are shown projecting from the floor of the cave, others from the sides, and others hang from the roof. This is the manner of their occurrence in the Utah caves, where they were discovered in comparatively recent years by cowboys.

Other cave formations from many parts of the world, representing caves in Kentucky, Missouri, Cuba, Italy, and other countries, are shown in an adjoining case. This exhibit includes also a collection of cave specimens presented to the Museum shortly before his death by Floyd Collins, the Kentuckian whose tragic fate, when he became imprisoned in a cave collapse, engaged the attention of the whole country some years ago.

### Visitors Present Specimens

Visitors to Chicago from distant places frequently take advantage of the opportunity to have their fossils and geological specimens identified at Field Museum. Others bring specimens to present to the Museum. While many of these duplicate material already in the Museum collections, some unique and valuable specimens from this source are being added to the exhibits.

The Department of Botany has an exhibit illustrating the standard used in grading coffee.

## A CRYSTAL STAR

BY HENRY W. NICHOLS  
Associate Curator of Geology

Five specimens which illustrate the method of cutting a "varnisher" from rock crystal have been presented to the Museum by Stephen Varni of New York. They are now exhibited in Hall 34. Although the primary object of the exhibit is to show the successive stages of shaping and polishing which intervene between the rough crystal and the finished star or, for that matter, between the rough and the finished state of any fine gem, most people will be more interested in the demonstration of the remarkable increase of brilliancy and fire imparted to gemstones by the skill of the modern lapidary.

Gems in the rough never display their maximum brilliancy. This can be developed only by skillful cutting. The surface of most fine gems is formed of many small polished planes called facets. Much of the brilliancy depends on the form, position, and angles of these facets, although much also depends upon the general shape and intrinsic brilliancy of the stone. This star is far more brilliant than the piece of rock crystal shown near-by from which it was cut. This is due in part to the general form of the star and in part to the position and angles of the facets which are so designed as to cause a maximum amount of the light which enters the stone to be caught and thrown back through the front face. Slight changes in the shape of either star or facets would seriously impair the brilliancy. Any light passing into the stone and reaching the lower face strikes a facet at such an angle that it cannot penetrate but is reflected back and forth inside the gem until it leaves from the upper surface. In other words, light penetrating the gem is trapped there and cannot leave except by the front door.

The skillful cutting which increases the brilliancy of a gem also enhances its fire. This is a sparkle of flashes of colored light which seems to emanate from the gem.

Rays of white light passing through a facet are not only bent but are separated into the rainbow colors of which white light is a mixture and flashes of these colors are mixed with the white light thrown out by the gem. The facets on a well-cut gem are placed at such angles that this effect is at a maximum. This brilliancy and fire characterize gems cut in modern times. Compared with these, gems of ancient workmanship seem dull and lifeless.

Gems are not always cut for maximum brilliance. Various factors such as color and the shape of the rough stone often influence the cutting, and sometimes, as in the cabochon cut, form is preferred to brightness.

Brilliance and fire cannot be imparted to a stone in which these qualities are lacking. They are inherent in differing degrees in each kind of stone. The lapidary can only develop what is already there. A bit of glass or a topaz cannot be cut to rival a diamond.

### Frankincense

Frankincense is a resin furnished by trees (*Boswellia* sps.) of the torchwood family growing in tropical Africa and Arabia. It is used as a drug and in incense. Frankincense is displayed among the resins in Hall 28.

A simple method that anyone can use to distinguish between true and imitation amber is demonstrated in the collection of amber in Hall 34.





Nichols, Henry W. 1933. "A Crystal Star." *Field Museum news* 4(9), 3–3.

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