

THE CARAVAN

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF LOREN EISELEY

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Loren Corey Eiseley
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"We have joined the caravan, you might say, at a certain point; we will travel as far as we can, but we cannot in one lifetime see all that we would like to see or learn all that we hunger to know."

-- *The Immense Journey*

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Over the summer months we have been celebrating publication of *The Night Country* by the University of Nebraska Press, the first Eiseley title acquired by the press for reprinting. The University of Nebraska Press is one of the largest academic presses in America. Even if you have an old copy of *The Night Country* on your bookshelf, I urge you to buy one. Eiseley's biographer, Gale Christianson, has contributed an outstanding introduction, and the book cover has one of those strikingly handsome woodcut illustrations by Leonard Everett Fisher from the 1971 edition. In his introduction, Gale Christianson noted that "Although *The Immense Journey* proved to be Eiseley's most popular book, many critics and readers look upon *The Night Country* as his best."

We had a most extraordinary "Night Country" evening at the Neale Woods Nature Center north of Omaha that I wish all Eiseley fans could have enjoyed. Board member Ken Finch-- holding a small flashlight--read excerpts from Eiseley's essays in the early evening. We were seated on a large circular bench, on a hilltop overlooking the Missouri River, with a view of the Loess Hills of Iowa across the river. At night fall, a naturalist provided a tour of the surrounding tall grass prairie, and then we spent a few minutes in silence, listening to the sounds of nighttime. Ken Finch is Executive Director of the Fontenelle Forest Association which oversees both Neale Woods and Fontenelle Forest Nature Centers.

I was also privileged to attend the first Honors Program Class on Eiseley offered by the University of Nebraska Lincoln campus. Professor Bing Chen, another Eiseley Board member, is the course instructor. I wish we all could have the opportunity these young people will have in the coming months. Bing is a professor of civil engineering who reads from his tattered copy of *The Invisible Pyramid* to his engineering students on the Omaha campus.

We welcome Curt Twedt and Fred Thomas to our Board, and we will miss Steve Shively, who has joined the English Department at Oakland University in Michigan. We extend special thanks to Ray Boice of Gering, Nebraska, who conceived of the idea of placing an Innocent Assassins marker honoring Loren Eiseley in the Wildcat Hills.

Kira Gale, President

Eiseley on Western Literature Agenda

It seems fitting to offer a paper on Dr. Eiseley's autobiographical writing in an issue coming out on the 90th anniversary of his birth. Dr. Kathleen Boardman presented this paper at the Western Literature Association meeting held under the theme "Grasslands and Heartlands" on October 2-5, 1996 in Lincoln. This was one of four papers presented in a session on autobiography: *Autobiographical Journeys in Nebraska*. Kathleen received her Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska and has since been on the faculty of the University of Nevada at Reno. She appeared in our pages when we reprinted her essay, "Writing in the Margins: the Essays of Loren Eiseley" in our Winter 1991 issue. We were pleased to have Kathleen back in Lincoln again and we are very grateful for her permission to let us give you this paper.

Stranger, Tell Me A Story:
Loren Eiseley's Western
Autobiography

By Kathleen Boardman

All the Strange Hours, Loren Eiseley's autobiography, is subtitled "The Excavation of a Life." Picture Eiseley the archaeologist digging artifacts from the layers of his life as several people look over his shoulder. One of them is Eiseley's biographer, who's ambivalent about what Eiseley has done with the facts of his own life: "Reading *All the Strange Hours* is akin to viewing a surrealist painting," says Gale Christianson. "Rarely are the portraits strewn across Eiseley's inner landscape placed in chronological order. Some are slightly askew, while others . . . are hung upside down, standing truth on its head" (see Christianson 426). Also in the group are some old friends: one believes Eiseley has misrepresented his actions (430); another wonders why Eiseley never mentioned him in his book: "It's as if I didn't exist," he says (qtd. in Heidtmann 15). A literary critic at the scene assures them that Eiseley is only practicing an "art of exclusion" (Heidtmann 9), but another critic says, "Eiseley's 'autobiography' . . . is hardly an autobiography, but a fragmented collection of reflections on a life in science and at the boundaries of science" (Pitts 33). The scholar of autobiography is concerned not with form or fact, but with the personality that has produced the work: "Eiseley's imagination . . . is committed more entirely to the past than the imagination of any other autobiographer I can think of," says James Olney. "*All the Strange Hours* . . . is a very queer affair, but it is . . . no more paradoxical and no more fey than the personality behind it" (31-32). At this point Eiseley looks up from his digging and smiles slyly. "I appear to know nothing of what I truly am," he says. "I feel impelled to deny everything and hide what is left" (248).

At the edge of this group stand the westerners, out at the margins, where Eiseley liked to see himself. They think

this conversation is entertaining, but they've read other autobiographies by twentieth-century westerners (like William Kittredge, Wright Morris, Mary Clearman Blew), so they--we--don't think Eiseley's book is all that strange; we don't expect a linear, orderly form; we don't assume that autobiographers know themselves entirely, and we don't feel they're obliged to tell all. But we also understand that any work labeled "autobiography" raises expectations that the autobiographer has to negotiate with the audience: how to write about the living, how to be fair to the dead, how much to reveal, what to do with "facts," and how the work is to be used. We're interested in the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves in the West. Teresa Jordan draws our attention to "how much our stories shape us, how much we are the stories we tell about ourselves. . . . [so that] . . . an incomplete or improper story can cause harm" (18). So we focus today on the westernness of a narrative written by a distinguished Penn professor who fled the Great Plains, lived more than half his life in the East, and disliked being categorized by anyone.

All the Strange Hours invites us to see it as grounded in the West. Its dedication reminds us of western history and location, telling us that Charles Frederick Eiseley and William Buchanan Price served the North and South, respectively, in the Civil War, and then served the state of Nebraska. Eiseley refers to himself as "born in the central plains, compacted out of glacial dust and winter cold" (139). The location of his family on the Great Plains in historical time provides a point of departure; he moves on to his convalescence in the Rockies and the Mohave, freight-hopping in the Southwest and Great Plains, paleontology in the Dakota Badlands, and spiritual home on the ice age plains. The frontier, as an inexorable, westward-moving line, is not the controlling image for Eiseley's life. His journeys take him in great loops, often back and downward; he does not project a better, brighter future west of somewhere. In the early 1970s, Eiseley was viewing the West like a proto-New Westerner: as a place of many borders, where cultures come into contact, where layers of past, present, and future are exposed to the constant wind of change.

I'd like to look briefly at the ways Eiseley takes a western American perspective on autobiography's three "cardinal questions" about self, society, and place: Who am I? What am I? (Or how am I related to others?) and Where am I? (see Heidtmann 43).

i. Who am I?

"Who am I?" asks the traditional autobiographer, who then uncovers memories, selects and checks the important ones, and ties them together in a chronological narrative that reveals appropriate portions of the public and private self. Often the autobiography gives form to the life rather than vice versa. But the smooth, coherent form of the traditional autobiography would not suit a writer who identifies himself even in his table of contents as a drifter,

thinker, and doubter. For a thoughtful son of the middle border and Depression-era hobo who experienced the sad end of frontier dreams, the step-by-step success story would seem silly. For an evolutionist with a dynamic sense of time, the form of his autobiography might be the challenge of all time. Eiseley did express doubts about writing his autobiography, but his editor assured him that a "selective" autobiography would be as valid as a "comprehensive" one.

Although generally chronological, *All the Strange Hours* is a good example of a "divided narrative," a form that is not organized chronologically into sequential chapters with a single line of narrative. Its "physical divisions . . . function as barriers or gaps over which the motivation . . . within the stories seeks to cross" (50). The divided narrative seems congenial to western narrators, according to Carl Bredahl. Such a form can also utilize a memory that is like a collection of pictures in an artist's loft and a retrieval process that is like reassembling fragments of a broken mirror. It reflects a sense of self constructed with westernness as one of its prominent features. Eiseley may be left with "fragments" of a life because he has no strong elders or heritage to put them together for him: "The names [of my ancestors] lie strewn in graveyards from New England to the broken sticks that rotted quickly on the Oregon trail," he says. "How, among all these wanderers, should I have absorbed a code by which to live?" (24). As a child overhearing whispers about the "mad Shepards" in his family, he tried to make sense out of these bits and pieces. "Nothing is lost, but it can never be again as it was," says Eiseley. "Still it is you, your mind, picking endlessly over the splintered glass of a mirror dropped and broken long ago" (4). This all sounds terribly depressing, and in fact, my first impression of *All the Strange Hours* was that it was simply morose. But I believe that the fragmentation expressed in this text is not all that final, and that Eiseley's long, sad face may also be a poker face. For one thing, as Mary Ellen Pitts reminds us, a mirror needn't be put back together in order to reflect an image. Each fragment reflects the whole--framed differently, perhaps, but still, the whole. And besides, Eiseley builds an identity out of those fragments.

How does Eiseley assemble his bits and pieces? Into stories. He represents himself as a self-reliant western raconteur. He is electrified when a sailor on a train turns to him and says, "Stranger, tell me a story." He has a repertoire of stories westerners like: dog stories, cat stories, rat stories, ghost stories, gambler stories, hobo stories, trickster tales. Although they're generally not very funny, many of them have a strangeness, a sense of the ridiculous and out-of-proportion that reminds me of tall tales. The book hints that Eiseley's life-story-telling is an oral as well as a written performance. Often he addresses the reader directly, even pugnaciously: "I am, it is true, wandering out of time and place," he says, defensively. "This narrative is faltering. . . . Listen, or do not listen, it is all the same" (23).

Through his stories Eiseley builds his persona: the loner,

stranger, solitary, fugitive, drifter, wanderer, searcher. He declares loftily, "I am every man and no man" (23), thus announcing his intention to mythologize himself in western terms:

I was a child of the early century, American man, if the term may still be tolerated. A creature molded of plains' dust and the seed of those who came west with the wagons. . . . I repeat, I am an American whose profession, even his life, is no more than a gambler's throw by the firelight of a western wagon (23-4).

Eiseley's self-identification as a fugitive and outcast is problematic for those who knew him as the respectable professor and successful writer. But it fits certain conventions of western American storytelling. Western stories can be both laconic and exaggerated; reserve and privacy mix with western myth and tall tale. Western stories pull your leg. An old favorite is the "orphan" story. As Jordan says, if every family's orphan stories were true, the west would have been populated by armies of orphans marching shoulder to shoulder. It is not minimizing Eiseley's difficult childhood to say that he's telling orphan stories about himself. In western stories the drifter is not just a social outcast, but a potential force for good. The wandering storyteller does his good by memorializing the otherwise forgotten. Eiseley is well aware of this role. For example, after telling his story of Willy, a night watchman, he says, "I doubt if anyone else remembers Willy now, but I do . . . I am Willy's last recorder" (158). Finally, as a white male westerner who avoids and even undercuts the success story, Eiseley has quite a bit of company. Like memoirists Mark Twain, William Kittredge, and others, he says something like this: I was born, I traveled around, I saw some things. . . . Some of those things are just spectacles and wonders; others need to be remembered, for all our sakes."

ii. "What am I?" Or, "Who are we?"

Eiseley repeatedly asserts his solitariness, but *All the Strange Hours* chronicles a lifetime search for compassionate connection, or a search for "we." Eiseley first draws attention to his use of "we" by recounting a conversation with W. H. Auden. Responding to Auden's question, "What public event do you remember first from childhood?" Eiseley tells about the 1912 escape of three prisoners and their death in the Nebraska snow. He concludes, "We never made it." Then, he recalls, "Auden sighed and looked curiously at me. I knew he was examining the pronoun" (26). In the rest of his autobiography, Eiseley tries out that pronoun in various contexts: He makes himself and the other drifters into something of a collective: "We gathered like descending birds in spite of all obstacles. Like birds, some of us died because we were old Cheap liquor killed us; occasionally we died by the gun . . ." (50). Sometimes the "we" becomes more cosmic: "We would be here . . . when the city had fallen . . . sitting among our hatreds and

superstitions. . . We would throw stones and break what we could not understand" (56). Later, "we" refers to Eiseley and his roommates in graduate school, as he recalls "the genuine peace I experienced among these individuals whose national governments were already making the first moves toward war" (110). We hear about a boyhood friend who had stopped playing with young Eiseley because his father told him to stick with people of his own social level ("That boy is not one of us," he may have said). Thirty years later, the prominent, middle-aged Eiseley is stunned to learn that the friendship had ended because of social class. In the West, class (though not racial) lines were often invisible and sometimes permeable. Eiseley first entered Lawrence, Kansas, as a hobo; six years later he returned as an assistant professor. Yet the shifting class borders were still strong, and all the more painful for their unexpectedness. "Though in the western towns of those years poor children might attend school with those of another economic level, there came a time when the bridge was automatically withdrawn" (160), says Eiseley; still he does not dwell on class consciousness. Although he identifies briefly with one outcast group after another, "Men beat men" is his only mantra; finally he even stops identifying with the prison escapees, for they can lead him no farther.

Still, the "lone stranger" role doesn't satisfy Eiseley, and he continues to write of bridge-building and burning. Two other possibilities remain for saying "we": animals and one's own body. When Eiseley is about to drop off a train from fatigue, he hears his body speak to him: "Straighten up, do something, anything. We're going to die" (51). He perceives his physical self as a collection of living forms. Sometimes "we" refers to himself and an animal companion, and he tries to transcend the alienation of humanness by declaring, "I did not care to be a man, only a being." A stray cat delivers a message that he is well prepared to hear: "I love forms beyond my own and regret the borders between us" (234).

With a few exceptions, Eiseley did not succeed in his search for stories he could tell about oneness with all beings, about a respite from time, about integration and coherence. Ironically, other people living in the West of Eiseley's time were telling stories that evoked or even assumed "achronicity" . . . "the kind of time in which the individual and the universe are 'tight,'" transcending "chronological time" (Allen 150). As an anthropologist, Eiseley knew about these stories and the Indians who were telling them, as he was aware of the trickster tales he mentions in Chapter 1, but he was not able to use them. Paula Gunn Allen summarizes both the gap and the alternative:

In English, one can divide the universe into two parts: the natural and the supernatural. Humanity has no real part in either, being neither animal nor spirit. . . . Such isolation is entirely foreign to American Indian thought. . . . Every story, every song, every ceremony tells the Indian that each creature is part of a living whole (60).

As an anthropologist, Eiseley was aware of this tribal way of thinking but couldn't step over the cultural gap to embrace it. For a scientist and son of pioneers these stories were appealing but out of reach, except by some imaginative leap into the past--for Indians were people of the past as he saw it.

Eiseley's reserve also keeps his autobiography from exploring personal relationships in depth. (Auto-biographers are sometimes criticized for this, as if once having decided to "tell," they must "tell all.") Carl Bredahl notes that the westerner prefers surfaces, while the eastern imagination dives deep for meaning. In exploring ideas, if not in personal relationships, Eiseley digs deeply, explores caves, delves into the past. At the same time, his interest in surfaces is strong but respectful. Just as drifters are careful not to ask each other's real names and life stories, so Eiseley can be profound while staying on the surface--aware of depths, but not disturbing them. As Peter Heidtmann puts it, "The surface details of Eiseley's life as he depicts them are fraught with intimations of depth" (38). "The Most Perfect Day in the World" is timeless because the four drifters, relaxing together for a single day, never question each other. In the same spirit of respecting surfaces, Eiseley criticizes the leader of an archaeological expedition for callousness when the party unearths a child's burial. It never occurs to this leader to put the skeleton back and leave the site undisturbed: "We've got to go deeper, much deeper," says the leader, but Eiseley's response is oriented to the surface:

Men should discover their past Only so can we learn our limitations and come in time to suffer life with compassion. Nevertheless, I now believe that there are occasions when the earth tells our story just as well, when the tomb should remain hidden (96).

iii. Where am I?

"Perhaps the most common story in western writing is the border story," Bredahl tells us (99). Borders, movement, depths, and surfaces concern not only human relationships, but also place. Eiseley uses his western background to illustrate how people exacerbate their alienation through the way they use space and conceptualize time:

Short though the white man's history may be in these western towns, it is sometimes terrifying by its very evanescence. . . . Americans made a mistake they have been paying for ever since. In response to the Homestead Act they have been strung out at nighttime into a vast solitude. . . . I have lived under such circumstances. . . . We were mad to settle the west in that fashion (197).

A sense of place--in space and time--is crucial in Eiseley's work. This may seem surprising in someone who plays the role of the "running man." Yet this constant motion does not amount to the same thing as rootlessness. We need a

sense of place to have a sense of dis-placement, a sense of home-- however inhospitable--to feel homelessness so acutely. As he was completing his autobiography, Eiseley returned to important places of his childhood and youth in Nebraska. The autobiography itself does not dwell on nostalgia for the Nebraska of his childhood--but rather on a hunger for a spiritual home farther west and farther back in the past. The nostalgia that begins this life story may be for something lost--or never found--a childhood sense of belonging. But the sense of loss that propels the narrative arises from consciousness of inevitable change.

In a western context Eiseley grounds his sense of being in the borderlands between past and future, between stages of evolution, between human and animal, between social groups. This passage combines restlessness with a sense of being marooned along a disused trail:

Why, far to the west, does my mind still leap to great windswept vistas of grass? . . . I will tell you only because something like this was at war in the heart of every American at the final closing of the westward trails. . . . I dream inexplicably at times of a gathering of wagons, of women in sunbonnets and black-garbed, bewiskered men. . . . We were Americans of the middle border where the East was forgotten and the one great western road no longer crawled with wagons (24-5).

In constant motion but not exactly on a journey, Eiseley rides the rails through the layers, borders, distances, and surfaces of a western landscape that touched him as a young man--a landscape that continues to suggest a destination yet propels his narrative by providing an ending--"further, further back . . . muffled in snow upon the altiplano" of the ice age (266).

To look at *All the Strange Hours* as a western autobiography is not to argue that westernness explains everything it is--any more than that Eiseley's training as an anthropologist, or his unhappy relationship with his mother, or his chronic illnesses account for all the contents and style of the book. We don't have to foreground "the western experience"--as if there were only one--or argue that there is something quintessentially western about certain writing that can never be found elsewhere. But perhaps we can learn something from this book about autobiography in the west, how the form has changed, what westerners have contributed and still contribute to the art of autobiography, and what western readers might have a right to expect from it. Do Eiseley's stories give us any of what Maxine Hong Kingston calls "ancestral help"? Or do they only mark a fading trail that we didn't want to take anyway? Do his accounts of his knowing help us in our own knowing, or is it indeed every man for himself? Eiseley's life story ranges over a vast space and time, yet it leaves many unbridged chasms. By opening up and pointing out these gaps--the fragments of a life, the distances between us, the lonely landscape that we have created--and by showing the need for bridges,

Eiseley's autobiography opens space for the many western writers and would-be writers of life stories.

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Videos Available

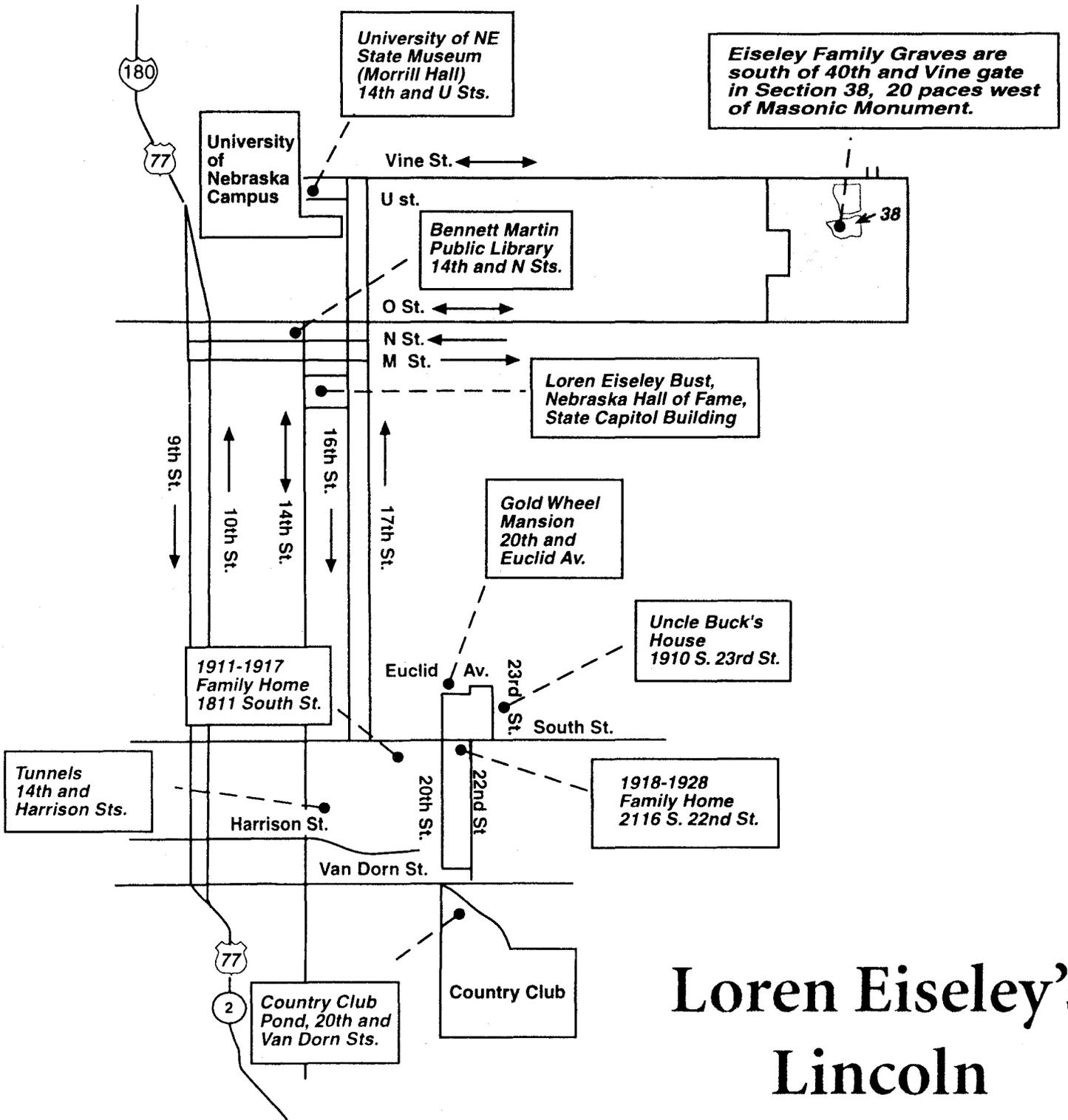
These video tapes can be ordered from our box number or by calling (402)-435-5454.

Reflections of a Bonehunter, by Christine Lesiak (1995), one hour video produced by Nebraska ETV. Interviews with Gale Christianson, science fiction writer Ray Bradbury, and much more.

Postpaid prices: members \$22.50 and nonmembers \$25.00.

Loren Eiseley's Lincoln (1996), one hour video produced by Friends of Loren Eiseley. Guided tour by Darrel Berg of sites associated with Loren Eiseley to be found in Lincoln.

Postpaid prices: members \$12.50 and nonmembers \$14.50.



Loren Eiseley's Lincoln

University of Nebraska State Museum (Morrill Hall)

Loren Eiseley went on museum-sponsored paleontology expeditions to the Wildcat Hills in western Nebraska in 1930, '32, and '33. He graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1933 with a Bachelor's Degree in Geology/Anthropology and English.

- *The Immense Journey* (1957), his first collection of essays, has sold over a million copies, and has been translated into 15 languages. Prehistory essays include: *How Flowers Changed the World*; *The Slit*; *The Snout*; and *The Bird and the Machine*.
- *The Innocent Assassins* (1973), a poetry collection, contains *The Innocent Assassins*, a poem about a 25 million year old cat fight. The saber tooth tiger bones, discovered by the 1932 expedition, are at Morrill Hall.
- *The Star Throwers* (1978), published after Eiseley's death, is a collection of his favorite writings including *Man the Firemaker*, and *The Last Neanderthal*.
- *The Night Country* (1971), has *The Relic Men*, and *Barbed Wire and Brown Skulls*.

Bennett Martin Public Library Heritage Room—Eiseley Archives

Young Loren Eiseley often visited the Carnegie Library, where the Public Library now stands. His own collection of youthful books is part of the Eiseley Archives in the Nebraska Authors Heritage Room. Many research materials are available. *Hours: 12-3, Tues-Fri., and 2-5 on Sundays. Phone: (402) 441-8516.*

Nebraska State Capitol Hall of Fame

A bust of Loren Eiseley is in the Hall of Fame. *Building open daily. Call 402-471-0448 for tour schedule.*

1811 South Street (1911-17)

The "House of Gestures," where he communicated with his stone deaf mother by gestures.

2116 So. 22nd Street (1918-28)

Behind this house Loren created the graveyard of gold crosses, and it was this house to which he returned after the fight with the bully.

1910 So. 23rd Street—Uncle Buck's

Home of his uncle and aunt, William Buchanan Price, and Grace (sister of Loren's mother, Daisy). Uncle Buck, the state auditor, was a protégé of William Jennings Bryan. Their house was a home away from home for Loren.

20th & Euclid—Gold Wheel Mansion

The old Rudd Mansion, where Loren discovered the gold wheel in the stone incinerator out back.

20th & Van Dorn—the Frog Pond

The frog pond where Loren gathered his aquarium specimens, is now a "tame" country club pond.

14th & Harrison—Tunnels

The storm sewer tunnels where Loren played as a child, were identified by him in an article in the *Nebraska Alumnus* of Nov/Dec 1979.

40th & Vine—Wyuka Cemetery

The graves of William Buchanan Price, his wife Grace, and her sister, Daisy, are located in the Masonic Circle.

Dick Herman Writes on Eiseley

It was a delight to open the paper one fine summer morning and find the essay which follows. Dick Herman is the retired editorial page editor of the *Lincoln Journal* and this feature appeared as one of his regular contributions to the *Lincoln Journal Star* on July 22, 1997. He is one of those who helped so much in the early days to organize the Friends of Loren Eiseley, and we thank him for letting us reprint his essay.

By His Book's Dedications,
Eiseley Opens Our Eyes To His World

Dick Herman

Some time had passed--too much time, really--since I last had opened one of my Loren Eiseley books.

Given that the University of Nebraska Press has just reissued Eiseley's *The Night Country*, and I was drafted for an associated piece of public service, it seemed only prudent to do a spot of refreshing. What became unexpectedly interesting, (to me) was the turn that superficial research took.

One can sometimes track a stream of a writer's layered personality by examining book dedications he or she shaped. Those few words on an otherwise blank page almost always are overlooked by readers.

As a general proposition, dedications mainly are prosaic. Some examples from noted works:

Catch-22 by Joseph Heller: "To my mother and to my wife Shirley, and my children, Erica and Ted."

All the Little Live Things by Wallace Stegner: "For Trudy, Franny, Judy, Peg."

Gideon's Trumpet, by Anthony Lewis: "To my parents."

But then there are those that permanently resonate, being prophetic or poetic or profound. Or all three. One rare point is Rachel Carson's dedication of her classic, *Silent Spring*. That culture-changing work salutes "Albert Schweitzer, who wrote, 'Man has lost the capacity to foresee and to forestall. He will end by destroying the earth.'"

Family was central, both positively and by omission, to Eiseley in his dedicatory passages. Nowhere will one find any honoring of his terrifying mother, Daisy Corey Eiseley. On the other hand, Lincoln's most celebrated scientist/writer and recipient of 36 honorary degrees signed his first work, *The Immense Journey*, to "the memory of Clyde Edwin Eiseley, who lies in the grass of the prairie frontier, but is not forgotten by his son." *All the Strange Hours* is dedicated to "Charles Frederick Eiseley, cavalryman in the Grand Army of the Republic, and member of the first Legislature in Nebraska Territory, without whom I would not be here, and

to William Buchanan Price, born in the ruins of the Confederacy, finally to lie in state in the Capitol Rotunda of Nebraska, without whose help my life would have been different beyond imagining."

The Night Country is written "In memory of my grandmother, Malvina McKee Corey, 1859-1936, who sleeps as all my people sleep, by the ways of the Westward Crossing."

Teachers and colleagues are hailed for their contributions to Eiseley's growth. Because I slightly knew her, I found particularly graceful Eiseley's dedication to the school teacher who first spotted great promise in the moody adolescent. *The Mind as Nature* is dedicated to "Letta May Clark, former supervisor of English of University of Nebraska High School, in gratitude for counsel and encouragement in my youth." A collection of poetry titled *The Innocent Assassins*, lights up again the shadows of the "bone hunters of the Old South Party, Morrill Expeditions 1931-33, and C. Bertrand Schultz, my comrade of those years, this book in memory of unreturning days."

Well, that is sufficiently straightforward and warm. What surely is not is *The Unexpected Universe* dedication: "To Wolf, who sleeps forever with an Ice Age bone across his heart, the last gift of one who loved him." A bit of the same order of symbolism may be sensed in how Eiseley introduces *The Invisible Pyramid*. He signaled that work to the memory of an honored academician associate, "Frank G. Speck, to me the Last Magician."

The enduring magic in Eiseley's life was that supplied and sustained by his wife. "For Mabel, who remembers the hours and the years." Thus the introduction of *The Brown Wasps*.

Notes of an Alchemist brings together more Eiseley poetry. It is "Dedicated to Mabel Langdon, my wife of many years, in appreciation of a devotion which cannot be spoken about save to say it exists having come unbidden into an unexpected world to a quite common man."

Eiseley died in 1977. He could not, therefore, have composed a fresh dedication to *All the Night Wings*, still another collection of poetic insight. Yet I find the inscription, which Eiseley originally penned in 1939, apt and romantic. And, yes if you like, transcendently noble:

To Mabel, so that when life is somewhat more dusty than it is now, she may remember the wood-lilies, and how we hid above Salt Creek when it was all dappled sun-gold and leaf shadow. And having remembered that far she will think kindly of Glitter Wing, the blue dragonfly so generous that he allowed his dinner to escape alive--probably because its taste was singularly unedifying! Remember Glitter Wing, like us betrayed by summer, his destiny to forsake the sun-paths and shiver to a pinch of jeweled dust at the first touch of frost. Remember Glitter Wing--his dust was jeweled!

The home on D Street where Mabel Langdon grew up is gone today. A brick apartment house occupies the lot. But only a few steps away to the east, is Sunken Gardens. There on freshly sun-dappled summer days, if one is fortunate, a blue dragonfly may be seen.

Look for diaphanous wings hovering about the lily ponds.

An Eiseley Colleague Visits Lincoln

Morrie Tuttle

One Sunday morning last spring we got a call to tell that a gentleman was visiting to do some work in the Library of the Nebraska Historical Society and that he just happened to have mentioned that he had been a former colleague of Dr. Eiseley. Having seen our Eiseley Friends' folder at the information desk, he had asked if this Eiseley fellow was important around here. The lady at the desk reported all this to us and said she thought he would probably be back to do more work that very afternoon. And so we were there to meet him.

The result was a delightful visit with Murray Murphey who is now retired and living in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania. He said that he had come to Penn in 1954 under a graduate fellowship and that one of Dr. Eiseley's colleagues in anthropology, Pete Hallowell, had played a part in his being there. A historian, he said that he first knew Dr. Eiseley in the days when he was working on *Darwin's Century*, a subject of much interest to them both. When, as you will see below, Dr. Eiseley decided to establish a department dealing with the history of science, Dr. Murphey served on committees to accomplish that end.

Dr. Murphey's daughter is now working on her doctoral thesis which will be one about Loren Eiseley. This was a wonderful experience for us and we are looking forward to and expecting to have further contact with these folks. Now here is the letter he wrote which summarizes very well that conversation we had on a beautiful spring Sunday afternoon:

May 21, 1997

Dear Mr. Tuttle,

I thought perhaps I could repay your kindness by putting down a few recollections of Loren for you.

I first met Loren in 1954 when I went to Penn as a post-doctoral fellow. Loren was then chairman of the Anthropology Department, which was one of the most distinguished departments at Penn. That distinction was largely due to Loren. He was not a particularly good administrator--administration bored him--but he was an excellent judge of people. When he took the chairmanship, he made it a condition of his doing so that the University

hire A. I. Hallowell, who was then at Northwestern University. Hallowell was a great cultural anthropologist, his work on the Barents River Ojibwa is world famous. Loren was also responsible for bringing in Ward Goodenough, Anthony F. C. Wallace, Ruben Reina, and other younger men who, together with Hallowell, made the cultural wing of the Anthropology Department one of the best in the country.

I got to know Loren better in the late fifties. We both happened to eat lunch in the Houston Hall cafeteria and so we often lunched together. He was then finishing *Darwin's Century* and we spent a lot of time talking about the history of science. He had a very broad understanding of both the intellectual and the social aspects of science and felt (correctly) that historians did not pay enough attention to its history. When he became Provost of the University, he created a Department of the History and Sociology of Science in the Graduate School under Dean Roy Nichols. He was also (for obvious reasons) very interested in the literary treatment of science and he did some teaching in that area.

When my own program became a separate department in 1960, we wanted to introduce work in American historical archaeology. Loren helped us to persuade John Cotter, an archaeologist with whom he had dug in Nebraska years before and who had done pioneer archaeological work on Jamestown, to teach for us the first course in American historical archaeology ever taught anywhere. Loren foresaw the growth of that field and used his influence to help it along.

Loren was a very private man. Until the publication of the *Immense Journey*, very few of us knew about his literary activities or had any hint of his romantic and imaginative side. His conversation was almost entirely circumstantial or intellectual; even after he became famous as a writer, he used to frustrate his colleagues by his refusal to exhibit that side of his personality in conversation. His literary work I'm afraid was not greeted with enthusiasm by some of his more hard-nosed scientific colleagues, but it delighted literary folk to find a writer lurking among the scientists. This was the era when C. P. Snow's "two cultures" thesis was much under discussion, and Loren was one of the few who belonged to both--a fitting achievement for an anthropologist.

Loren was one of the most exquisitely tactful men I ever knew. He would sit through faculty meetings in which his colleagues were at each other's throats and refuse to become involved. He could turn away explosive remarks or hostile statement with a subtle gentleness that preserved his own position but did not offend others, no matter how offensive they were.

I recall only one issue over which he made a public fight and that was the Vietnam War. Penn was not one of the hot campuses of the 1960's; no university with the Wharton School of Business could have been. But we had our SDS chapter, our sit-in in College Hall, our student radicals, and our demonstrations. I recall vividly one meeting of the

faculty senate in which Loren defended the war--a position that got a very hostile reaction from many in the senate. Loren did not lose his temper, but when he told his colleagues that they should not think that they could wash the blood from their hands, he offended a great many of them. Nevertheless, he continued through the late sixties to oppose the student radicals. As I agreed with him on that point, we often worked together on committees dealing with the student disorders and demands, and his presence on those committees was important in preserving the standards of the university.

As you know, Loren died after an extended battle with cancer. He had always been rather heavy, and once the cancer started he lost weight, as people with that disease do. Remarkably, as he slimmed, he became more striking in appearance, and the most arresting photographs of him are the ones taken during that period. It is one of the multiple ironies of his life that he never looked better than he did in his final illness.

Sincerely,

Murray Murphey

NU Honors Course On Writings of Loren Eiseley

For the first time, a course devoted to the writings and philosophy of Nebraska native Loren Eiseley is being taught this fall at his alma mater, the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Members of the Friends of Loren Eiseley are invited to attend sessions of interest in the Gray's Parlor of Niehardt Hall on Wednesday afternoons starting at 2 PM.

The seminar format will permit honors and graduate students to explore and exchange thoughts and ideas with a distinguished group of guest speakers who have been invited to share their special insights. Students will submit creative materials which may be published in future issues of The Caravan.

The schedule of speakers is as follows: 9/17 Bing Chen, "The Immense Journey"; 9/28 Mike Voorhies, "Tour of Ashfall" (please call Bing Chen 402-554-2288 for information); 10/1 Morrie Tuttle "Wimberly and Barbour, The University Years"; 10/8 Ken Finch, "A Naturalist's Perspective" (will be a reading and nature walk held at Nine Mile Prairie starting at 2:45); 10/15 James Estes "How Flowers Changed the World"; 10/29 Paul Johnsgard "Darwin's Century"; 11/5 John Janovy "All the Strange Hours as Literature"; 11/12 Fred Thomas "Nature Writing From a Journalist's Perspective"; Rev. Darrel Berg "Childhood Influences"; 12/3 Bing Chen, "Invisible Pyramid: Eiseley as a Modern Shaman".

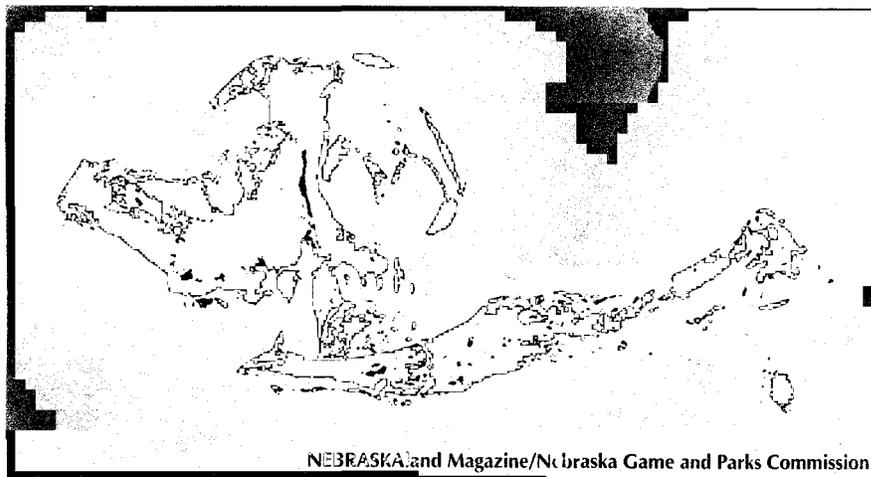
Ray Boice at Dedication



Innocent Assassin Marker Placed

On May 18, a marker commemorating the discovery of one of the most important fossil remains found in Nebraska was dedicated at the Chimney Rock Visitor Center in western Nebraska. The full text of the marker placed on the grounds of the Center is shown on the opposite page. In 1932 a party including a student Loren Eiseley found the remains of that ancient cat fight which Eiseley later immortalized in his poem, "The Innocent Assassins." The Center is as close as one can get to the actual discovery site for that is some two miles away on private land out in the Wildcat Hills. The actual fossil may be seen in Morrill Hall on the UN-L campus in Lincoln.

Placing this commemoration is the result of the good work and devoted spirit of Ray Boice. Ray told us that it was a pleasure to work with the Boy Scouts through their Save Our American Resources program (SOAR) and the fine people from the State Historical Society to provide this plaque in honor of Loren Eiseley and thereby locate one of Nebraska's treasures. Principal funding of the costs of the installation came from the Long's Peak Council of the Boy Scouts of America, Gering Nebraska. Larry Sommer, Director of the State Historical Society told us that they were very pleased with the response the marker had received--that people tell how pleased they are to see it.



NEBRASKAland Magazine/Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

The Innocent Assassins

"Once in the sun-fierce badlands of the west in that strange country of volcanic ash and cones, . . . we found a sabertooth, most ancient cat, far down in all those cellars of dead time."

From *The Innocent Assassins*
by Loren Eiseley

The twenty-five-million-year-old cat described in the above passage was found only a few miles from here by a University of Nebraska paleontology crew. One of the more unusual paleontological finds ever made in Nebraska, the sabertooth was found with one of its sabers thrust through the upper arm bone of another of its species. Both animals died locked together as a result of their combat.

One of the members of the paleontology crew working at the site was a young student named Loren Eiseley, a native of Lincoln who received his degree from the University of Nebraska in 1933 and who went on to achieve fame as an anthropologist, literary naturalist, author, and philosopher.

During the summers of 1931, 1932, and 1933 Eiseley participated in the University-sponsored "South Party" or Morrill Paleontological Expedition under the direction of Dr. E. H. Barbour. After graduating from Nebraska Eiseley received his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1937 and for ten years taught in Kansas and Ohio before becoming a member of the University of Pennsylvania faculty, where he served as chairman of the anthropology department from 1947 until his death in 1977 at age seventy.



The University of Pennsylvania Archives

Eiseley's poem describing the sabertooth find in western Nebraska was published in 1973 as *The Innocent Assassins*. Author of thirteen books, some of his best-known works include *The Immense Journey*, *The Night Country*, *The Firmament of Time*, and *The Unexpected Universe*.

The sabertooth fossil found by the "South Party" in 1932 is on display at the University of Nebraska State Museum in Morrill Hall, Lincoln.

The Nebraska State Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support and assistance of the SOAR Project, Longs Peak Council, Boy Scouts of America, Gering, Nebraska, and Friends of Loren Eiseley.

The Innocent Assassins

Once in the sun-fierce badlands of the west in that strange country of volcanic ash and cones, runneled by rains, cut into purgatorial shapes, where nothing grows, no seeds spring, no beast moves, we found a sabertooth, most ancient cat, far down in all those cellars of dead time. What was it made the mystery there? We dug until the full length of the striking saber showed beautiful as Toledo steel, the fine serrations still present along the blade, a masterpiece of murderous art conceived by those same forces that heaved mountains up from the flat bottoms of Cretaceous seas.

Attentive in a little silent group we squatted there. This was no ordinary death, though forty million years lay between us and that most gaping snarl. Deep-driven to the root a fractured scapula hung on the mighty saber undetached; two beasts had died in mortal combat, for the bone had never been released; there was no chance this cat had ever used its fangs again or eaten—died there, in short, though others of its kind grew larger, larger, suddenly were gone while the great darkness went about its task, mountains thrust up, mountains worn down, till this lost battle was exposed to eyes the stalking sabertooths had never seen.

Pure nature had devised such weapons, struck deep in the night, endured immortally death, ambush, terror, by these, her innocents whose lives revolved on this, whose brains were formed only to strike and strike, beget their kind, and go to strike again. There were the great teeth snarling in the clay, the bony crests that had once held the muscles for this deed,

perfect as yesterday.
I looked a little while, admiring how
that marvelous weapon had been so designed
in unknown darkness, where the genes create
as if they planned it so.

I wondered why
such perfect fury had been swept away, while man,
wide-roaming dark assassin of his kind,
had sprung up in the wake
of such perfected instruments as these.
They lived long eras out, while we
in all this newborn world of our own violence show
uncertainties, and hopes unfostered when
the cat's sheer leap wrenched with his killing skill
his very self from life.

On these lost hills that mark the rise of brain,
I weep perversely for the beauty gone.
I weep for man who knows this antique trade
but is not guiltless,
is not born with fangs,
has doubts,

suppresses them as though he knew
nature had other thoughts, inchoate, dim,
but that the grandeur of great cats attracted him—
envy, perhaps, by a weak creature forced to borrow
tools from the earth, growing, in them, most cunning
upon an outworn path.

I see us still upon that hilltop, gathered like ancient men
who, weaponless, detach
from an old weathered skull a blade whose form reshaped in flint
could lift death up from earth's inanimate core
and hurl it at the heart. Whatever else would bring
cold scientists to murmur over what they saw?
We are all atavists and yet sometimes we seem
wrapped in wild innocence like sabertooths, as if we still might seek
a road unchosen yet, another dream.

The Innocent Assassins by Loren Eiseley
published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1973.



NEBRASKA STATE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

April 1997

Our Web Site Has A New Address

Mike Antrim

The Loren Eiseley web site, sponsored by the Friends of Loren Eiseley and written by the Education Outreach Committee, has a new address:

<http://www.ops.org/burke/EISELEY.html>.

This site continues to receive "hits" from around the country and is usually the top site listed from a key word search for "Loren Eiseley". Recent additions on the site include information on the release of *The Night Country* and information on the UNL honors course that began this fall. Students in the honors course will be providing input for the web site.

Night Country Is Reprinted

The month of June marked the reprinting of Loren Eiseley's *The Night Country* by the University of Nebraska Press in an edition featuring the original illustrations of Leonard Everett Fisher and an introduction written by Dr. Gale Christianson, Loren Eiseley's biographer. This beautiful paperback edition is available from us for \$13.95 plus \$2.50 for handling and shipping.

The Friends celebrated this event with several programs in June. In the President's letter, Kira Gale tells of the fine evening they had on August 5th at Neale Woods in Omaha.

Our thanks go to Christine Pappas for organizing several events held in Lincoln. On May 30th Christine Pappas and Morrie Tuttle discussed *The Night Country* on *Book Talk*, a regular Friday evening feature on Lincoln's KZUM Radio. On June 11th a program at the Heritage Room in the Bennett Martin Library in Lincoln began with a narrated slide show which was produced by Lincoln's Junior League many years ago. Morrie Tuttle then provided a background and overview of *The Night Country* while three others talked about specific essays in the book. Christine Pappas talked about "The Gold Wheel," Christine Lesiak discussed "The Relic Men," and Steve Shively concluded with "The Brown Wasps." A fine audience generated a good discussion afterward. On June 27th, Dick Herman appeared on Nebraska Public Radio's *Live from the Mill* program to tell about Dr. Eiseley and to discuss the book with host Bill Stibor.

On June 21st the Friends met at Nine Mile Prairie for a twilight nature walk. Shelly Clark from Imperial, which is way out in western Nebraska, is an English/journalism teacher in the Chase County High School. In Lincoln for summer session graduate studies, she was on the prairie with us and we are very pleased to be able to present her impressions of that evening:

A Little Journey

by Shelly Clark

The Friends of Loren Eiseley threw a party and millions showed up. However, only 34 of these were people. Celebrating with Eiseley enthusiasts on the evening of the summer solstice were the inhabitants of Nine-Mile Prairie: red-tail hawks, great horned owls, brown thrashers, grasshopper sparrows, tree swallows, toads, cicada, Little Blue Stem, Prairie Drop Seed, Sunflowers, and an infinite number of other tolerant hosts.

Christine Pappas, Secretary of the Friends of Loren Eiseley, organized the twilight walk, June 21, on the prairie northwest of Lincoln, to honor the June reissue of Eiseley's book, *The Night Country*, by the University of Nebraska Press.

At dusk, the participants congregated in the parking lot across from the prairie. Some knew each other, others stood apart from the main group. Along with Pappas, Morrie Tuttle, Treasurer of the Friends, visited with Curtis Twedt, environmental analyst for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and Friends board member who was our guide for the twilight walk.

As cars continued to pull into the lot, high school students who were participating in the two-week Nebraska Scholars Institute camp at UN-L, huddled with their three instructors, as one of them, Steve Ferris, Lincoln High biology teacher, quietly read passages from *The Night Country*.

About 8:45, everyone fell in and moved up the short lane to the prairie. Twedt explained some of the history of Nine-Mile Prairie and fielded questions from the group about the prairie grasses and wildlife for about 30 minutes. He told that only 30 days before they had burned the entire area, a necessary act for maintaining the prairie. And now in such a short time it was bursting with abundant new growth. The only clues to the fire that had so recently burned were small bits of charred material one could find close to the ground, this destruction being a necessary act for preserving the prairie.

The NSI students and teachers pulled off from the main group for a short hike through the prairie and invited a few others to tag along. The students said they chose to accompany their teachers on the twilight walk because "We didn't want to go to the dance," said Ginny Colwell, Lincoln East student. The other girls, Becky Goines, Papillion High, and Julie Dunbar, Lincoln East, laughed and agreed. Only one of the three students had previously studied Loren Eiseley's work in school.

Mary Liz Jameson, NSI instructor and Friends board member, said, since the 1997 NSI theme was "Creating Connections," focusing on Eiseley's work was very

appropriate for groups studying science and literature. As the hike progressed, the teachers picked wood sorrel and no one in the group hesitated to eat the tart lemony-flavored plant.

Ferris gathered the group around a smooth-topped rock about the size of a bushel basket and said, "Do you want to know about the rock?" The students smiled knowingly and answered the way they were supposed to, "Yes." Then with great ceremony, Ferris proceeded to explain the "genealogy" of this particular Nine-Mile Prairie rock. But first he pulled out his visual aid, "the string" to explain geologic time. Stretching the string to its full length of 4.6 meters with the help of a student, Ferris said the string represented 6.4 billion years. Times were knotted off to represent milestones in the earth's geologic time. Ferris pointed out when one-celled animals appeared, when dinosaurs roamed, and when Modern Man showed up.

Modern Man's 200,000 years is represented by the thickness of one dime at the end of the string, Ferris explained. He was interrupted at that point by Greg Hartel, Bellevue High biology teacher who disagreed. "It is only one speck of dust at the end of the string," he insisted. They had a friendly argument for a few minutes and then it was back to the rock. Ferris explained that the rock originated in the center of the earth as molten rock, and in its travels turned to granite, sandstone and eventually into its present form.

Ferris said its "parent rock" is in a rock bed in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. "So that's where it came from," he added. He paused and then added with a smile, "Well it makes a nice rock to sit on anyway." Suddenly Hartel pointed to the east and yelled "Hawk!" The group watched as it bank in and fall out of vision behind a hill on the east side of the prairie.

Night dropped onto the prairie and Jameson and the students took off to catch fireflies. They huddled in the grass in a circle around Jameson as she carefully explained the facts of the beetle, otherwise known as the lightning bug or firefly. Jameson said each species has a characteristic flashing rhythm which is a mating ritual and that the light of the beetle is known as "cold light." The youngest of the group, Haley Clark, who had tagged along with the NSI group, was delighted when she caught a beetle and held it in her hand.

They (teachers) are excited enough about something to want to tell others, have others love it as they love it, tell people the how of something, and the why. I like to see students who will carry the intellectual spark into the world beyond my time.

Eiseley, *Nebraska Alumnus*, April 1959

Suddenly Ferris and Hartel whistled, signalling the group to join them on the crest of a hill to witness a spectacular moonrise over the Lincoln Skyline. There were "ohh's" and "wows." One of the students said watching the moon move upward so quickly was like being able to feel the earth

spinning. She asked Ferris how fast the earth rotates. "Every 24 hours," he quipped. Soft laughter, then silence.

Along this uneasy border the old life of the wild has come back into its own. Weeds grow and animals slip about in the night where no man dares to hunt them. A thin uncertain line fringes the edge of oppression. The freedom it contains is fit only for birds and floating thistledown or a wandering fox. Nevertheless there must be men who look on it with envy.

The Night Country

The group hesitated, looking out over the line of the eastern horizon that separated the prairie from the city. The lights, neon pink, blue and white, and a far-off insistent noise called the group back out of the darkness of the night country, where they were, after all, only guests.

The party was over. They turned and started for the parking lot. The last one off the prairie was the 10-year-old who more than once darted off the path to chase lightning bugs, "Just one more," she said.

Editorial Excavations

Morrie Tuttle

Some significant milestones have passed which we must not allow to go by unnoticed. September 3 was the 90th anniversary of Dr. Eiseley's birth. July 9th marked the 20th anniversary of his death and so much has happened just in those 20 years since then. We have lost many people who were associated with him, his wife Mabel, friends Bert and Marian Schultz, and his long time administrative assistant Caroline Werkley, just to begin such a list. Four of his books were issued after his death. Ten years ago he was inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame. Our organization was started a few years after his death and interest in his work continues.

The Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission and the NEBRASKALand Foundation, Inc., have co-sponsored the publication of *The Nebraska Hall of Fame*. This fine little book, well illustrated, tells of the social, cultural, political and historical connections shared by the group who have been selected for the Nebraska Hall of Fame, and this, of course, includes Dr. Eiseley. The cost of these books is \$6.50 plus \$1.75 for postage and they are available from the Nebraska State Historical Society or from us, if you write to our box.

In previous issues we have told of the work in progress to place a life size bronze figure of a 30,000 year old Imperial Mammoth in front of Morrill Hall. This project of the Friends of the State Museum has been financed by the sale of small bronze models of the sculpture. Now we can tell you that all of this really is going to be realized and soon. Over the summer we have watched sculptor Fred Hoppe

erect a large wooden form as he began to create the huge figure which would rise some 22 feet. By mid July he had the great beast completely modeled in clay. People then came from the foundry to make the forms which they have since taken back to Cody, Wyoming, to complete the work of casting the great figure in bronze. Progress on the project is on schedule, and placement of the sculpture is expected this November. Some of Dr. Eiseley's earliest professional writing was on such beasts and he would have been familiar with the particular fossil on which this is based.

Eiseley Friends have many times gathered at the former home of Bert and Marian Schultz whose long association with Loren Eiseley is well known. Even before the Schultz family lived there, a young Loren Eiseley and friends such as Wilbur Gaffney would walk out to that place to sit on the hill under the sky, read poetry, and discuss the things that concerned them. Dr. Schultz donated his home and grounds to the Nebraska Academy of Science which has just announced plans to reconstruct a bit of natural prairie on a ten acre portion of the property using help from an \$18,200 grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust. Over the coming years, members of the Wachiska Audubon Society of South East Nebraska will harvest seeds from prairies they own and plant these to establish this prairie nature center. Once the prairie becomes established, students and the public will be able to walk there to learn more about one of Nebraska's most important and dwindling ecosystems. Reconstructing an authentic natural prairie will not be easy because these are made up of hundreds of species of grasses and wild flowers. Morton Stelling, Associate Executive Director of the Nebraska Academy of Sciences, says that it will take a decade to establish more than 100 species of prairie plants at that site and that it will not even begin to look like a prairie for at least three years. He noted that the process is difficult because some species must become established before others can grow. Determining the natural succession of plant species to be followed is a matter of trial and error and is still a subject of current research.

We have enjoyed making contact with new member John Hicks of Grand Junction, Colorado who has written us on the stationery of his tour company which he has named Immense Journeys. And another new member has made us an international society of Friends for Barbara Goldsworthy of Aberfoyle Park in far off South Australia is just now one of us and we are very pleased.

Discussions between the scientific community and the "creationists" rage on and there is little that we could add to all that which our readers do not already know. However, a recent article in London's *Sunday Observer* yielded something we would like to share with you. In this issue Steve Jones, a Professor of Genetics at University College London, discusses a recent trail in Australia in which a geologist sued a fundamentalist and lost. All this had to do with an expedition to recover Noah's Ark and the means by which they had solicited the funding to achieve this. The case

was thrown out of court by the judge, not on the basis of the interesting issues, but instead only because of a technicality in Australian law. Jones covers the range of the issues outstanding in this matter, none of which would be new to our readers, however, he ends his essay with an anecdote which we can't resist bringing to you. He has been talking about the dangers of biologists flirting with theology and creationists mixing in science and continues:

Both sides need to accept the boundaries of their own subject . . . I once worked at the University of Botswana. Many of the students were keen creationists. Even so, my lectures went down well, and the exam was a model of accurate regurgitation. How, I asked, did that fit with their beliefs? The answer was masterly: "It's simple, sir: you evolved, we were created!"

+++++

JOURNEY

There are things still coming ashore.
- Loren Eiseley, *The Immense Journey*

Dipping my hand into the Platte,
fins sprout timidly
into an old song,
a melody trilling like flecked fish
over streambed rocks

this hand digging
down
burrowing into murky riverbottom sand

then Coming Up, suddenly, into filtered light, this hand,
slithers and slips into the morning
of its earliest home

this hand,
this white-bellied hand,
breathes without gills,
Remembering, I think,
the River
in its bones.

--Shelly Clark

A Special Invitation

EISELEY FRIENDS ANNUAL CELEBRATION

October 25, 1997

Where does the landscape end--and where do we begin? Is it possible to go anywhere, even into a remote wilderness, alone? Are wilderness and civilization opposites, or are they mirror images?

Paul Gruchow asks these intriguing questions in the current on-line edition of *The Hungry Mind Review*. Perhaps he'll answer some of them, too, during his talk at the annual Loren Eiseley celebration in Elephant Hall on Saturday, October 25, 1997.

Author of six books about humans and the natural world, Gruchow believes Eiseley is a master of the natural history essay--the kind of writing he calls "the meeting place of science and the humanities."

Gruchow's essays, like Eiseley's, are deeply personal. In *Boundary Waters: The Grace of the Wild* he tells of his wanderings through the boundary waters of Minnesota and Ontario, a "land of dense forests and thick bogs, of rocky ridges and deep clear lakes." In *Grass Roots: The Universe of Home*, Gruchow "paints poignant pictures of rural life before corporate agribusiness dominated landscapes."

His talk for us is titled "Loren Eiseley and the Meaning of Natural History" where he will consider the natural history essay in American intellectual experience--that place where scientist and humanist meet. As he has said, "to me, there is no better example of this than the work of Loren Eiseley."

In the afternoon we will gather at the Nebraska Academy of Science building (the former Schultz home) at 3 to 5 PM for a reading of Eiseley's works by Ken Finch and a nature walk conducted by Morton Stelling who is both the Academy's Associate Executive Director and a representative of the Wachiska Audubon Society.

It will be a wonderful day so be sure to join us for a nature walk, dinner among the mastodons at Morrill Hall, and Gruchow's talk so watch your mail for more specific information.

DUES REMINDER

Dues are now being received and appreciated. Remember, if you paid after September 1, 1997 you are considered paid up for all of 1998.

The dues structure is as follows:

Individual member - \$10.00
Contributing member - \$25.00
Supporting member - \$50.00
Patron - \$100.00

Send checks to: Friends of Loren Eiseley
P.O. Box 80934
Lincoln, NE 68501-0934

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