

THE CARAVAN

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF LOREN EISELEY

Vol. 13, No. 1

P.O. Box 80934, Lincoln, NE 68501-0934

Winter 1999



Loren Corey Eiseley
September 3, 1907 - July 9, 1977

"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

Much has happened since the last issue of *The Caravan* -- first, Kira Gale has completed her terms as president and I have taken over. We do thank Kira for her dedication and the success of her leadership years. My name is Christine Pappas and I hope I can bring the same amount of skill and dedication as Kira has given to the Friends of Loren Eiseley. I am a Ph.D. Student at the University who works in the Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors and I am the editor of *Plains Song Review*.

Our best news is that, largely upon the work of Friends of Loren Eiseley and the finesse of Dick Herman, the Lincoln City Library Board voted to name the new northwest branch library after Loren Eiseley. We are thrilled and plan to be involved in designing the proper tribute to Eiseley at that site.

We have hosted many successful events in the past year as well: a paper at the Nebraska Literature Festival given by Deb Derrick, a paper given in Omaha by Rev. Darrel Berg, a presentation by Mike Voorhies on the State Museum's Darwin Exhibit coupled with a reception honoring the surviving members of the Old South Party, cosponsorship of a presentation and reception for renowned scholar E. O. Wilson, and a program to celebrate the republication of Eiseley's *Invisible Pyramid* by the University of Nebraska Press which featured a presentation by Press Director Dan Ross and a reading by Paul Gruchow, who wrote the introduction to this new edition.

Sadly, however, in the last months we have lost two truly good and gentle people from our Board: Naomi Brill and Fred Thomas. Their passing constitutes a loss not only for us but for the whole state. Our thoughts are also with Ruth Thone, who remains at Madonna Rehabilitation Center after surgery.

In closing I would also like to welcome several new members to our Board: Susan Perlman, Bonnie Armstrong and Priscilla Grew. Mike Antrim and Bing Chen have resigned and both have given so much to our work. Although there have been personnel changes, I have no doubt in our ability to continue to meet the mission of their group in promoting Loren Eiseley's writings.

Christine Pappas, President

LOREN EISELEY AND THE MEANING OF NATURAL HISTORY: THE NATURAL HISTORY ESSAY, THE PLACE WHERE THE SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES MEET

By Paul Gruchow

On October 25, 1997, Paul Gruchow spoke to our Annual program and dinner. Paul Gruchow is a natural history essay writer and lecturer who is on the faculty of St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, and has been serving as a visiting faculty member at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. Author of several books, he also wrote the introduction to the new University of Nebraska Press edition of *The Invisible Pyramid*. We are pleased to be able to present the text of his lecture which follows:

It is a great honor for me to be here tonight since Loren Eiseley is one of my intellectual heroes -- a great writer whom I have been reading for many years and who in many ways, I think, has shaped my own work.

Eiseley often referred to himself as the wanderer, or as the alchemist. I remember keenly a moment when I thought I knew exactly what Eiseley meant by those descriptions. I was walking one of the spiny ridges of Isle Royale in Lake Superior. I had descended the Minong Ridge at the place where it crosses one branch of the upper reaches of Washington Creek and was just about to set my right boot onto a stepping stone when a dark, lithe, long-tailed animal slipped around an alder bush and disappeared into a thicket of shrubs. I had a second's look at it, if that, before it had vanished. A cursory exploration in the direction it had gone revealed no evidence of a readable foot print.

Perhaps if I had not been so intent on getting to Windigo before the store closed (I did not yet know that it hadn't opened), if there had not been a boat to meet in the morning, if I had not committed myself to obligations that bound me to meeting it, perhaps if I had ever learned to travel freely, or believed more deeply in the opportunities a moment brings, I might have unburdened myself of my pack and gone in search of that fleeting image. But I didn't. I looked where the creature had gone, replayed the image of it

in my eye, stepped to the opposite shore of the little stream, and trudged uphill, beads of sweat gathering in the small of my back, hoping that some less fleeting presence might appear along the way to compensate for the loss.

I thought that it might have been an ermine in dark summer coat, or a mink, or even an otter, although it seemed small for that. Most likely I decided the creature was a mink. Later that day I would claim to have seen one and to have been pleased at the sight of it, but it was the kind of lie we tell when we are disappointed. Truth was, I had seen a fleeting shadow for a brief moment, a thin thread of experience, and had embroidered it into a story. We tell stories like this all the time. One's life consists, in some way, of the sum of them.

I can see the moment even now, a long time later, just as if it had freshly happened: the glance to the left, where the tan water ran through the green stems of a marsh marigold bright with golden flower, the flurry of motion, the flash of visual data: long, lithe, brown or black, with tail. It remains one of my most vivid impressions of Isle Royale. I have stored it with a hundred thousand other impressions just like it of a thousand other places. I want to extract them, make them solid, and render them as something concrete: a collage maybe, or a quilt.

See, I could then say, this is the essence of wildness: this is what we must not forget: how brief life is, how unexpected, how little of it we glimpse, how rapidly it changes.

I, like the next person, struggle to make sense of what I have seen and heard. I tell stories about wild places, as if I had discovered anything at all. If I told the truth, everything I described would be indistinct and on the run. This would be a true picture of the places I have known, including those of my own heart: I would be standing at the center of the frame, and at its edges one would see the tails of things, mysterious and alluring, their owners dashing for cover.

I think it is precisely this sense that we get when we are in nature -- of a world fleeting and in retreat and at the same time mysterious and alluring, miraculous -- that makes it inevitable that when we experience nature we should think of ourselves as wanderers and as alchemists. It is in our own eyes and through our own imaginations that the mystery and wonder of nature is realized.

Loren Eiseley fits a pattern that I would describe in

this way: a typical nature writer is somebody who has grown up at the edges of society in circumstances where it is possible to be intensely lonely, but near at hand to something that is overpoweringly beautiful.

Edward O. Wilson, to take one example, attended more than a dozen schools before he graduated from high school. During the summers, he was shipped across the south from relative to relative. His alcoholic father committed suicide. Wilson himself grew up with flawed vision because when he was about six he caught a fishing hook in one eye and lost the sight in it. That is how he came to study ants, he said. They were one thing he could look at with his monocular vision and still make sense of. In his autobiography Wilson says, "I suppose that there might be a better way to make a scientist, at least a field naturalist, but I can't think of one, than to put a lonely child in a beautiful place."

I think that describes what happened to Loren Eiseley. It describes Thoreau's life. It describes John Muir's life. It describes Mary Austin's life. It describes Mari Sandoz's life. It describes Rachel Carson's life.

We have had many ways of thinking about why nature is important, why it is valuable. Most commonly these days we think about nature as a kind of provider. The standard argument in favor of nature is that there might, for example, be some kind of rare plant which will contain a chemical that will rescue us all from a cancer in the future. Ecologists these days are fond of talking about the ecological services that natural systems provide: cleaning up water, keeping air pure, recycling nutrients, stabilizing climate, and so on.

We have thought sometimes, but not often enough, about nature as an instructor, as a teacher. The possibilities for thinking of nature in such terms, ones that especially might apply to our agriculture, have gone largely unexplored. There remain many things we could learn from nature about how to manage our own material lives.

We've thought about nature as a kind of escape: a place you could go to get away from the cares and toils of ordinary life, about nature as an inspiration. But I think all of the great nature writers, and especially Loren Eiseley, have seen nature, above everything, as a source of great consolation. Nature, many of us have come to believe, quite literally keeps us sane.

I'd like to demonstrate the idea of nature as

consolation in Eiseley's work.

Eiseley saw nature, for one thing, as offering us the consolation of time. If ever there was a human being who had an expansive sense of the idea of time, it was Loren Eiseley. He could actually think about 50 million years and have some conception of what that might mean. He habitually thought in terms of ages and eons instead of days and hours and was completely comfortable doing so. Because he was so passionately an explicator of the idea of evolution, he had a keen sense of the creation as something ongoing, something perpetually unfolding, and, therefore, of life as a great adventure.

I imagine that if Loren Eiseley is looking down on this crowd tonight, he is quite chagrined to know that I am here talking about him. I was part of that rebellious generation of college students in the 1960's who so perplexed and disgusted him. He thought that what was wrong with the people of my generation was that we had given up on time, that we were content to live in some sort of romantic past. For Eiseley, that was the ultimate sin. Not to embrace time, not to revel in the fact that time is unfolding, that it is linear, in Darwinian terms, was, for Eiseley, to be without intellectual hope.

He wrote about this idea memorably many times, but I think most memorably in an essay called "The Judgment of the Birds." This is the passage:

It was a late hour on a cold, wind-bitten autumn day when I climbed a great hill spined like a dinosaur's back and tried to take my bearings. The tumbled waste fell away in waves in all directions. Blue air was darkening into purple along the bases of the hills. I shifted my knapsack, heavy with the petrified bones of long-vanished creatures, and studied my compass. I wanted to be out of there by nightfall, and already the sun was going sullenly down in the west.

It was then that I saw the flight coming on. It was moving like a little close-knit body of black specks that danced and darted and closed again. It was pouring from the north and heading toward me with the undeviating relentlessness of a compass needle. It streamed through the shadows rising out of monstrous gorges. It rushed over towering pinnacles in the red light of the sun or momentarily sank from sight

within their shade. Across that desert of eroding clay and wind-worn stone they came with a faint wild twittering that filled all the air about me as those tiny living bullets hurtled past into the night.

It may not strike you as a marvel. It would not, perhaps, unless you stood in the middle of a dead world at sunset, but that was where I stood. Fifty million years lay under my feet, fifty million years of bellowing monsters moving in a green world now gone so utterly that its very light was travelling on the farther edge of space. . .

I had lifted up a fistful of that ground. I held it while that wild flight of south-bound warblers hurtled over me into the oncoming dark. There went phosphorous, there went iron, there went carbon, there beat the calcium in those hurrying wings. Alone on a dead planet I watched that incredible miracle speeding past. It ran by some true compass over field and waste land. It cried its individual ecstasies into the air until the gullies rang. It swerved like a single body. it knew itself, and, lonely, it bunched close in the racing darkness, its individual entities feeling about them the rising night. . .

I dropped my fistful of earth. I heard it roll inanimate back into the gully at the base of the hill: iron, carbon, the chemicals of life. Like men from those wild tribes who had haunted these hills before me seeking visions, I made my sign to the great darkness. It was not a mocking sign, and I was not mocked. As I walked into my camp late that night, one man, rousing from his blankets beside the fire, asked sleepily, "What did you see?"

"I think a miracle," I said softly, but I said it to myself. Behind me that vast waste began to glow under the rising moon.

And Loren Eiseley knew, too, the consolation of nature as a place in which one finds play. Eiseley was famously insomniac. We were talking at dinner about what a difficult experience it must have been to live with him. He was a great writer, but not someone one would want to have as a husband, I think. He was a brooder and so he was perhaps by his nature hypersensitive to those moments of joyfulness with

which nature is filled. The dour Victorian image of nature "red in tooth and claw" -- the phrase is Tennyson's -- has informed our own culture's vision of nature, but Eiseley saw something quite different there, as in his memorable encounter with a young fox, reported in the essay, "The Innocent Fox:"

The creature was very young. He was alone in a dread universe. I crept on my knees around the prow and crouched beside him. It was a small fox pup from a den under the timbers who looked up at me. God knows what had become of his brothers and sisters. His parent must not have been home from hunting.

He innocently selected what I think was a chicken bone from an untidy pile of splintered rubbish and shook it at me invitingly. There was a vast and playful humor in his face. "If there was only one fox in the world and I could kill him, I would do." The words of a British poacher in a pub rasped in my ears. I dropped even further and painfully away from human stature. It has been said repeatedly that one can never, try as he will, get around to the front of the universe. Man is destined to see only its far side, to realize nature only in retreat.

Yet here was the thing in the midst of the bones, the wide eyed innocent fox inviting me to play, with the innate courtesy of its two forepaws placed appealingly together, along with a mock shake of the head. The universe was swinging in some fantastic fashion around to present its face, and the face was so small that the universe itself was laughing.

It was not a time for human dignity. It was a time only for the careful observance of amenities written behind the stars. Gravely I arranged my forepaws while the puppy whimpered with ill-concealed excitement. I drew the breath of a fox's den into my nostrils. On impulse, I picked up clumsily a whiter bone and shook it in teeth that had not entirely forgotten their original purpose. Round and round we tumbled for one ecstatic moment. We were the innocent thing in the midst of the bones, born in the egg, born in the den, born in the dark cave with the stone ax close to hand, born at last

in human guise to grow coldly remote in the room with the rifle rack hung upon the wall.

. . .

For just a moment I had held the universe at bay by the simple expedient of sitting on my haunches before a fox den and tumbling about with a chicken bone. It was the gravest, most meaningful act I shall ever accomplish, but, as Thoreau once remarked of some peculiar errand of his own, there is no use reporting it to the Royal Society.

Eiseley once wrote of himself:

I am a man who has spent a great deal of his life on his knees, though not in prayer. I do not say this last pridefully, but with the feeling that the posture, if not the thought behind it, may have had some final salutary effect.

This is the posture of prairie people. Here Eiseley reveals not only his work as an anthropologist, but also his upbringing as a prairie person. Prairies are places where the landscape is either visible in its vastness, as a series of endless and unreachable horizons, or as a place in which all of the loveliest and best features are tiny. Any person who loves the prairie spends a lot of time on hands and knees, and that posture does have some meaning.

So Eiseley knew and, although he was not a conventionally religious man, often wrote about the consolation of the holiness that one finds in nature. One of the many essays in which he wrote about this is, "Science and the Sense of the Holy." In this brief passage he is thinking about the narrator of the book *Moby Dick*:

Ishmael . . . is the wondering man, the acceptor of all races and their gods. In contrast to the obsessed Ahab, he paints a magnificent picture of the peace that reigned in the giant whale schools of the 1840's, the snuffing and grunting about the boats like dogs, loving and being loved, huge mothers gazing in bliss up on their offspring. After hours of staring in those peaceful depths, "Deep down," says Ishmael, "there I still bathe in eternal mildness of joy."

Isn't that a wonderful phrase, "in eternal mildness of joy."

The weird, the holy, hangs undisturbed over the whales' huge cradle. Ishmael knows it, others do not.

At the end when Ahab has done his worst and the Pequod with the wounded whale is dragged into the depths amidst shrieking seafoam, it is Ishmael, buoyed up on the calked coffin of his cannibal friend Queequeg, who survives to tell the tale. Like Whitman, like W. H. Hudson, like Thoreau, Ishmael, the wanderer, has noted more of nature and his fellow men than has the headstrong pursuer of the white whale, whether "agent" or "principal," within the universe. . .

Yesterday, wandering along a railroad spur line, I glimpsed a surprising sight. All summer long, nourished by a few clods of earth on a boxcar roof, a sunflower had been growing. At last, the car had been remembered. A train was being made up. The box car with its swaying rooftop inhabitant was coupled in. The engine tooted and slowly, with nodding dignity, my plant began to travel.

Throughout the summer I had watched it grow but never troubled it. Now it lingered and bowed a trifle toward me as the winds began to touch it. A light not quite the sunlight of this earth was touching the flower, or perhaps it was the watering of my aging eye -- who knows? The plant would not long survive its journey, but the flower seeds were autumn-brown. At every jolt for miles they would drop along the embankment. They were travelers -- travelers like Ishmael and myself, outlasting all fierce pursuits and destined to re-emerge into future autumns. Like Ishmael, I thought, they will speak with the voice of the one true agent: "I only am escaped to tell thee."

And Eiseley knew, too, that deepest consolation which comes to us almost only from nature, the consolation of self knowledge. We humans are blest -- this is a frequent theme of Eiseley's -- by the ability to share in many, many lives, in hundreds, in thousands of lives that are not our own. Eiseley writes about the spider he observed, for example, which, he realized upon examination, lived and could live only in a spider's world. "Most other creatures on earth or anywhere in

the universe so far as we know of," Eiseley observed, "can live only in the world to which they have been born, the world of a bear, or of a fox or of a clam or of a snake, and one of the great and wonderful things about humanity, about our own lives is that we are not condemned just to our lives as humans, that when we go to nature we find that we have lives multiplied by many thousands of times and it is all of those lives that finally introduces us to ourselves." Here is one of the characteristic passages, from the essay, "How Natural is 'Natural?'," in which Eiseley has expanded upon this idea :

The sun was sparkling on the scales of a huge blacksnake which was partially looped about the body of a hen pheasant. Desperately the bird tried to rise, and just as desperately the big snake coiled and clung, though each time the bird, falling several feet, was pounding the snake's body in the gravel. I gazed at the scene in astonishment. Here in this silent waste, like an emanation from nowhere, two bitter and desperate vapors, two little whirlwinds of contending energy, were beating each other to death because of their plans -- something I suspected, about whether a clutch of eggs was to turn into a thing with wings or scales -- this problem, I say of the onrushing nonexistent future, had catapulted serpent against bird.

The bird was too big for the snake to have had it in mind as prey. Most probably, he had been intent on stealing the pheasant's eggs and had been set upon and pecked. Somehow in the ensuing scuffle he had flung a loop over the bird's back and partially blocked her wings. She could not take off, and the snake would not let go. . .

So I, the mammal, in my way supple, and less bound by instinct, arbitrated the matter. I unwound the serpent from the bird and let him hiss and wrap his battered coils around my arm. The bird, her wings flung out, rocked on her legs and grasped repeatedly. I moved away in order not to drive her further from her nest. Thus the serpent and I, two terrible and feared beings, passed quickly out of view. . .

Slowly, as I sauntered dwarfed among overhanging pinnacles, as the great slabs which were the visible remnants of past ages

laid their enormous shadows rhythmically as life and death across my face, the answer came to me. Man could contain more than himself. Among these many appearances, that flew, or swam in the waters, or wavered momentarily into being, man alone possessed that unique ability.

The Renaissance thinkers were right when they said that man, the Microcosm, contains the Macrocosm. I had touched the lives of creatures other than myself and had seen their shapes waver and blow like smoke through the corridors of time. I had watched, with sudden concentrated attention, myself, this brain, unrolling from the seed like a genie from a bottle, and casting my eyes forward, I had seen it vanish again into the formless alchemies of the earth.

For what then had I contended, weighing the serpent with the bird in that wild valley? I had struggled, I am myself now convinced, for a greater, more comprehensive version of myself.

From Eiseley's sense of nature as a bountiful source of consolation to us in all these many ways ultimately emerges, I think, the conviction that it is possible to make homes here on earth. If we are wanderers, we are also by definition home seekers. I think Eiseley found a home in the world of nature and I know that I myself, with his guidance and inspiration, have found one there too.

I was born in the baby boom of the late 1940's in the year that 2-4-D, the first miracle chemical of industrial agriculture was introduced. Although farm children has already for generations been forsaking the farm for the brighter opportunities of cities and although a million farm families were driven by economic forces from the land during my elementary school years, still it was hoped that I, like those of my lineage, would settle down, stop wandering, make my life where I had been born and someday take over management of the home place. The idea had its attractions and although I might have been persuaded by them, although I doubt happily, it had become obvious by my teens that I was hopelessly ungifted mechanically and not very adept either at concentrating on the details of the farm work at hand. I was always catching the drag in the fence at the end of the field and pulling the fence down or running out of gas at the wrong end of the farm or cultivating out the corn

rather than the weeds. I remember one memorable night in my youth when I spent the evening planting by hand two half-mile long rows of corn that I had plowed up with the cultivator before I could have supper. My father, in the end, acknowledged that I had better think of something else to do with my life, but he could not accept the idea in his heart. On the day I left for college he made it a point not to be around to say good-bye.

I have come to terms with my father's disappointment, I am quite certain I would have starved had I tried to be a farmer. Still I often wonder what I left behind when I set out for Minneapolis on that September day so many years ago, my worldly possessions in a cardboard box and a hand-me-down suitcase, throbbing with excitement, but my sense of where I belonged yet in limbo.

I think that what I left behind was not farming -- not certainly the community of which it was a part about which I then had much less positive feelings than I do now -- not family for my family like most modern ones have scattered to distant cities -- not even the place itself for place is, as Robert Farrar Capon says, is not a location but a session. What matters most about it is not where you are but who you are, but who you are with.

What I had left behind, I think, was the home place. I have lived and visited since in many places. I have been, like Loren Eiseley, a wanderer. Some of them I have lingered in or visited frequently for long enough or often enough for familiarity. There are places even that have I come to depend upon that give my life shape and dimension in the sense, at least, that they are in some way measures of myself. When I return to a book I have often read or to a piece of music, long familiar, or to the liturgies I have recited almost since I was an infant or when I visit an old friend after a long absence, I find in the stirrings of my heart, in the memories that are provoked, in the dreams that follow, a gauge of the ways in which I have changed or stayed the same.

"My how big you've gotten," the out of town aunts would invariably exclaim when we gathered for a baptism or graduation, a wedding or funeral. I was always exasperated in the way of children at their stupidity. What did they think, that I was going to remain forever two? I knew that I had began to be accepted as an adult when they started to say, "My you haven't changed a bit." It would turn your hair blue to know the ways, I would think. And then I was suddenly old enough to be flattered and before long

I found myself saying the same things to children of friends.

When we were pre-schoolers, my sister and I often wandered down the lane to the neighbors on the next farm, a kindly and elderly couple who talked to us seriously and kept a bowl of caramels, and had a refrigerator, a device as exotic to us as a Martian spaceship, in which there was ice cream. They liked us and we adored them. Then I moved to Minneapolis and to other places and my parents died and for a long time I put them and the home place out of mind. One night I was invited back there to tell about a book I had written. With some misgivings I went. Irene, the woman on the next farm had died, I learned. Indeed she had been buried that very afternoon, but Jake came to the talk, a gift that both overwhelmed and shamed me. How selfish and neglectful I have been, I thought. I hugged him fondly, recognizing too late that he had been one of my fathers. We talked. We posed for pictures. Suddenly, while my eyes were still dazzled from the glare of the flashbulbs, I realized that when I had been running down the lane to pound on Jake's refrigerator door, the behavior that always produced a laugh and a bowl of ice cream, he had been not an old man at all, but somebody my age.

Some surprise always lurks in the familiar. Some bit of history one can appreciate only with the passing of time and by comparison with the particulars of the thing intimately known, a person or community or place, the surprise of the familiar is a deeper and truer discovery than the surprise of the exotic because it is the kind of surprise that enlarges our sense of connectedness rather than that of our own separateness. This distinction is frequently lost in the endless preoccupation we now have with matters of self esteem. Esteem comes from the knowledge of belonging, not from the fractures of difference. Our deepest longing is to have a place in the family, in the community, in the culture, in the world.

This is why adolescence is such a torment. It is a the time of life when our need to understand ourselves as individuals overwhelms our sense of ourselves as ordinary. We are obliged for that time to concentrate on the things that distinguish us from the crowd. We find ourselves, in consequence, isolated, alienated, humiliatingly conspicuous. I had a freshman student last week who could not come to class because he had a zit on his nose.

Some cultures, but not ours, have sympathized with the wretchedness of this work, by offering their

youngsters at the end of this trial by separation, a ritual way of reestablishing connections, especially the most fundamental one, the connection with nature. This is, as I understand it, what the vision quest of the plains Indians was about. A native child was sent alone to a sacred place for three or four days to await in silence and in fasting a vision from the spirit world of nature. The vision came not from inside, but from without. It came in the form of a bear, or a crow, or a mosquito, or in the form of some other creature from whom one took one's name, in whom one found the spirit of one's life work and with whom one was allied for the rest of one's days. The vision named you as an individual, it gave you claim of special standing in the community and in the tribe, but it also, and more importantly, affirmed you as a member in good standing of the community at large, the community of nature. It was a way of marrying into the world.

When one has a home place and takes the idea of it seriously, when one feels bound to it and responsible to it for a life time, then one has in the same way undertaken the adult work of living, both as an individual with unique qualities and as a citizen of the commonwealth of the place with all of the connections that implies, to other individuals, to the whole community of the place, to the work of the place and to the land itself. And it is this sense of being joined to something good and whole that gives one the confidence, the esteem necessary to persevere. The conviction is possible then that one does not stand alone and out of that conviction emerges also the prospect of an endless unfolding of surprises. Surprises that reveal the intricacy and diversity and invincibility of our ties to all of creation.

I sit on a rock at the edge of the water in the gathering darkness of the boundary waters, staring into the depths of the lake and thinking of something Thoreau said when he was perhaps in a similar mood about Walden Pond. "The lake," he said, "is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is the earth's eye, looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature."

Down the lake a solitary loon cries. The sound is low and mournful. It is sometimes mistaken for the howl of a wolf. I think that the cry might have come from my own heart. When it echos back across the water it also echos inside me. And the reverberations do not die away. I shiver and button my wool shirt and pull a jacket over it, but I think it is not the sudden coldness alone that stirs within me.

In a few months I will be as old as my father was when he died. I can see him now looking up at me out of the depths of the lake. He is smiling. He always wanted to be in a place like this, but never found the time or the means to get here. I see now that it did not matter -- that he is here and always was.

Forty seven years was the span of his life. Thoreau was forty five when he died. This rock has been here for two billion years. Somewhere loons have been crying for a hundred million years. There were already loons when this shore I sit upon was still buried within the heart of a great mountain. Long before the Rocky Mountains there were loons. Somewhere a wolf is prowling. I can feel it in my bones. I can feel the reverberations in this stone. Thirty million years ago there were wolves. In an hour I will hear one howling. Before the ice came, it was already howling. Nine thousand years ago this lake was here. Eight thousand years ago on a night very like this one, perhaps, an ancestor of mine sat upon this boulder or on one nearby. A loon was crying and its cry echoed across these waters and the echo reverberated in my kin's heart and it reverberates still.

Tonight I have a session with myself. I look into the eye of the earth and I find there myriad things coming forth and expressing themselves: flowers, poets, fathers, lakes mountains, wolves, loons, boulders of granite, both inside my body and out of it. I have found, after all, the thing I was looking for. The home place, it is here. I see, everywhere and inside me, where it always was.

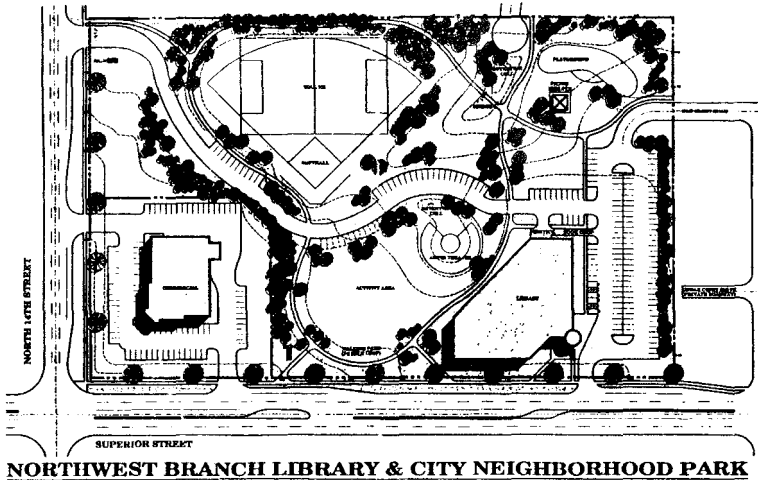
Thank you very much.

NEW EISELEY EDITIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE FRIENDS

We mentioned in an earlier article that the University of Nebraska Press republished *The Invisible Pyramid* in addition to their edition of *The Night Country* done last year. Copies of these are available from the Friends by writing our box number. The price is \$14.00 which is a postage paid price.

We are very happy to tell you that this May the Press will republish *The Firmament of Time* and this will also be available from us at the same price once published. The new edition will feature an introduction by Gary Holthaus, a freelance poet and author of *Wide Skies: Finding a Home in the West*. We are very grateful to Dan Ross and the University Press for continuing this series in such a beautiful format.

NEW LIBRARY TO BE NAMED FOR LOREN EISELEY



The Lincoln City Libraries Board has announced names for two new branch libraries to be built in the northwest and southwest quadrants of the city. The one located at North 14th Street and Superior will be named for Loren Eiseley. The library is the generally triangular form in the lower right corner of the site plan shown above.

The decision was made after a City Libraries Board Meeting held in mid January where people from the community were asked offer nominations for persons who were either authors with Lincoln connections or persons who had done outstanding service for the city library system. Barbara Sommer, Christine Pappas and Morrie Tuttle attended the meeting and Barb and Chris made our formal presentations. Another excellent choice for the name of the north library would have been Mary Ellen Rice who many years ago was instrumental in bringing library services to the area and later served as a beloved branch librarian in that area. They decided to name the children's room of this new library for her.

The new library will be built in conjunction with a city park and will be extensively landscaped, making it a beautiful setting. The eight acre park will feature a developed green space with playground equipment, a small shelter for summer day camp programming, walking paths, and a multi-purpose athletic area.

Bertrand and Marian Schultz made their home on the other side of 14th street from this site. They were long time friends of Dr. Eiseley and founding members of our Friends Board. Their home and the extensive land surrounding it have been given to the

Nebraska Academy of Science and the grounds are now being fashioned into a natural prairie by through the efforts of the Audubon Society. The hilltop where the Schultz home was built was a place where young Loren Eiseley and his friends walked to from the University campus to bask under a wide sky, read poetry and discuss literary thoughts. Wilbur Gaffney, one of those friends, told us of those good times at a gathering of the Friends held at the Schultz home on a beautiful spring day many years ago.

UNIVERSITY HONORS COURSE LOREN EISELEY: WRITINGS OF A NATURALIST

By Mary Liz Jameson

For a second consecutive fall semester, students in the Honors Program at the University of Nebraska explored the writings and philosophies of Loren Eiseley, one of Nebraska's greatest naturalists. Thanks to the vision and perseverance of Dr. Bing Chen and Kira Gale, this course will be regularly taught each fall semester. This semester, Dr. Mary Liz Jameson mentored eight enthusiastic students, familiarizing them with Eiseley's natural philosophy, humanity's role in the universe, and Eiseley's messages about life and living.

The course was structured in an informal seminar-style which consisted of discussion (based on readings from Eiseley's works), written assignments (informal journals and two theme papers), and a final presentation. Students were quick to absorb Eiseley's ideas, regardless of their undergraduate major (which ran the gamut from accounting and architecture to anthropology and environmental studies) or personal interests.

During the course of the semester, the class examined Eiseley as a person (including the Eiseley tour of Lincoln); studied Eiseley's literary "toolbox"; compared Eiseley's writing style with the styles of other writers (e.g., Annie Dillard, E. O. Wilson, and Aesop); explored many of Eiseley's themes (e.g., time, spirituality, evolution, instincts, loneliness, science, and death); and attempted to understand the symbols and metaphors that Eiseley so deftly used to teach us about the world within us and the world around us. The semester of studying Eiseley's works provided the class with . . .

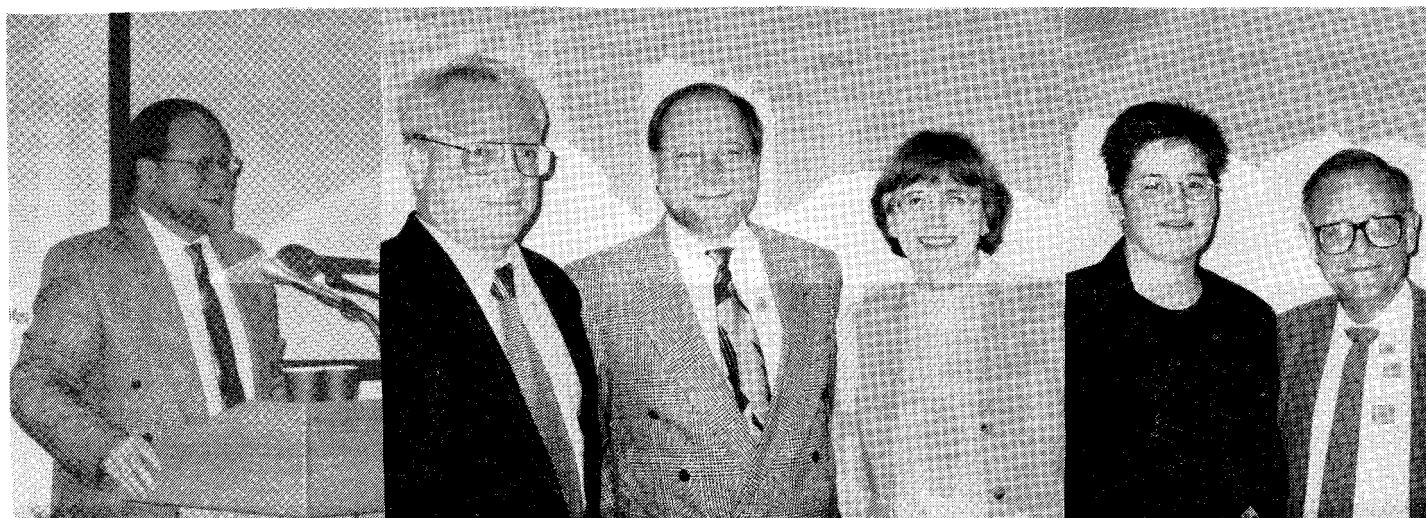
. . . a good journey - long, perhaps - but a
good journey under a pleasant sun.

--The Immense Journey

Friends board member and museum paleontologist, Mike Voorhies, led the Friends through the special Darwin exhibit in the museum in June. This travelling exhibit which had been displayed earlier at Darwin's home has been enriched with additional material developed by the museum curators.



Dr. Edward O. Wilson's October lecture was co-sponsored by the Friends. Seen at the reception in Elephant Hall following his talk are from the left, Dr. James Estes, Director of the Museum, Dr. Wilson, and Christine Pappas, our new Friends President.



In November, we celebrated the republication of *The Invisible Pyramid*. On the left Paul Gruchow reads selections from the new edition. In the center, from the left, are, Dan Ross, Director of the University of Nebraska Press, Paul Gruchow, and Friends President Kira Gale. On the right Christine Pappas is shown with Morrie Tuttle who was awarded the Eiseley Medal.

RECENT EISELEY PROGRAMS

By Barbara Sommer
Chair Program and Publicity Committee

The Friends of Loren Eiseley have had a very active program year. In June we had a fine evening in the State Museum when Board member Michael Voorhies gave us a conducted tour of the special Darwin Exhibit now showing in the lower level of the museum. We then gathered in Elephant Hall for a presentation and reception to honor the surviving members of the Old South Party. The full text of that presentation is given elsewhere in this issue.

We participated in the Nebraska Literature Festival held this year on the Wayne State College campus in north central Nebraska on September 19th. Featured on our panel was board member Deb Derrick who presented her paper, "Mapping Loren Eiseley: A Bone Hunter's Geography." Her talk will be soon be published in *Plains Song Review*.

We co-sponsored with the Nature Conservancy and the Friends of the State Museum a public talk by Pulitzer Prize winning author, Dr. Edward O. Wilson at the Lied Center for the Performing Arts which was followed by a reception in Elephant Hall attended by about two hundred members of the three organizations. This October 12th event took the place of the Annual Dinner and Program of the Friends this year.

Dr. Wilson came to our city for the University's E. N. Thompson Lecture Series sponsored by the Cooper Foundation and that lecture was on the subject of his new book, *Consilience*. We are very grateful for the help of the Cooper Foundation's Jack and Art Thompson for helping us in making it possible for us to also present Dr. Wilson while he was here.

For our program Dr. Wilson spoke on "Global Challenges to Biodiversity," biodiversity being a term he has added to our language. His studies, which draw from the sciences and the humanities as did Eiseley's, raise many questions about the future well-being of the world if changes are not made in how we care for the fragile environment in which we live. He gave the audience much information and challenged us to continue to be aware of this situation. Dr. Wilson answered audience questions for almost an hour following his presentation which was made to about a thousand people in the Lied Auditorium.

On October 13th, Rev. Darrel Berg presented a talk on "The Crack in the Absolute: Loren Eiseley as Accidental Theologian" at the Alumni Center of the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Sponsored by University Library Friends, there were over 70 in attendance. Dr. Berg, a Methodist minister, is well known in Nebraska.

Dr. Berg spoke on the quality of transcendence in Eiseley's writings, citing sociologist Peter Berger's analysis: Order or Purpose, Playfulness, Opulence, and Beauty. Eiseley maintained he was not a religious man, but that he was on a religious quest. Dr. Berg provided an evening of stimulating and memorable insights into the religious nature of Loren Eiseley, an unforgettable experience for those in attendance.

At the end of November, the Friends sponsored a gathering in honor of the republication of Eiseley's *The Invisible Pyramid* by the University of Nebraska Press. The event, held in the auditorium of the Bennett Martin Public Library in downtown Lincoln, featured tours of the Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors and refreshments. More than fifty people attended the event. The program began with the awarding of the Loren Eiseley Medal to Morrie Tuttle which is reported by the Medal Committee in the article which follows.

Dan Ross, Director of the University of Nebraska Press and the first speaker on the program, described the contacts between Eiseley and the University of Nebraska Press. In doing so, he provided information not before known about Eiseley's connections with his home state and the difficulties encountered by the Press in publishing the Montgomery Lectures on Francis Bacon which Eiseley had given on the campus. Ross then introduced noted nature writer Paul Gruchow who presented readings selected from three of the essays in *The Invisible Pyramid*. Each of the readings chosen by Gruchow illustrated a theme from the book, beginning with Eiseley's memories of watching Halley's Comet with his father and ending with a final statement from the book. A question and answer session followed during which some of the finer points of Eiseley's writings and interpretations were discussed by Gruchow.

Both the Wilson program and the Ross/Gruchow program were taped by William Stibor of Nebraska Public Radio for later re-play throughout the Nebraska Public Radio network. Dan Ross and Barbara Sommer were also guests of Stibor on his "Friday Morning from the Mill" live radio broadcast

on the Friday before the November program to promote the work of Eiseley and the Sunday program.

Our Program and Publicity Committee organized and presented the Lincoln events and special thanks go to Pat Nefzger and Christine Pappas for their tireless work on these projects.

And we also want to give special thanks to the Nebraska Humanities Council which helped us fund both the Wilson and Ross/Gruchow programs.

NAOMI BRILL

by Christine Pappas

Naomi Brill had been with the Friends of Loren Eiseley from the beginning and her January 8, 1999 passing leaves us deeply saddened. Naomi was a recipient of the Eiseley Medal, she served as our Historian and believed that there should be renewed focus on Eiseley's works instead of his personal psychology. Naomi's interest in promoting Eiseley's works was only natural; she was deeply dedicated to environmental preservation, authoring the "Lincoln Star" column "The Amateur Naturalist," as well as being a member of the Pioneer Park Nature Center Board, the Prairie/Plains Research Institute, the Nature Conservancy and Wachiska Audubon Society. Also interested in the state of society, Naomi graduated from Columbia's School of Social Work and was Professor Emeritus of UN-L's Graduate College of Social Work and her textbook, *Working With People*, having been through many editions is still the standard textbook in its field.

Loren Eiseley was a man who dwelt at the wood's edge, and Naomi Brill truly worked to ensure that there would be a wood and that its edge would be duly protected. During our last dinner together, which was held the night before Paul Gruchow's reading from "The Invisible Pyramid," Naomi, in her soft but forceful Kentucky drawl, led the conversation from good books to good food, finally settling on the perils of expanding Lincoln development too quickly at the expense of preserving the natural environs. Loren Eiseley would have been pleased that she argued so convincingly to protect what Paul Gruchow would term "the necessity of empty places."

FRED THOMAS

by Morrie Tuttle

Fred Thomas, a long time reporter for the Omaha World Herald and a member of our Friends of Loren Eiseley Board, died on January 29, 1999. Over 26 years he wrote nearly 1,300 columns and his "Your Environment" column was reading continually anticipated by so many people. While his regular column ceased with his retirement in 1997, he was still working and writing about the issues that mattered so much to him. His last column about bird watching in the Halsey Forest appeared on January 11. As a reporter, he wrote on many subjects, but he was a passionate voice expressing his love for nature and speaking for environmental issues. The Omaha World Herald's editorial tribute to Fred said, "He deserves to be remembered as a leading voice on environmental matters in Nebraska." They continued, "Thomas was a student of the state's history, its architecture, its off-the-beaten-track natural and cultural treasures. One of his specialties was to research and write stories that told Nebraskans things they didn't know about themselves."

Michael Kelley said in his World Herald column, "A city-boy native of Detroit, Fred made his life in Nebraska, loving the land and cherishing nature as much as any Native American."

His friend Bing Chen said of him, "He was a friend to all of Life's creations, a generous and gentle spirit to all he encountered, never strident but always patient, he possessed a deeply held commitment to inform and educate. He was one of a very precious and unique few, a TRUE BELIEVER. His life enriched and touched all of us."

MORRIE TUTTLE WINS THE EISELEY MEDAL

Medal Committee: Christine Pappas
and Pat Nefzger

Paul Gruchow's beautiful reading from the *Invisible Pyramid* was not the only notable event to occur at the Bennett Martin Public Library on November 29, 1998. The Friends of Loren Eiseley Board of Directors also made a surprise presentation of the Loren Eiseley Medal to Morrie Tuttle.

Morrie Tuttle is a worthy recipient of the Eiseley Medal for innumerable reasons, none of which would

be possible without Morrie's deep appreciation for Eiseley as a man and as a writer. Morrie has been an Eiseley Friends Board Member since shortly after our founding and has acted in an indispensable capacity as Treasurer, Secretary as well as ambassador to the greater community and other groups. He can be counted on to represent the Friends of Loren Eiseley with his table of books, photographs and other material whenever and where ever he is called upon.

Morrie's sensitive understanding of Eiseley's writing enlightens all of us. At every meeting and gathering, his insight enhances our knowledge. As the editor of *The Caravan*, which he has crafted into more than a newsletter, he brings his understanding of Loren Eiseley to countless others. Morrie is also working on an index of material by and about Eiseley that currently contains more than 1,800 entries. His bibliomaniacal tendencies have been translated into a quest for all of the foreign language editions of Eiseley's works -- over twelve languages in all -- which he has helped to procure for the Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors.

A very rare event occurred on January 10, 1998. Morrie was unable to attend our Board meeting. While we were debating our new rule that current Board Members should not be eligible for the Eiseley Medal, we quickly (and secretly) voted that Morrie should get the award before the new rule went into effect. On November 29th, no one in the room was more surprised at our presentation than Morrie -- but he shouldn't have been. In 1998, Morrie also received a Sower Award from the Nebraska Humanities Council and the Lincoln Arts Council Mayor's Literary Heritage Award. The Loren Eiseley Medal is the fitting conclusion to Morrie's trifecta. Congratulations Morrie!

NEW EISELEY WEBSITE

By Deb Derrick

The new Eiseley website is up and running! We've moved from an Omaha Public Schools server to a new home at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Visiting the website is now as easy as pointing your internet browser to the new web address at:

<http://www.cet-omaha.unomaha.edu/eiseley/>

The "new" site looks a bit different but still incorporates many elements of the previous website designed by Mike Antrim. We've added the last two editions of *The Caravan* newsletter and a page of links

to other websites. We're working hard to resolve some computer problems regarding the discussion group. Darrel Berg has agreed to moderate the discussion group once we get it activated. We're also seeking teaching/curriculum guides and syllabi to post on the website from those who teach Eiseley in their classrooms. If you have something to contribute, please let me know.

I want to thank Bradley Haumont, a student worker at the College of Engineering and Technology, who's been doing the "nuts and bolts" work on the site under my direction. Most of the credit goes to him, including the design and the "wallpaper" background. If you have any suggestions, please contact me by e-mail at dderrick@unomaha.edu.

ANNOUNCING LOREN EISELEY "JOURNEY" AWARD

The Sandhills Press announces the First Loren Eiseley "Journey" Award for Creative Non-Fiction on topics pertinent to the natural worlds of locale, nature and human nature. This is open to any author for an unpublished creative essay. The winning essay will be published in *The Sandhills New Century Reader*, a new literary occasional anthology, early in the year 2000. To enter the competition, authors should:

Submit a creative essay, not to exceed two pages.

Provide two cover sheets, one with the title of the essay, and one with the essay's title, the author's name, and the author's address. The author's name should not appear anywhere else in the manuscript.

An entry fee of \$8.00 per essay, payable to Sandhills Press, must accompany manuscripts. While multiple manuscripts are welcome, an entry fee must be paid for each.

Manuscripts must be received between January 1, 1999 and May 1, 1999.

All entrants will receive a copy of the "Reader" and the winning manuscript will receive \$150 and five copies of the "Reader." For information or entry submission contact Sandhills Press, c/o Mark Sanders, Humanities Division, College of the Mainland, Texas City, TX 77591. This independent Nebraska-based small press started in 1979 has published more than twenty books, chapbooks and anthologies, including works by both new and established writers of Great Plains literature.

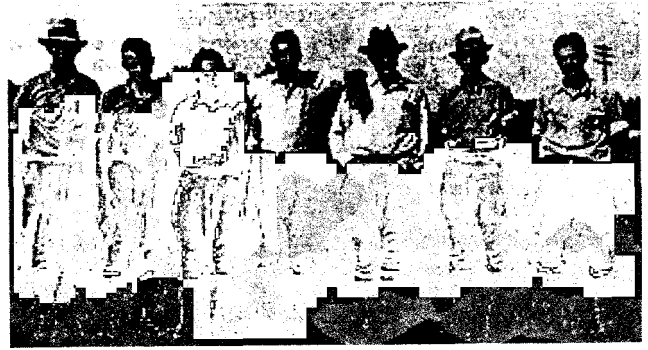


EISELEY FRIENDS HONOR THE OLD SOUTH PARTY

On June 25th, Friends hosted a program in Morrill Hall and enjoyed a guided tour of the visiting Darwin Exhibit given by Michael Voorhies, Paleontologist on the Museum staff. Then at a special reception and presentation in Elephant Hall honoring the surviving members of the Old South Party each of them was given a certificate like the one showing here. Mylan and Eunice Stout are shown in the photo above after the presentation of Mylan's certificate by Christine Pappas who first made a short talk about the Old South Party. The full text of her comments follow:

There are three surviving members of the South Party -- Frank Crabill, a Rhodes Scholar and retired New York attorney, Robert Long, once the chief medical doctor working with Mutual of Omaha, and Mylan Stout. Both Frank Crabill and Robert Long are ill and could not attend today, although both send their regards and regret that they could not take part in this tribute.

In the words of Loren Eiseley, "Bone hunting was a way of life," and for a group of hardworking young men in the late 1920s and early 1930s, it surely was. The story of the South Party begins with Professor Erwin Hinkley Barbour, a noted paleontologist who came to the University of Nebraska in 1891. A showman as well as a scientist, Barbour once mounted



Morrill Paleontological Expedition South Party

In tribute to the work and legacy of the South Party, the Friends of Loren Eiseley honor

Mylan Stout

on this day, June 25, 1998. Under the direction of Professor Erwin Barbour of the State Museum, the bone hunters of the South Party scouted and excavated many sites across Nebraska. In the words of Loren Eiseley, "*Most of our knowledge of the successive American faunas is derived from excavations in those sterile, sun-washed regions.*"

the front legs of Archie, the mammoth collected in 1915 whose bronze is to soon grace the front of this building, as an archway in the previous museum building. Frustrated with digging parties from other museums claiming the bones in the state for others -- for example, Childs Frick, from New York's American Museum of Natural History -- Barbour, with financial support from Charles H. Morrill, launched the Morrill Paleontological Expedition in 1928 and the South Party was born. As originally envisioned, the South Party would scavenge the Southern part of the state and the North Party the North, but as the locations of their digs show -- the Wild Cat Hills, Banner County, Valentine, the Scotts Bluff Bison Quarry -- the South Party was all over the state.

Mylan Stout was a member of the South Party. Growing up near the Historic Ash Hollow, Mylan cultivated an interest in excavation and collecting and as a young man he wrote to Barbour in 1931 about a job at the museum. When he came to University in January of 1933 with \$50 in his pocket, he was put to work full time as a preparator, tour guide and sometime janitor. In his words, "he did everything." One of his first tasks was mounting Archie in the new museum building, which had opened in 1927.

Mylan's first South Party expedition was in 1933, two years after Loren Eiseley made his first trip. On an excursion to the South Dakota badlands, Mylan remembers pulling his jacket off the roof of his tent and finding a disgruntled previous occupant when he put his arms into the sleeves. Reacting quickly, he crushed a black widow spider against his arm but not before it stung him. After a long and frantic car ride, a doctor was found who packed Mylan in hot pads to sweat out the poison. All except his legs. Although he survived the scare, his legs continued to trouble him long afterward. He remembers the work as hard and the summers hot, but no snakebites to his knowledge. He also remembers Eiseley and Emery Blue sharing one spoon and one bowl for dinner in order to cut down on dishwashing.

The scientific value of the work of the South Party bone hunters cannot be denied. As Mylan explained to me, these digs "doubled or tripled" the holdings of Morrill Hall, making the museum one of the top in the country in terms of North American fossil mammals. Providing most of Loren Eiseley's practical field experience, the South Party digs also became fodder from many of the anecdotes in his essays, especially in his autobiographical works *All the Strange Hours* and *The Night Country*. The foray into the Faden Ranch or the story of the petrified woman are among Eiseley's most memorable essays.

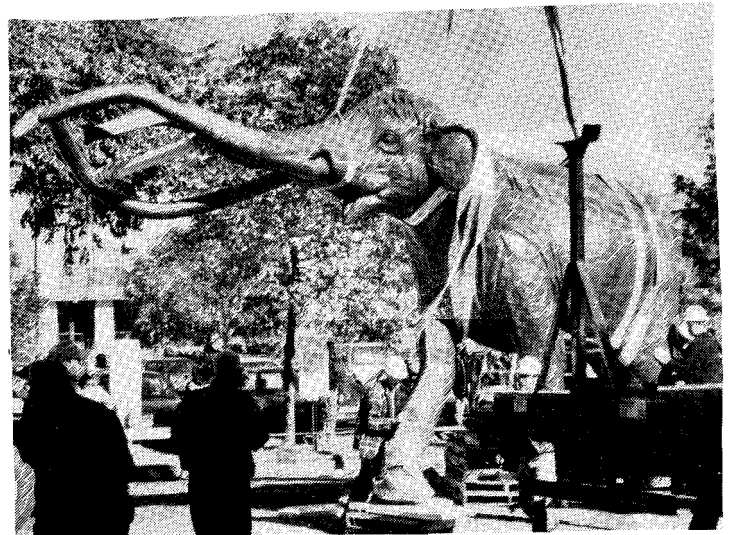
Eiseley's imagination was fueled by the solitude of bone hunting. He remarked in his preface to *The Innocent Assassins*, which was dedicated to "the bone hunters of the old South Party," that "through some strange mental osmosis those extinct, fragmented creatures merged with and became part of my new identity." Reinforcing the vision he had of himself as a faceless fugitive, in *All the Strange Hours* Eiseley writes of his Nebraska excavations -- "In the timeless land, I could remain hidden."

While Eiseley left the field work of Nebraska for graduate study at Penn after taking his degree in anthropology and English, Mylan Stout remained in the program at Nebraska, taking a geology bachelor's in 1936 and a master's in 1937. At this time, the New Deal-funded Works Projects Administration allowed an expansion of digging parties, so, with no increase in salary -- as Mylan notes -- he became de facto coordinator of five parties and several hundred men working at Broadwater, Lisco, Gordon, Rushville, and the Badlands who shipped their material back to Lincoln for preparation. These are locations he visited each weekend.

Although the war effort interrupted field work in 1940, Mylan taught extremely long hours to prepare soldiers for their comprehensive exams in geology. During the summers he continued his own research in Frick Laboratory associated with the American Museum and studied at Columbia University. Also in 1940, Mylan married his wife Eunice, who had been Barbour's secretary since 1933. Interested in intercontinental correlations of the fossil materials of Nebraska, the Stouts traveled around the world in the name of research. Mylan Stout officially retired in 1980, currently retaining Professor of Geology and Curator Emeritus status. He told me that if he could organize a party and send it out today, the best place to go is the same old spots.

EDITORIAL EXCAVATIONS

Morrie Tuttle



Archie is here! Above you see the ice age mammoth sculpture just after he was lifted from the flat bed truck which brought him down the interstate from the Wyoming foundry surprising all motorists and everyone else who caught sight of him as he passed by. He arrived at the end of October and has been well received by all Tusker fans. He is now on his base in the midst of a beautiful new plaza named for museum paleontologist, the late Lloyd Tanner.

Ceremonies on December 7th inaugurated the new C. Bertrand and Marian Othmer Schultz Chair in Stratigraphy, the first award going to Dr. David B. Loope, a professor in the UN-L Department of Geosciences. This fine event was also of special interest for Eiseley Friends for Mylan Stout gave a beautiful reminiscence of Bert and Marian which included a much about Eiseley as he told of their old

bone hunting days. Mylan also demonstrated the wonderful professional partnership of Bert and Marian in the pursuit of their scientific work. Dr. Loope presented a paper on his work on sand dune movement in Mongolia, "Lethal Landslides from Cretaceous Dunes: The Entombment of Mongolia's Ancient Fauna," pertinent because he made discoveries there to form theories applicable to our Nebraska Sandhills, an area very similar to the Gobi Desert. Dr. Loope continues research initiated by Schultz in our own Sandhills and is also very interested in the geologic record of climate change, another focus of Dr. Schultz's work. The formal program was followed with a reception in Morrill Hall.

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Important things have happened which we don't have room to tell about in this issue, but which will be featured next time. The Eiseley bust in the Hall of Fame in the Nebraska Capitol has been remounted and moved to a fine new location.

The 16 millimeter film of the NBC-TV series *Animal Secrets* featuring Dr. Eiseley has been transferred to video. Protecting this resource was accomplished through the good offices of the Nebraska Historical Society and the Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors. This was a most important transaction for the films were becoming so fragile it was dangerous to project them. For this reason most of the film had never been projected since its arrival here. We may have the only copies of these programs existing. More on this next time.

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Christine Pappas, editor of *Plains Song Review*, the new undergraduate interdisciplinary literary journal, tells us the first issue has gone to the press and should be available in about 6 weeks. Issues will be available

from us for \$6.50 including postage. A new magazine from the UN-L College of Arts and Sciences, it encourages undergraduates to explore and be a part of the literary culture of the state. This issue will run around 200 pages and promises to be a handsome production.

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The next Nebraska Literature Festival will held in western Nebraska on the campus of Chadron State College next September 19. We expect to meet you there.

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Thanks to Bing Chen we learn the new issue of *Archeology Magazine* features an article by James Wiseman, "The Muse within Us, Poetic Visions of the Past," wherein he quotes from Dr. Eiseley and calls him the "archaeologist poet."

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We have noted elsewhere the loss of Naomi Brill and Fred Thomas, but another death this fall should not pass by unnoticed, that of Olga Stepanek. While we did not know her that well ourselves, she was a very good friend of Naomi's and a very important presence in our community, especially well known for her popular art work.

Now there is an important Eiseley connection in all of this. Orin Stepanek, her husband, was on our English faculty during Eiseley's university days and he was still a significant presence when we arrived on the scene in the late '50s. By that time he was the central figure in the university's Czech studies. A beloved character, he had been Eiseley's teacher and friend. You will see on page 84 of Gale Christianson's *Fox at the Wood's Edge* he was a kinsman to the owner of the land in the Mohave Desert where Loren went to be a caretaker of sorts and thereby enjoy the climate needed to restore his health. Orin set up that for Loren and in his book, Gale tells us the rest of the story.

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