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Loren Eiseley and Sociology at the University of Nebraska, 1926-1936: The Sociological Training of a Noted Anthropologist

Michael R. Hill

INTRODUCTION

OREN COREY EISELEY [1907-1977] rose from modest beginnings to become one of the nation’s foremost essayists, naturalists, and anthropologists (Carlisle 1983; Christianson 1990; Carrithers 1991; Gerber 1983; Heidtmann 1991; Pitts 1995), and his work was built on a solid interdisciplinary foundation that included intensive undergraduate and graduate study in sociology at the University of Nebraska.¹ Eiseley, the writer, is best known today for The Immense Journey (1957), The Firmament of Time (1960), and The Unexpected Universe (1969), his most popular books. As a mature scholar tenured at the University of Pennsylvania, Eiseley served as Provost; Professor and Chair of the Department of Anthropology; Professor and Chair of the Department of the History and Philosophy of Science; and Curator of the Early Man Museum. Unknown to most of Eiseley’s readers and students, however, these notable accomplishments were rooted professionally in his substantial sociological training, primarily at the University of Nebraska, as much as in his literary interests, archaeological studies, and anthropological schooling at Nebraska and Pennsylvania. Whatever else is claimed for Loren Eiseley, he was also a professionally-trained sociologist.

Eiseley’s predominantly sociological career was short, and subsequently played second professional fiddle to his deep love of archaeology and anthropology, but he was, nonetheless, a trained sociologist. Dirk Käsler (1981, quoted in Deegan 1988a: 9), in reconstructing the history of German sociology, defined a sociologist as anyone who fulfilled at least one of the following criteria:

- occupy a chair of sociology and/or teach sociology,
- membership in the German Sociological Society,
- co-authorship of sociological articles or textbooks,
- self-definition as a “sociologist,” [and/or]
- definition by others as a sociologist.

These criteria, modified to meet the American situation, can help identify sociologists who are not, traditionally, claimed as such (Deegan 1991: 7). For example, Deegan (1988a: 9-13) used the criteria to demonstrate that Jane Addams was a sociologist as well as a social worker. Substituting the American Sociological Society for the German Sociological Society, Addams meets all of Käsler’s criteria. Likewise, Harvard jurist Roscoe Pound also measures up to all of the Käsler/Deegan yardsticks (Hill 1989: 4-6), as does the justly celebrated feminist, Charlotte Perkins Gilman (Deegan 1997: 11).

Eiseley’s case is only a little less dramatic. He never joined the American Sociological Society during his sojourn in sociology, but he did eventually publish an article in a professional sociology journal, albeit from an anthropological perspective (Eiseley 1943), and was a sponsored author in a sociological textbook (Eiseley 1938; Reinhardt 1938). He briefly taught sociology courses (at the University of Kansas) and later chaired a joint

¹ My thanks to F.M. Tuttle for encouraging this research and to Mary Jo Deegan for her comments on an earlier draft of this manuscript. Presented in the History of Sociology Section, 93rd Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, CA, August 21-25, 1998.
department of sociology and anthropology (at Oberlin, for two years). Eiseley represented himself as fully qualified to teach college-level sociology, joined Alpha Kappa Delta, and his sociological mentors pointed with pride to Eiseley’s graduate sociological training. If, as was the case, Eiseley later failed to assert or recount a sociological identity (especially during the 1950’s and thereafter), his increasingly conservative political views may hold a partial explanation (indeed, several sociologists distanced themselves from the discipline’s popularly-perceived “leftist” origins not only during the Red-baiting era of the 1920s but also during the McCarthy era in the 1950s). Nonetheless, Eiseley fulfills the majority of Käsler’s criteria, if only—compared to the likes of Jane Addams and Roscoe Pound—for a relatively short period.

The recovery of unexpected and little-known aspects of sociological history, such as documenting the story of Loren Eiseley’s sociological mentoring at the University of Nebraska (to which the remainder of this paper is devoted), can provide alternative disciplinary models to the unreflective, self-serving, hegemonic myth-making that too often reigns unquestioned and unchallenged in American sociology (Hill 1993). By corroborating instances of alternative sociological history and practice, we can provide illuminating examples of constructive, thoughtful perspectives from which to view our present methodological quandaries, theoretical quagmires, and institutional rivalries. Through systematic archival analysis, researchers are presenting us and our students with lived examples of vibrant, alternate paths to sociological insight and practice, paths blazoned—often as not—by women, people of color, and scholars housed in institutions and living in other countries beyond the image-centric orbits of Chicago, Harvard, Columbia and the like.

Loren Eiseley’s emphatically literate, interdisciplinary approach to knowledge provides one such alternative model for social scientific practice. And, his interdisciplinary training at Nebraska in literature, archaeology, anthropology, and sociology deserves mention in the chronicles of sociological history. His case is representative of many sociologically-trained scholars, activists, and other professionals who pursue activities beyond the realm of pure academic sociology or in cognate disciplines rather than in sociology departments per se. Such an individual is often negatively defined by sociologists in the academy as “not a sociologist” (Deegan 1987). Other disciplines, however, are sometimes more open minded and sociology can learn from there example.

If, as is clearly the case, faculty members in departments of American literature can hold Eiseley up to students as a paradigm example of literate expression and a master of the modern essay (e.g., Carlisle 1983; Gerber 1983; Heidtmann 1991; Pitts 1995), surely sociologists have at least an equal professional claim to bask in Eiseley’s reflected celebrity and popularity. By claiming a central role in the production of scholars of Eiseley’s prominence and interdisciplinary accomplishment, sociology not only widens its intellectual horizons, but also strengthens its raison d’être as an academic discipline in the eyes of budget-minded college and university administrators.

There can be no doubt that Loren Eiseley’s little-recognized graduate studies in sociology at the University of Nebraska played a crucial role in launching his professional career in academia. Throughout 1935-1936, an intense year of advanced graduate work in

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2 The English Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) proudly promotes its link to Eiseley. For example, a handsomely-framed portrait of Eiseley hangs in the departmental lounge of the Department of English at UNL, celebrating Eiseley’s undergraduate work on the Lincoln campus. By contrast, no such remembrance is found in the UNL Department of Sociology to commemorate Eiseley’s accomplishments as both an undergraduate and graduate student therein.
Lincoln, Eiseley built a solid foundation in sociology, including: completing required course work, assistantship duties, research, publication, participation in the local chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta (the national sociology honorary), and, perhaps most important, earning the admiration and support of University of Nebraska sociologists James M. Reinhardt and Joyce O. Hertzler. Thus, in 1937, when Eiseley applied to the University of Kansas for his first full-time academic position (a position specifically requiring expertise in anthropology and sociology), he legitimately presented himself as a well-trained sociologist—in concert with advanced anthropological preparation obtained at the University of Pennsylvania.

Loren Eiseley was the beneficiary of a full year of graduate-level sociological training in 1935-1936 at the University of Nebraska under the tutelage of sociology professors Hertzler and Reinhardt. The strategic importance of this fact for Eiseley’s subsequent career is insufficiently stressed by most authorities. Eiseley eventually rose to prominence as an anthropologist and essayist, but that happy professional outcome is rooted as much in Eiseley’s formal sociological mentoring as it is in his anthropological education and youthful experiences as a writer and avid bone-hunter. I do not dispute the proper claims that anthropology, archaeology, and English lay upon Loren Eiseley when naming him “one of their own,” but it is equally fair to underscore the structural centrality of yet another institutional sponsor of Eiseley’s accomplishments: the discipline of sociology. As a member of the sociological fraternity, I add yet another voice to the interdisciplinary chorus—to also claim Loren Eiseley “one of our own.”

CORRECTING THE RECORD

Nebraskan accounts of Eiseley’s academic training and career often omit mention of his graduate work in sociology. For Nebraskans and most scholars, Eiseley is, effectively, “not a sociologist.” For example, when Lincoln’s Evening State Journal reported Eiseley’s 1940 receipt of a prestigious post-doctoral research fellowship from the Social Science Research Council, Eiseley’s academic life was summarized, in part, as follows:

Dr. Eiseley received his A.B. degree at the University of Nebraska in 1933, having specialized in anthropology under Dr. William Duncan Strong, well-known American anthropologist now at Columbia university. Following his graduation, Dr. Eiseley completed his doctoral work at the University of Pennsylvania, where he held the Harrison scholarship in 1934-35 and the Harrison fellowship in anthropology in 1936-1937. Immediately following the completing of his Ph.D. at Pennsylvania, he was appointed assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Kansas.

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1 Joyce Oramel Hertzler, (AB ’16 Baldwin-Wallace; graduate study ’16-17 Harvard; MA ’19, PhD ’20, University of Wisconsin), professor and chair of the department of sociology at the University of Nebraska.
2 James Melvin Reinhardt, (AB ’23 Berea; summer study ’24 & ’25 U. Chicago.; MA ’25, PhD ’29 University of North Dakota), associate professor of sociology and, later, chair of the department of sociology at the University of Nebraska.
3 Robert Knoll (1995: 85), for example, briefly references Eiseley as “a naturalist” and notes only his association with Lowry Wimberly, a University of Nebraska professor of English and editor of the Prairie Schooner.
4 Evening State Journal (Lincoln, Nebraska), April 17, 1940: 4.
While correct, as a crude outline, the newspaper article makes several crucial errors of omission. Not only was Eiseley appointed to a dual position at Kansas as a sociologist-ethnologist, he also double-majored at Nebraska, as an undergraduate (from 1926 to 1933), in sociology (with a concentration in anthropology) and in English. Anthropology, to the limited extent then offered at the University of Nebraska, was located within the sociology department. William Duncan Strong taught anthropological and archaeological courses important to Eiseley’s undergraduate education, yet Strong was but one of the many social scientists who taught Eiseley during his undergraduate days.

Core components of Eiseley’s official undergraduate major in sociology also included completion of: Soc. 9 (Introduction to Sociology); Soc. 109 (Criminology); Soc. 115 (Social Psychology); Soc. 117 (Social Econ); Soc. 118 (Social Progress); Soc. 133 (Social Origins); and Soc. 135 (Primitive Religions). In sum, Eiseley completed half of the formal course work in his undergraduate major in sociology courses, courses taught by a notable staff of sociologists that included Joyce O. Hertzler, James M. Reinhardt, Willard Waller, Hutton Webster, and Hattie Plum Williams.

This pattern of “double training” also marked Eiseley’s subsequent graduate studies. True, as the Evening State Journal reported, Eiseley went on to the University of Pennsylvania and completed a masters degree in anthropology in 1935. But, Eiseley then returned to Lincoln and, during the 1935-1936 academic year, completed all of the required, formal course work for a masters degree in sociology before again journeying to Philadelphia to pursue the doctorate in anthropology. This “missing year” of Eiseley’s graduate sociological training, 1935-1936, and its significance, merit close inspection.

GRADUATE SOCIOLOGY ASSISTANT, 1935-1936

When Loren Eiseley returned to Lincoln after completing a masters degree in 1935, he applied to and was accepted for further graduate study in the Department of Sociology at the University of Nebraska. The serious nature of his work and his formal status in the Department of Sociology during 1935-1936 are attested by his appointment as a graduate assistant and by the courses he completed. Graduate study in sociology at Nebraska then required the completion of Soc. 323-324 (a two-credit, two-semester sequence in the History of Sociological Thought) and Soc. 327-328 (a three-credit, two-semester sequence in Sociological Theory and Methods). Eiseley completed both sequences, then taught by Professor J.O. Hertzler, earning a total of 10 credit hours. For electives, Eiseley took Soc. 351-352 (a five-hour, two-semester sequence of Research in Social Psychology) taught by Associate Professor James Reinhardt and earned 10 additional credit hours. Inasmuch as the masters degree required a total of 30 credit hours, of which 6-10 hours could be earned by writing a thesis, Eiseley completed all requirements to earn a masters in sociology except for writing a formal thesis.²

Indeed, Eiseley was nearly A.B.D. (“all but dissertation”) for a doctorate in sociology at Nebraska if Philadelphia had not lured him away. His masters from Pennsylvania counted for 30 of the 90 hours required for a Ph.D. at Lincoln. By the close of 1935-1936, he had amassed 20 additional hours of credit (including all required courses). Having also completed the foreign language requirement, he needed only ten hours more of formal course work in sociology plus the standard dissertation—together with a “pass” on the requisite

¹ William Duncan Strong, (AB ‘23, PhD ‘26 University of California), professor of anthropology at University of Nebraska, 1929-31, and, later, professor of anthropology at Columbia.

² In exactly like manner, Mabel Eiseley completed everything for a masters degree in English at Nebraska—except the thesis (Christianson 1990: 167).
 Students on assistantship stipends typically secured room and board in Lincoln, thus making Eiseley’s decision to live with his mother more a matter of choice than forced necessity. Earl Hoyt Bell, (AB ’25 Iowa State Univ.; PhD ‘31 Univ. Wis.), assistant professor in anthropology at University of Nebraska, and, later, chairman of sociology and anthropology department at Syracuse University.

Eiseley’s sociological training at Nebraska is mentioned in Gale Christianson’s biography of Eiseley, but essentially as an aside. He asserts, for example (Christianson 1990: 164), that Eiseley—with a bachelor’s degree from Nebraska and a freshly-minted master’s degree from Pennsylvania—was “virtually penniless” and “had no choice but to [return to Lincoln and] move back in with his mother, aunt, and grandmother.” Albeit 1935 fell within the Great Depression, it still bears asking whether a talented, experienced man with Eiseley’s outstanding academic credentials—even if he was in hard straits financially—really had no choice other than to return to Lincoln, re-enter the University of Nebraska, accept a graduate assistantship, and undertake the disciplined rigors of full-time graduate study in sociology.

Viewed less negatively, the sociology program at Nebraska offered Eiseley an affirming opportunity to more fully pursue a discipline cognate to anthropology under the tutelage of two trusted mentors: Professors J.O. Hertzler and James Reinhardt. Eiseley had taken sociology courses from both men during his undergraduate years in Lincoln; he knew their temperaments and skills. Structurally, the graduate assistantship offered by the sociology department at Nebraska provided Eiseley with a Spartan but livable salary. It may be that Eiseley’s future academic plans at this time were “shifting and uncertain” (Christianson 1990: 164), but the Nebraska sociology program clearly offered intellectual coherence, emotional shelter, and financial sustenance—and should be recognized for having done so.

When Eiseley returned to Lincoln in 1935, he chose neither to pursue advanced studies in the Department of English (the locale of his second undergraduate major at Nebraska), nor to enroll in Soc. 331-332 (Research in Anthropology), then under the energetic direction of Earl H. Bell (a new Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin who filled the Nebraska anthropology position vacated by William Duncan Strong). Both English and anthropology would have been natural options, given the conventional wisdom concerning Eiseley’s intellectual predilections. Instead, he enrolled in a program of advanced sociological study.

Following a highly successful first semester (earning an “A” in Soc. 323, an “A” in Soc. 351, and a “Pass” in Soc. 327), Eiseley continued his course work during the spring of 1936. He was deeply immersed in full-time sociological studies that spring, whereas Eiseley’s biographer, Gale Christianson (1990: 165-66), instead emphasized Loren’s part-time work writing a chapter on Nebraska’s geology for a WPA-sponsored Writers’ Project guide edited by Rudolph Umland. Of Eiseley’s much more major project at that time, Christianson (1990: 169) says only:

1 Students on assistantship stipends typically secured room and board in Lincoln, thus making Eiseley’s decision to live with his mother more a matter of choice than forced necessity.

2 Earl Hoyt Bell, (AB ’25 Iowa State Univ.; PhD ‘31 Univ. Wis.), assistant professor in anthropology at University of Nebraska, and, later, chairman of sociology and anthropology department at Syracuse University.
While German troops occupied the Rhineland and the electorate rewarded Hitler with 99 percent of its vote, Loren completed a second semester of non-credit German and some additional course work in sociology.1 Christianson’s dismissive phrase (i.e., “some additional course work”) does not capture the rigorous nature and intellectual coherence of the program on which Eiseley embarked. Soc. 324 and Soc. 328 were core, required courses, the second halves of an integrated, year-long program of sequential sociological study. Eiseley again had a good term during the spring semester, earning a “B+” in Soc 324, an “A” in Soc 352, and another “Pass” in Soc 328.

Eiseley’s two semesters of non-credit German were necessary not only to present himself as a candidate for a Harrison fellowship at Pennsylvania, as he did eventually, but also for advanced degrees at Nebraska. Strategically, Eiseley positioned himself for fellowships at Pennsylvania, and, simultaneously, met the formal language requirement for advanced graduate study at Nebraska. Eiseley’s academic program at Nebraska, including assistantship duties, graduate sociology course work, and two courses in German comprised a serious, full-time academic load.

EISELEY’S SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH REINHARDT

A stable support for Eiseley in the Nebraska sociology program was James M. Reinhardt, an Associate Professor of Sociology. Reinhardt’s importance to Eiseley was much greater than Christianson’s (1990: 167) passing observation that when Lowry Wimberly and Eiseley drifted apart, “Loren began palling around with James M. Reinhardt, a Georgia-born sociology professor.” Reinhardt was, as noted above, the instructor for the two semesters of Research in Social Psychology in which Eiseley earned 10 hours of graduate credit and two “A” grades. Reinhardt and Eiseley, professor and student, pursued “the unsolved problems of present-day social psychology.”2 Hence, it is not remarkable that they talked long hours together—regardless of the state of Eiseley’s relationship with Wimberly.3

In fact, Reinhardt’s association with Eiseley began when Loren was still an undergraduate, and the affiliation grew beyond the classroom to include Reinhardt’s wife, Cora Lee. She recalled that “Jim and I first met [Mabel and Loren Eiseley] in 1931 at the University of Nebraska” during Loren’s undergraduate period. The centrality of Jim Reinhardt to Eiseley’s career is recounted in the following note written by Mabel Eiseley to Cora Lee following James’ death in 1974:

We were both exceedingly fond of Jim, as you know, and even though we have not seen him for some years we always felt that he was nearby.

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1 Emphasis added. Work designed to meet graduate degree language requirements was (and still is) typically completed on a non-credit basis.
2 Course description for Soc. 351-352, Bulletin of the University of Nebraska, Catalog Issue, 1936, pp. 400-401.
3 Lowry C. Wimberly was, in fact, a professor in the Department of English and editor of The Prairie Schooner, a well-known literary journal, but he too was a sociologist, having earned his doctorate in sociology at the University of Nebraska (Wimberly, 1925) under the supervision of Hutton Webster (1952: 38).
4 Annotation by Cora Lee Reinhardt on envelope containing Mabel Eiseley to Mrs. James M. Reinhardt, 17 May 1974, James M. Reinhardt Papers, Box 3, Folder 1974, University Archives, Love Library, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
His generosity—and yours too—to Loren will not be forgotten. He gave encouragement and practical help at a time when such help meant a great deal. His whole career might have been much different had he not encountered such understanding.

Reinhardt’s “practical help” included getting Loren published as a sociologist. In a book that has escaped Eiseley’s biographers, Professor Reinhardt made room for what became Eiseley’s (1938: 229-44) first publication in a sociological context. Loren’s research in Reinhardt’s courses impressed the elder sociologist so greatly that he included Loren’s analysis of “culture and personality” as a chapter in his then forthcoming book on Social Psychology: An Introduction to the Study of Personality and the Environment. Proudly, the Nebraska professor pointed to this work when recommending Eiseley for a teaching post at the University of Kansas.

ENTERING THE ACADEMIC MARKETPLACE

Following his year of graduate sociology study at Nebraska, Eiseley returned to Pennsylvania, a decision facilitated by winning a Harrison fellowship (a considerably more lucrative award than his assistantship at Nebraska). Later, coincident with the doctorate in anthropology from Pennsylvania (sans official dissertation!), Eiseley entered the academic marketplace in 1937. His first job offer, however, came not from an anthropologist, but from a sociologist: Carroll D. Clark of Kansas. The Department of Sociology at the University of Kansas sought a new faculty member who could teach both sociology and anthropology, a situation for which Eiseley’s dual training made him especially qualified. The support Eiseley garnered from sociologists in his quest for this position needs emphasis, because Christianson’s (1990) account of the campaign neglects the central role played by Eiseley’s sociological champions. It is true, as Christianson (1990: 176) noted, that Pennsylvania anthropologist Frank Speck wrote to Clark on Eiseley’s behalf and that:

During the next month at least six others wrote on his behalf, including Duncan Strong, Dwight Kirsch, James M. Reinhardt, and Lowry Wimberly, who described him as a young man possessed of a “striking personality, a good voice, and a sympathetic and loyal nature.”

1 Mabel Eiseley to Mrs. James M. Reinhardt, 17 May 1974, Reinhardt Papers.
2 Carroll D. Clark, (AB ’22, MA ’25 University of Kansas; PhD ’31 University of Chicago), professor and chair, department of sociology, University of Kansas.
3 Frank Gouldsmith Speck, (AB ’04 Columbia; MA ’05 University of Pennsylvania), professor of anthropology at University of Pennsylvania, and president of the American Folklore Society, 1920-22. Christianson (1990: 176) observed appreciatively that Speck “composed a glowing, five-page testimonial” on Eiseley’s behalf, but it should be noted that the apparent relative length of Speck’s letter results from its being handwritten in large script, whereas Hertzler’s and Reinhardt’s letters were typed.
4 Frederick Dwight Kirsch, Jr., (BA ’15, University of Nebraska); artist, director of galleries and, later, chair of the art department at the University of Nebraska.
5 Lowry Charles Wimberly, (BA ’16, MA ’20, PhD ’25, University of Nebraska), professor of English and editor of the Prairie Schooner, University of Nebraska.
The “others,” however, included Professor J.O. Hertzler, the well-known chairman of the Department of Sociology at the University of Nebraska, and Professor W. Rex Crawford, chairman of the Department of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania.

**Hertzler’s Recommendation:** Kansas’ Carroll Clark was, first and foremost, a sociologist and it is thus no small matter that Hertzler, an influential scholar, wrote on Eiseley’s behalf. Testimony to Hertzler’s strong regional reputation is the fact that when the Midwest Sociological Society was formed in April, 1937, at a meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, Hertzler was elected vice-president and, the following year, president of that new organization. Hertzler’s letter, uncited by Christianson, is an instructive document. On February 22, 1937, Hertzler wrote to Clark:

> Mr. Loren C. Eiseley is a candidate for a position as sociologist-anthropologist in your department. I have known Mr. Eiseley as an under-graduate and graduate student since about 1925. He has an excellent analytical mind and a broad culture, his scholarship is conscientious and profound, he is highly versatile, and has an attractive personality. I need not mention his work in Anthropology because you have been fully informed regarding that by Dr. Speck and others. I may add that he also has an excellent preparation in Sociology, majoring in the subject as an under-graduate with us and last year he put in a full year in this Department and was by all odds the pick of the graduate students. Also, as you know, he has taken considerable work in Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania under Crawford and Bossard. I would consider him a valuable addition to any department; in fact we would like to have him here if funds were available. I believe also that due to his broad intellectual and cultural interests he would soon become a distinctive person in any faculty.

Hertzler underscored several important points: that he had known Eiseley in a professional capacity for more than a decade, that Eiseley was a candidate for a discipline-straddling position as a sociologist-anthropologist, that Eiseley majored in sociology as an undergraduate, that Eiseley’s sociological preparation was excellent, and that Hertzler would have liked to have hired Eiseley at Nebraska.

**Crawford’s Recommendation:** Professor W. Rex Crawford wrote to Clark on April 14, 1937, also emphasizing Eiseley’s preparation in sociology:

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1. See, for documentation, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (June 1937: 416), and Hertzler (1938). Carroll Clark was also elected to the presidency of the Midwest Sociological Society, in 1941, as was James Reinhart for the years 1942-44.
2. William Rex Crawford, (Phd ‘26, University of Pennsylvania), chair of the department of sociology, University of Pennsylvania.
3. James Herbert Siward Bossard, (AB ’09 Muhlenberg; MA ‘11, PhD ‘17 University of Pennsylvania), professor of sociology in the medical school, University of Pennsylvania.
4. Hertzler to Clark, 22 February 1937, Carroll Clark Papers, Correspondence, Eiseley 1937-1978, Series No. PP/I, Box 4, folder 1937-1959, University of Kansas Archives, Lawrence, Kansas.
He [Eiseley] has done considerable work in Sociology at the University of Nebraska and here has taken my Seminar in Recent European Social Theory.\(^1\)

Crawford pointed to Eiseley’s sociological work at Nebraska and noted Eiseley’s additional sociological preparation in Philadelphia.

**Reinhardt’s Recommendation:** Nebraska sociologist James Reinhardt also wrote to Clark. On February 20, 1937, Reinhardt penned the following:

> I understand that Mr. Loren Eiseley, who is now a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, is applying for a position in your Department. Mr. Eiseley took his A.B. degree from the University of Nebraska in 1933, and has since done graduate work with us in sociology. He was an assistant in the Department last year, after having completed his master’s degree in Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. He returned to Pennsylvania on a Harrison fellowship this year, to complete work for the Ph.D. degree. All of the work for the Ph.D., including residence requirements and comprehensive examinations, has been done, and only the actual completion of the dissertation remains. The dissertation is now in progress, and part of it has already been accepted for publication by the Anthropological Society of Philadelphia. The entire dissertation should be out of the way by spring.

> While Mr. Eiseley is taking the doctorate in the Department of Anthropology at Pennsylvania, he has also had considerable work in sociology both at the University of Nebraska, and at Pennsylvania. He is an especially able student, as suggested by the fact that he was appointed as an assistant in our Department, and that he has been the recipient of two awards at the University of Pennsylvania. These awards, as you probably know, are granted solely on the bases of distinguished scholarship and research ability. I think that during all my experience as a teacher and a director of graduate students in various universities, I have never had a more competent and conscientious student than Mr. Eiseley. He did some excellent research work for me in the field of juvenile delinquency. These investigations included case studies from the courts and from personal interviews, and also a comprehensive analysis and organization of the results of other investigations in the field. He also wrote for me a highly critical study of some other anthropological approaches to problems of personality. I was so impressed with this study that I am using it as a chapter in a forthcoming book on Personality and Social Order, to be published by Lippincott.

> Mr. Eiseley has also published in the American Anthropologist, and, as indicated above, is a contributor to the forthcoming volume of the Anthropological Society of Philadelphia. He is one of the editors of the Prairie Schooner, well-known Midwestern literary quarterly, and has contributed to recognized literary journals. He has had a wide field experience in North American archeology, having served three seasons with the Morrill Paleontological expeditions of the University of Nebraska; with the 1934 expedition to the Southwest, conducted by the University of...
Pennsylvania Museum; and the expedition of the Smithsonian Institution to Colorado in 1935. He is an active member of Sigma Xi, and of Alpha Kappa Delta.

Mr. Eiseley has a genuine interest in people, and is a man of broad sympathies and keen understanding. He enjoys working with students, is co-operative, conscientious, and a gentleman of the first rank. I am glad to recommend him in the highest terms.¹

Reinhardt’s letter is a model of energetic support, and it nicely summarizes Eiseley’s interdisciplinary accomplishments at the University of Nebraska.

CONCLUSION

From sociologists in Nebraska and Pennsylvania, Eiseley received not only advanced training but also a substantive boost upward to a full-time academic position as a sociologist-anthropologist. The record of Eiseley’s advanced sociological training at Nebraska and its significance in securing his first professorial appointment are clear. The epilogue, however, has yet to be written. What remains to be done, at the least, is research that traces the substructure and outcroppings of Eiseley’s maturing sociological imagination among his literate essays and ostensibly anthropological musings. Whatever else may be claimed for Loren Eiseley, he was also a well-trained sociologist. His mature success as a literate, interdisciplinary interpreter of social scientific discoveries provides a valuable, interdisciplinary model for young students as well as an additional legitimating argument for pursuing academic preparation in sociology today.

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