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Review of *NEBRASKAland Magazine's The Cellars of Time: Paleontology and Archaeology in Nebraska* Vol. 72 No.1; January/February 1994. Lincoln: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

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NEBRASKAland Magazine's *The Cellars of Time: Paleontology and Archaeology in Nebraska*. Vol. 72 No. 1; January/February 1994. Lincoln: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, 1994. Introduction, photographs, illustrations. 162 pp. \$12.95 paper. (Also published as *Nebraska History* Vol. 75 No. 1; Spring 1994.)

A passage from Loren Eiseley's *The Innocent Assassins* lends this volume its title and sets the stage for a spectacular journey through the cellars of Nebraska history. We venture through 300 million years of Nebraska deposits, rich with fossils and artifacts. Expertly guiding the expedition are Michael Voorhies, Curator of Paleontology at the University of Nebraska Museum, and archaeologists from the Nebraska State Historical Society, John R. Bozell, Gayle Carlson, and John Ludwickson.

Voorhies takes us from the Missouri bluffs, where sea lily and other fossils tell about life in a shallow equatorial sea 300 million years ago; to Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park (Voorhies's paleontological offering to the state), where ten-million-year-old rhinos and their savanna home are featured; to north-western Nebraska at the end of the ice age

when two bull mammoths fought and died, their entangled skeletons telling this tale 10,000 years later. Other stops, all lyrically presented, are made throughout the state.

Archaeologists Bozell, Carlson, and Ludwickson direct an excursion similarly epic and textured. Projectile points, grinding implements, ceramic vessels, ornaments of bone, and tools of metal from throughout Nebraska transport the reader through prehistory and into the historic period. The expedition halts at the first homestead (in Gage County) claimed under the Homestead Act.

The travel guide itself is splendidly produced with crisp photographs and rich illustrations. Brief sidebars on topics like "The First Flowers," "Chipped Stone Tools," "Working Together" (on collaborating with Native Americans) further assist the journey. Oversights that detract slightly from the utility this volume will have in the classroom are the lack of a map displaying the ages of state surface deposits and a table depicting the epochs (such as Barstovian and Clarendonian) and periods referred to in the text.

Paleontology and archaeology are both like putting together giant puzzles for which we don't have the completed picture to guide us. Every piece is critical and, therefore, so are non-professional contributions, as emphasized throughout the volume. Knowledgeable amateurs are the "remote sensors" who first find the sharks teeth, mammoth molars, and projectile points that signpost this journey. As this volume also emphasizes, it is not just the object that communicates information about the past, but also the pollen grains, sediment clasts, and so forth with which it is found. This is why professional inspection of fossil or artifact-bearing deposits is so important.

Nebraska is blessed with amazing and bountiful, and often unheralded, fossil and artifact resources. No Great Plains library is complete without this volume, which does a wonderful job of proclaiming this rich heritage. For Nebraska archaeology, it represents the only current source that is accessible and engaging. Students of paleontology will be similarly

entranced and enlightened. *NEBRASKAland* and *Nebraska History* are to be congratulated.

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