

**Memoirs of Dr. Edson Harvey Fichter, Jr.
compiled by his daughter, Nancy Dillon**

BOYHOOD AND TEEN YEARS

Edson was born on Sunday, July 3rd, 1910, in an old farmhouse near the small town of Randolph, Iowa. The country doctor that assisted with his birth eventually became his brother-in-law, marrying his elder sister, Mabel. As a boy he was called “Eddie” or just “Boy Fichter”. He was the youngest of four children. His siblings were Mabel, Edna, and Corby.

Edson wrote the following many years later: “When I was a little boy, our family of six went to Omaha, Nebraska, which was about 50 miles from our farm, to buy clothing. I can remember, more or less clearly, that much of the time we were there I was crying because I was frightened by the big city.”

When Edson was five he became a first grader along with another boy, Irving Travelute, and two girls, Louise Allely and Hilda Hintz, at Harvard, a one-room country schoolhouse one mile from his farm. He and his brother Corby, age 12, walked to school or rode together on a black pony named Billy. At the end of the first semester the teacher was committed to a mental institution; then it became clear to his family that his school morning stomach ache had not always been malingering. His sister, Mabel, 21 years older than he and unmarried, was the teacher the second semester. The following nonsense verse is the only thing that he can specifically remember as having learned at Harvard:

Where is a boy going
And what is he going to do,
And how is he going to do it
When the world bursts through?

The above named horse, Billy, occasionally showed some surprising behavior. Once, when the boys were on their way home, he balked when they arrived at a bridge over a creek about three-fourths of a mile from their house. Intending to lead him across, they got off his back, whereupon he ran across the bridge and out of sight over the nearby hill! This made such an impression on Edson that he never forgot the incident.

Following is another horse story in Edson's words:

“One of my father's workhorses was a white mare named Gypsy. She was slightly smaller than his other six or seven workhorses and was accustomed to being ridden, which I did as a boy during the times when wheat or other oats were being thrashed. My job was to get drinking water in jugs, wrapped in gunny and hung on the saddle horn, to the men who were loading hayracks that would take the bundles to the thrasher. One day, one of those men saw fit to poke Gypsy in a flank with the handle of his pitchfork when I came to his group, saying something like, 'Make her buck.' Late in the afternoon, when I brought water to his group, he said he wanted to ride the white mare. I got off the horse, and when he climbed into the saddle, she bucked for less than a minute, then stopped and stood still. The man hurriedly dismounted while his fellow workmen laughed heartily. After they all had a drink of water from a jug, I mounted Gypsy. She carried me to the next group of men with no behavior that suggested she might be going to buck.”

Many of the hired men came from states to the south. Many of them were “coon hunters.” During his late teens he went on several hunts at night. These hunters were primarily interested in following the hounds, as best they could, and seeing the raccoons after they were treed by the dogs. When the 'coons were treed, the hounds were called off.

In September of 1917, Corby and Edson started going to town school in Randolph (population 350). They used a single-seated buggy drawn by Billy, the black pony. Billy was kept in a relative's barn about a block from school.

During his early years on the farm, Edson was allowed to go to the cornfields in March to help the men burn cornstalks. Another chore was tending wet, newborn pigs, making sure their nostrils

were clean of the membranes of birth, allowing them to breathe adequately.

Edson's family had two amusing stories that they like to tell about him as a small boy: The first was that he was in a barber's chair for the first time and the family member that had brought him to the barbershop was seated nearby. Shortly after his hair began to be cut, he asked: "Is the bleed a comin'?"

The second story: He was seated with his family on the front pew of the Methodist Church in Randolph. The minister was well into his sermon when he vigorously scratched an itching spot (where on his body is not known). His mother quickly grabbed his hand and shook her head. Loudly enough that he could be heard by many people in the congregation, Edson asked: "When a fellow's got a scratch, can't he itch it?"

Edson had an interest in nature early in his life. His mother was especially supportive of his interest in birds, butterflies and moths. His family encouraged the growth of this trait and when he was about six years old, took him to see a slide show on birds at the Methodist church, and gave him his first bird guide book. One day, while carrying the guide in a hip pocket, he accidentally lost it. When a search failed to find it, his family replaced it – and added a butterfly guide to his treasures.

His "wilderness" as a farm boy was a grove of deciduous trees. His enjoyment of that area was the beginning of his love of nature. Following are direct quotes from his collection of memories:

"Those boyhood days at the old farm home and in the village of Randolph were spent working some and playing much. The hills, the woods, the ponds, the streams, the fields, the alleys, the underbrush, each dusty land and quiet glen, the stars, the sun, the moon, the sky, the clouds, the wind, the rain and snow, the storms and calms of every season, the birds and the flowers---every creature of the wild ---all these I felt akin to in my boyhood days. And always will they be attractions for me who came to know them and their ways when childhood's freedom let me be with them. So it was that I, the fourth and youngest of the prairie family's children, became inherent, in many ways, of nature among both the cultivated and uncultivated lands of southwest Iowa.

One autumn evening while I was a small boy, I briefly watched a flight of hundreds, if not thousands, of Monarch butterflies into a two-row stand of deciduous trees, and gathering there within 20 yards or so of the home farm. I was excited---well beyond good sense---because I made considerable effort to disturb those lepidopterans. This happened several years before I knew about the Monarchs' southward migration in the autumn and northward migration in the spring in enormous numbers.

While I was still quite young, I began collecting butterflies and moths, and in the winter, looking for and taking indoors the cocoons of moths and watching the adults emerge come spring. These interests took me into uncultivated areas, such as roadsides, some of which were edged with hedges of Osage orange along which I would sometimes see Loggerhead Shrikes, Brown Thrashers, and flocks of Bobwhite Quail.

When I was about ten years old, I began spending many days wandering the fields and woods, sometimes with a companion, usually alone. In doing so, I found my greatest joy. When I saw a bird I had not seen before, the wilderness of the woods seemed enhanced and I would feel a bit of a thrill. When I saw an ancient, towering tree that seemed to be centuries old, I would feel like I was gazing at a masterpiece of nature's handiwork. When I would hear the quavering whistles of a Harris' Sparrow at the edge of an April woodland, I would want to see the bird as well as hear it.

I remember well how I used to collect insects during the summer months. When the men were making hay in the warm fields I would be there with my net and collecting boxes, causing no little comment among the hired hands and disturbing the horses, for at times the butterflies and grasshoppers were a bit elusive, leading me on long, wild chases. Birds also attracted me from the first."

Having been born only five years after the founding of the Forest Service, Edson saw ads in the farm papers inviting young fellows to "Be a forest ranger." When he was 10 or 11 he announced that he was going to be a forest ranger!

“By the time I was 12 years old, I had begun to frequent the uncultivated areas of my home country and, with my father's permission, bought a pair of 6 x 24 field glasses built by Carl Zeiss of Jena, Germany. I clearly remember the first bird that I identified with those binoculars: a Harris' Sparrow. The thrill that moment brought me and how that species remained my favorite bird for some years leads to the fact that I could now go to the very spot where it happened.”

Also as a 12-year-old, he plowed with a walking plow for a neighbor who expected him to plow 6 acres per day for which he paid Edson fifty cents per day.

Edson clearly remembered going with his dad to milk the cows in the evenings. In the winter they would tramp through the snow by lantern light to the barn:

“Inside the air would be warm with the odor of steaming animals and the fragrance of the hay in the loft above. As Dad would set the milk singing in the pail, I would climb up among the rafters just to sit --and be a boy, listening to the squeaking of mice along the edge of the hay and the champing and stamping of the horses on the other side. On a summer evening Dad would milk in the lot outside while I would lie on my back on the roof of a shed nearby, watching the twilight fade and the stars appear while the evening song of a brown thrasher throbbed across the darkening hillside.” (This paragraph taken from an assignment written when he was in college as a freshman or sophomore.)

During my early teens (1921-1925) I once found some small larvae (caterpillars) on the parsley growing in our garden in town. I gathered some of them and placed them in a glass jar along with some parsley. For reasons not clear in my memory, I did not feed them enough to grow to normal adult size—negligence that I apparently was not aware of at the moment. However, pupation (becoming a chrysalis) occurred and, what was most fascinating was the emergence of adults with the color pattern of a swallowtail---probably the Eastern Black Swallowtail—but with a wingspan about one-half that of the normal adults. I was fascinated by this, but it did not occur to me to determine if those “miniature” adults would carry out the reproductive process of normal-sized individuals.”

Edson's mother, Alta Maria Bentley Fichter, died of cancer in April, 1918. What follows is a direct account of his experience with the loss of his mother:

“Within a day or so, a coffin containing her embalmed body was brought to the home farm house (from Omaha hospital—about 50 miles away)). In keeping with a custom of the period, she was said to be 'lying in the corpse.' When I heard that expression and that her body was in the room we called the parlor, I was overcome with curiosity; I wanted to see my dead mother. Waiting for a moment when I thought I would not be discovered by adults in the house, I hurried into the parlor, stood close to the casket, stared at my mother's face, then touched her nose...whereupon I walked hurriedly out of the house and ran crying across the farmyard to behind a corn crib where I was out of sight of the house. How long I stayed there, crying, and perhaps searching for understanding, I do not remember.”

His highly conservative sister, Mabel, 21 years older than Edson, assumed the role of mother for her eight-year-old brother. Because of her disposition, he was, for example, not allowed to play marbles “for keeps” with his friends because it was “sinful” or any card game that she thought was played by gamblers, and he was made to keep wearing knickers for some months after all the other boys in his class at school had, in keeping with a change in fashion, begun wearing long pants.

While he was still in grade school, brother Corby, who was in high school, and their sister Edna lived in Randolph during one school year, possibly in 1919. The “home” was an old house about one hundred yards from where their permanent one would eventually be built. Edson clearly remembered only one feature of that old house: each room was lighted by only one electric bulb hanging from the ceiling.

His father had a house built at the northwest corner of Randolph in 1920, partly in response to Mabel's urging him to do so. It was Edson's home, on and off, until he married Ardith Owens in 1935. In the rear portion of the house there were three bedrooms, with Edson's and his father's rooms side-by-side. When waking in the night, Edson could sometimes hear his father sobbing and softly calling to

his dead wife. This would occur until his father died in 1945.

Because the new house in town had an attic, Edson soon had established a museum there. The only items that he remembers having on exhibit were a few black walnut shells that had been gnawed by fox squirrels to expose the edible contents.

In September 1917, Edson and Corby started going to “town” school in Randolph, about 4 miles from the farm. Most of the time their means of transportation on dirt roads was horse and buggy, a single seated buggy drawn by a single horse, Billy. When temperatures were low, a fur robe covered their legs and there were heated bricks on the floor of the buggy to keep their feet relatively comfortable. During school hours, Billy was kept at a relative's barn about a block from the cluster of small, wooden school buildings alongside a large brick school building which was under construction and designed to house grades one to twelve. During that first year in town school, Edson was seven years old and in the third grade. Anita Wright was the teacher and was very likable. In the seat in front of Edson was a girl named Flora who had long curls which sometimes hung down onto his desk. Edson had fun pulling them but was eventually caught doing so by Miss Wright who made him come up front and sit on her lap. In later years, Edson realized that her procedure was the perfect punishment: “baby” on the teacher's lap and visible to all other members of the class.

When Edson was in the 8th grade (1922-23) at the age of 12, he and his class were disturbed and saddened, if not somewhat frightened, by the deaths of two students and the teacher, all three caused by diabetes.

One form of punishment effected by the woman who replaced the 8th grade teacher who died was whipping a student with a piece of rubber hose in the cloak room. This event was out of sight of the rest of the class but not out of hearing.

It was in 1924 that he took an interest in Ardith Owens, who was 11 at the time and Edson was 14. Quite often in the early evening he would ride his bicycle to a neighbor's house where the family purchased milk. But before getting the milk he dashed to the south part of town, would whistle and Ardith, pretending to visit the outhouse, would dash out, get a quick kiss, and run back into the house. This went on for a while before Ardith (age 12) and family moved to the town of Emerson, some 10-15 miles away. One of the girls in Edson's freshman class at Randolph High school teased him about “robbing the cradle.” Edson and a friend drove to Hastings at some time after the Owens family moved (no date found) hoping to see her again, but had no luck as she lived on a farm and not in town. Ardith's mom never knew all this was happening until she was told, years later, after their marriage.

In high school Edson played the trumpet, was a short-time basketball player, a prominent soloist in operettas and an actor in class plays; he was a high-jumper but never cleared more than the level of his eyes and a pole vaulter attaining no more than eight feet. He was a cheerleader during football games. He was elected president of his junior class at a meeting he did not attend---thus was chairman of the Junior-Senior Banquet.

In his own words: “ When I was a member of the Junior class, I was on the first basketball team, playing what was then known as 'standing guard.' At the beginning of my senior year, the coach asked me to be the football team's quarterback. Having never had any such experience, I declined and continued being a cheerleader. Come the first practice session of that year's basketball players, I was told by the coach to be seated on one of the sideline benches...and there he left me until I quit going to basketball practices at the end of three weeks.”

Manual Training was a traditional course for all freshman boys. During the 1923-24 school year, Edson built a small jardiniere of oak and a porch swing. Both items are still in use today by his daughters.

It was during his high school years that he became known as “Sis” Fichter, probably because of behavior resulting from the disciplinary pressures in his home and also because of his interest in nature which led to frequent walks alone beyond the edge of town to look for birds, watch them, and record what he saw in pocket notebooks. Also, he did not indulge in some of the activities that most of the

other boys were doing, such as smoking cigarettes behind the barn. He smoked tea leaves in a homemade corn cob pipe. He was also called “Professor Snodgrass,” a collector of spiders in current Boy Scout books, because he was a collector of insects, especially butterflies. An example of his notebook entries follows:

“Nov. 18. Cold. Took a short walk in evening after school. Identified the Tree Sparrow which had baffled me on Nov. 6. Recognized it by the spot on the breast.”

In his own words: “My tendency to be alone may have developed, or perhaps been augmented as a response to social pressure by my peers, albeit they exercised it subtly and perhaps unknowingly. My withdrawal may have evoked an increase in the pressure. Peers made fun, so I withdrew, and thereby became less socially acceptable.”

“The winter wood's still, leafless solitude
Finds me not lonely, for there's a multitude
Of secrets to be learned and wonders to behold
Though trees stand gaunt and bare and the air is cold.” E.F.

In later years, Edson could see the circle, not a vicious one, but a creative one—for it may be that he was socially driven to a closer union with nature. He was thankful then for the social pressures. He missed his high school friends after graduation.

A poem Edson wrote on April 15, 1928:

Just folks---but real folks
Who know and understand
The real of you,
And most of all
Appreciate the things
You try to do.
More of friends I could not ask,
For friends they are, and true. E.F

Edson's journal entry for March 18, 1927—“Went north of Deer Creek to a small bayou where I knew that I would find ducks. In one flock, which I crawled to within 20 yards of, there were about 20 Mallards. These I left undisturbed after watching them for about 15 minutes. On another small pond were about 200, I would guess, Mallards, Pintails and Teal. Being in a hurry, I disturbed this flock and they all arose and whirred away while I was there, a most inspiring and spectacular experience.”

In 1926, at the age of 16, Edson fully decided that no one could stop him from a more or less deep and extensive study of ornithology. He graduated from high school on the 13th of May, 1927, with his grade ranked 11th in a class of 17. The valedictorian followed in his father's footsteps and became a plumber.

Edson tells of Saturday nights in small-town Iowa:

“Being in the downtown part of Randolph on Saturday evening was to be a participant in a social event, especially characterized by folks from the surrounding countryside who were there to buy groceries, but many of them apparently glad to be visiting in various combinations of acquaintances. Very obvious at times—and perhaps disturbing to some of the people—was the “cruising” up and down main street (which was one block long) by male teenagers in noisy cars with tops down so that the teenage girls could see them and they could better see the teenage girls, and those cruising in Model T Ford Runabouts frequently and intentionally causing the engines to backfire—a noise which irritated some folks while it attracted the attention of people, especially teenagers, albeit briefly.”

Often during his teens, he and his friend, Irving, took buggy rides with the top down during the

summers away from town to enjoy the quiet of the farmlands and the slowness of their travels on the dirt roads.

A range of bluffs, called the Waubonsie Hills, rising a few miles east of the Missouri River attracted Edson. He liked to be there collecting fossil crinoids, enhanced by distant views from the tops of the hills, and walking among the oak trees on the lower slopes. The closing couplet of a poem he wrote years later reflects the attachment he felt for that hill country:

“I shall remember the cooling musk
Of bur oak woods in a windless dusk.”

When the time came in 1927 for Edson to go to Lincoln, Nebraska, to begin his university education, Sister Edna's husband offered to take him. As final preparations for that trip with Ben's car were being made, Edson and his father stood nearby in the front yard. At the last minute, his father had a considerable surprise for him: he handed Edson a checkbook and said, “Use your judgement.”

Edson did not attend university because he wanted to, but because his father had promised his mother, when she was on her deathbed, that all four of their children would “go to college”---which they did. Sisters Mabel and Edna studied at Bellevue in eastern Nebraska, and brother Corby at Iowa State College at Ames from which he graduated.

After entering the University of Nebraska, he turned down an invitation to join Phi Sigma Kappa. This invitation was extended by Ilo Trively, whose family lived across the street in Randolph. Edson's major was zoology with botany his first minor and entomology his second minor. After he got to know the late George Hudson, who was a graduate student in the Department of Zoology and an accomplished ornithologist, Edson once said to him that he wanted to be an ornithologist; Hudson responded with this advice, “You best be a biologist first.”

Some of his feelings about the city are here in his own words:

“During the first few months here in the city I became, on a few occasions, nearly desperate enough to leave, but somehow I held on. Now I have become accustomed to it and am at least able to tolerate living here. At first the city was to me an inferno of noise and confusion, of hurrying crowds and traffic, of smoke and unpleasant odors. All of this was nerve-racking to one whose ears were tuned to the silence of village and country life---a “hayseed”, if you wish! At first I was afraid of people; now I pity them.

The few moments of soulful freedom that I experience here are when I am alone in my room, far above the noise of the street below. This is especially so on warm autumn evenings when I sit before my open window watching the moon and stars, hearing the birds of passage winging their uncharted ways against the blue-black sky.

Occasionally sitting outside to write in my journal, I can hear the babbling crowds, the roar of trucks and autos, the whining of brakes, the coughing and whistling of locomotives, the shouts of newsboys, the ragtime tune of a jazz orchestra---and a hundred other confused, discordant noises. The feeling that comes to me is one near to abhorrence.”

One of the notable changes that befell him during his first two years as a university student and in a new environment was a gradual erosion of his conservatism by a few new friends, perhaps unknowingly, whose backgrounds differed from his. He was not fully aware of this transition until several years later.

Two of his journal writings follow:

“Sat., May 5, 1928.

Went to the museum this a.m. to draw some Indian pottery. On the way thru the campus I suddenly heard a kingbird calling and then, what thrilled me more, a brown thrasher singing from the branch of a tall tree.”

--no date--

“This morning a robin lit on top of the building across the court, 5 stories from the street and sang continuously for 19 minutes, seemingly as much at home as those I've seen in the woods. His spirit has abided with me all day. He helped me start the day out right.”

As a freshman and sophomore, Edson failed 14 credit hours in French and history (he was aware during one American history test session that the male students on either side of him were copying some of his answers. He failed the course and they passed it!). Edson entered his junior year on probation during which he failed 3 credit hours. He was called to the office of the Assistant Dean of Students who told him that he was “not university material.” That blunt evaluation apparently disturbed him enough that he began to take his education more seriously. He started studying more diligently, thereby becoming “university material.”

After his freshman year, Edson served as an assistant to the owner of a boys' camp known as “Thunder Moon” in central Minnesota. He found much joy living in the heart of the pine and lake country. The camp was located on the shore of a beautiful little lake, deep in the brush and pine. Edson loved the quiet solitude of the north woods even when having few moments to himself. Here are his thoughts about the area:

‘Vividly I remember those enchanting nights when the moon would be dipping its mysterious light into the rippled waters of the little lake. A gentle wind would be sighing in the tall pines that stood close to our open cabins. From the blackness of the deeper woods a whippoorwill would be incessantly calling its name. Occasionally we would hear the howl of a brush wolf. From a distance would come the wild, thrilling call of a loon, echoing from shore to shore. All the sounds of the night, the very voices of nature, so clear and musical, throbbing through the cool darkness, touched upon the harp strings of my soul.”

TIDBITS OF EDSON'S LIFE:

Edson fell out of a tree in the front yard of the home farm.

By the time Edson was 17 years old he had shot and eaten cottontail rabbits and fox squirrels, trapped pocket gophers and gone coon hunting. During the Depression, Edson and a friend hunted crows and ate only the broiled breasts which tasted much like those of bobwhites. After moving to Idaho, he hunted ducks, geese, sage grouse, ring-necked pheasants and chukars. Edson enjoyed eating the meat of elk and deer. He also hunted pronghorns---but not on his study area in the Pahsimeroi!

During that same summer of 1928, Edson spent a week or so at Camp Iowa on the north shore of Ten Mile Lake north west of Hackensack with Verda Belle Jensen, her mother and brother. Edson was very fond of Verda Belle.

In the summer of 1929 Edson collected 1600 insects for the Dept. of Entomology in the vicinity of Randolph for which he received one cent for each.

Verde Belle and her family visited in Randolph in early December, 1929.

On a Saturday evening, December 14, 1929, Edson became a member of Phi Sigma, National Honorary Society in the Biological Sciences.

In that same year his cousin, Alice Bentley, of Madison, Wisconsin, visited the family in

Randolph for about two weeks; then his Dad, sister Mabel, and Edson drove the Whippet to Madison, taking Alice home.

Early in 1931, he dated a distant cousin, Florence Cooper, who was a student at Nebraska Wesleyan. In June of the same year he had his first date with Marietta Feather. They eventually became engaged, but it was all over in May, 1933!

At some time during his college career, Edson took an art class in water color. He got an A for improvement. He changed his major to Art, but could not bear the haughtiness of the fine arts students. After 4 days, he got some of his money back!

He laid flat at the bottom of a narrow ravine in native prairie during a thunderstorm.

A secretary at the Nebraska College of Agriculture asked Edson to marry her.

THE DEPRESSION OF THE 1930s

Because of the economic decline that began in the late '20s, Edson quit attending the university with only eight credit hours needed to allow graduation. Part of the time he worked on the Fichter farm with his brother, Corby; he also played drums in dance bands and a four-string guitar for square dances. He worked some for the publisher of the Randolph Enterprise, a weekly newspaper, selling advertising to businesses in surrounding towns, and writing a few columns titled "Haywire/by Heck."

Also because of the Depression, a number of young people in the Randolph community could not afford to go to college. As a way of carrying on some kind of creative activity, they, along with some of the older folks in the community, organized a theatrical group which they named the Randolian Players. Over a period of two years or so during the early '30s, they performed such plays as "The Key Note," "Inside Out," "Three Wise Fools," and "Icebound," the Pulitzer Prize play of 1923. The program for "The Key Note" is dated Friday, October 27, 1933. The cover of the program was drawn by Edson. Source of the printing is unknown.

Edson was asked to judge a speech contest in the school in Strahan, a small town six airline miles north-easterly of Randolph. He does not recall who drove him there but when the evening program ended there was, for reasons he never understood, nobody to take him home. He walked about seven miles down a railroad, being disturbed only once when some cattle in a pasture bordering the railroad stampeded. Edson kept walking, hoping the fence was in good condition.

During this time, the young folks also organized a county "Chautauqua" which involved comparable groups in three or four other towns.

Edson enjoyed the company of the young women in the theatrical group; six of those girls are on his list of those he dated in 1932-1933.

At this low in the economy, Edson drew pastel portraits of two women in Randolph for \$5.00 each. He also did a watercolor painting of a bucking horse being ridden by a cowboy to convince the Sidney (Iowa) Rodeo authorities that he could do the same painting much enlarged on a signboard to advertise the rodeo. His price was \$75.00, apparently too costly for them---their response was "No!"

Because of Edson's love for Minnesota, he and a friend, Bruce Moore, went to the north-central areas of that state in May of 1932. They first lived in a cabin owned by people Edson knew on the north shore of Ten Mile Lake. When the tourist business began to develop, they moved to a forest margin above the west shore of Portage Lake which is near Ten Mile.

Their objective of being in the lake country was to collect aquatic specimens to sell to biological supply companies. Their collecting techniques were productive but the supply companies selling the kind of biology laboratory specimens to educational institutions were not buying such to the usual extent because of the economic depression. Edson wrote in his journal:

"5 May 1932 Bruce and I can as yet scarcely realize that we are actually here in the

Northwoods. It all seems a dream...but we're here, free and happy and rolling in the joy of wilderness life!"

At about midsummer, they had an unprecedented experience. They were invited to join four or five other young people in a party that was to be held on the front porch of a cabin above Women Lake. They were told that they need not take their car. An hour or so after the party began, some behavior developed that Edson and Bruce did not enjoy or approve of. More or less secretly they conferred with each other and soon stole away into the woodland dusk, one of them at a time. They walked together in darkness 12 miles on the road to Hackensack, quickly hiding in the roadside vegetation when they heard or saw a car. One of the cars contained their hosts who were looking for them. Throughout much of the long walk, they were amused by the croaking of bull frogs.

Bruce and Edson ran out of money and, therefore, decided to move to the backyard of folks they knew very well in Hackensack. When they broke camp they found a nickel on the ground under one of the two cots.

In Hackensack they became well acquainted with a young lady who was an accomplished pianist. Hoping to make enough money to get them home to Iowa down the highways, the three gave a concert in the gymnasium of the local school building, but they did not secure that much income.

Edson and Bruce were eating an evening meal in a restaurant, the owner of which had sometime earlier offered all they could eat if Edson would play the piano and sing duets with Bruce during meal times. While eating, they were discussing their lack of money to get them home. An elderly lady eating at a booth on the other side of the room heard them, called them to her and gave them some money that would get them back to their Iowa homes ((\$15.00 or \$25.00). They went toward home the next day driving a 1930 (?) Chevrolet. (Ownership of Chevrolet not known.)

Edson began playing drums with dance bands while in Minnesota. He spent much time with a girl named Lydia Newton.

He wrote these lines about his time in Minnesota:

"When I would gaze upon a sunset fading far across the rippled waters of a northland lake, my soul would reach out through the twilight into unknown realms, and I would feel that I was kin to the evening star."

He lived with his brother and family during that fall and winter.

Also, at some time in 1933 (?) Edson hitchhiked about 1,000 miles, including from Madison, Wisconsin, to either home or to Audubon, Iowa. He slept in a jail at Morrison, Illinois, thanks to a policeman. His bed was a broadly-spaced metal "mesh" with newspapers on it. He was covered by his gabardine coat which was somewhat wet since he had been wearing it as a rain coat while signaling for a ride. The next morning, he waited at a nearby filling station until drivers of a moving van let him get into the rear of their vehicle. There, on piles of soft packing pads, he slept on the way to Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

In the summer of 1934 Edson lived in a borrowed tent (from Dr. William Kerr) in the hills above the Platte River near Louisville, Nebraska, helping John Morrison with his Master of Science research on the vegetation of the Platte River islands. The Morrises lived in a tent fifty yards or so from Edson's. John had been a classmate of his at the University of Nebraska and a close friend who would be the best man in the Fichter's wedding the following spring.

Edson wrote the following on June 10, 1934: "I am alone, and in the twilight ending of a perfect summer day I record my solitude. Through the opening of my tent---beyond the cottonwoods that guard the entrance of our ravine---I see the broad stretches of the Platte---and beyond, the obscured farm lands of Nebraska.

A short time before sundown I saw a brown thrasher attacking a large bull snake on the west side of the ravine. For a distance of about 50 feet, the thrasher pursued furiously, beating at the five-foot snake with its feet, apparently never using its beak, withdrawing suddenly after each strike and returning immediately with another blow, all the while uttering an unmusical scold note. The snake beat

a moderate but steady retreat and finally disappeared under some brush and dead leaves. For five or ten minutes, the bird continued to search for the reptile.”

While camped above the Platte, Edson painted a water color picture of a small lizard that was common there. He liked the results to the extent that he decided to return to college in the fall of 1934 and changed his major from zoology to fine arts. After attending classes for four days, he got some of his registration money back and withdrew because of the pretentious atmosphere among the art majors. He went home to Randolph and lived with his brother and family during the autumn and winter.

In October of 1933, Edson rediscovered Ardith, while playing his four-string guitar for a square dance in the Sells Opera House in Randolph with her and her father. Ardith played the piano and her father, Floyd Owens, played the violin. They had been separately invited to play for the group of square dancers. When the evening's dancing ended, Edson took Ardith to the home of a contractor for whom she was working and where she was living at that time in Red Oak. This was a drive of nearly 30 miles, thus, a round trip of nearly 60 miles in the middle of the night. That was the beginning of their close relationship that lasted almost 60 years. They became engaged on Valentine's Day in 1935.

They were married on the 28th of April of that year in the Methodist Church in Randolph, Iowa. They honeymooned in Minnesota, lodging in one of the cabins of Camp Iowa, a summer vacation site owned by people they knew, on the north shore of Ten Mile Lake.

Upon returning from the honeymoon, Ardith and Edson began making a home in an old tenant house across the road from the house in which Edson was born on the home farm, where his only brother, Corby, and his family had lived for seven years.

When Ardith would come to the Fichter home in Randolph during their courting days, Edson's father (who was extremely shy even around people he knew) would go to the basement. But after they were married and Ardith was working industriously in the tenant house to make a home for the newlyweds, Father decided that she was a wonderful woman---and he said so.

Earlier dealings within the Fichter family, involving no monetary transactions, had given Edson quarter ownership of the farm operations with his brother and father. They had two tracts of land: the home farm and the south farm totaling 400 acres. The “south farm” was where his parents lived from 1894 to 1905.

Within a few days of settling in to the small house, Edson's brother, who was seven years his senior, asked him: “Don't you think we would be better brothers if you moved to the south farm next year?” During their midday meal, the somewhat mystified newlyweds decided that Edson would try to secure a teaching position at the high school level in one of the neighboring towns. That effort was unsuccessful because he had taken no college courses in education---no teachers' training. Then the couple decided, during a mid-day meal, that they would soon move back to Lincoln and Edson would return to the University of Nebraska to complete his under-graduate studies (after missing 5 semesters) and possibly become a graduate student. They realized that this move would effect a considerable change in their lives. Edson's love for the home farm area of southwest Iowa made this a hard decision. On the following day, they drove to Lincoln and contacted the chairman of the University's department of Zoology, Dr. Whitney, who encouraged Edson to stick to his plans. The Dept. of Zoology gave the newlyweds a linen shower.

The Fichters moved back to Lincoln and Edson took two education courses during summer school, thereby earning nine credit hours. Adding to those he had acquired in the late 1920s, made him eligible for receiving his Bachelor of Science degree in 1935.

As a graduate student, his first job was grading examination papers for which he was paid \$10.00 a month. Later as laboratory assistant, he received \$25.00 per month. Ardith took two courses at the university during the first semester. Inasmuch as they were living in a one-room “apartment” that cost them \$12.00 a month, to make ends meet they fed another graduate student, Elmer Hertel, two meals a day at 50 cents per meal. One evening they realized that they had only 50 cents, whereupon they went to a 25 cent movie---perhaps to seek courage in spite of hard times. The next day they

received a five-dollar bill in the mail from Edson's father, who had, before the depression, an estate in the neighborhood of \$100,000 but who, at this time, was about \$40,000 in debt.

Probably the most influential subject that he studied at the U of N was plant ecology, a relatively new but rapidly expanding discipline. It was taught by Dr. John E. Weaver, one of the pioneers in that field. Edson's enthusiasm in the context resulted, not only because of the obvious relevance of plant ecology to wildlife studies and management, but because it made him more sensitive to the living landscape.

Edson's major was zoology, with botany his first minor and entomology his second minor. He got to know the late George Hudson, who was a graduate student in zoology and an accomplished ornithologist. Edson once said to George that he, too, wanted to be an ornithologist; George responded with this advice: "You best be a biologist first."

During the summer of 1936, Edson carried out eight weeks of ecological investigations upon the arthropod fauna of spruce-fir forest in the Medicine Bow area of Wyoming. This study, part of the University of Wyoming's summer camp, was in a declared wilderness area of 771 acres. He also learned how to make mammalian study skins from a fellow student at the camp. The knowledge of making study skins was helpful because he was an assistant curator of the mammal collections in the University of Nebraska State Museum. He was also a laboratory assistant during his graduate study years. Following the study in Wyoming, he wrote his master's thesis.

Two trips (dates unknown) with others from the U. of N. State Museum were to Northwest Arkansas and to New Mexico. The former found Ralph Velich and Edson collecting small mammals, while others were collecting fossils on Abraham Lincoln Tinsley's land in Arkansas. More collecting was done in the Guadalupe Mountains in New Mexico, mostly in and near caves. Edson also prepared a few exhibits for the museum sometime in the early 1930s. Some of his work was still visible in the mid-1960s.

Edson earned a Master of Science degree in 1937. His family came from Iowa for this event.

June of 1937 found Edson and Ardith traveling with Rosemary Brewer, Doris Riisness, and Rufus Lyman, in Rufus' V8 Ford, on their way to Friday Harbor, University of Washington Oceanographic Laboratories. They had one sleeping bag and four bedrolls. Their first night out was Ardith's first time sleeping on the ground. It was cold! They bought 2 wool blankets when they got to Laramie, Wyoming. Everyone slept outside every night on the way except one rainy night when they stayed at a motel. A ferry strike caused them to miss the University of Washington boat so they took a "tramp" ferry. A nine weeks study followed (what was studied is not known). On the trip back to Nebraska they traveled through the Olympic Peninsula where they slept by a stream and it rained. They had no flashlight. The next day found them in Tillamook, Oregon, at a motel. Using two stoves, the blankets were dried out after being strung on lines in their rooms. They traveled on to the states of Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, and Colorado. Edson and Ardith thoroughly enjoyed the time they spent at Friday Harbor.

In September of that year, Edson undertook research on the invertebrate fauna of native true prairie and associated vegetational complexes in eastern Nebraska. Within the continuous, half-section tract of grassland known as Nine-mile Prairie or as Flader's Prairie, located five and one-half miles west and three miles north of Lincoln, he set up a tent laboratory and living quarters within the half-section study area and carried out his ecological study at close range during three months of the summer of 1938. In the course of two years, (4 November 1937 to 5 November 1939), his quantitative sampling took more than 85,000 specimens. Edson studied for doctoral written exams most of the summer of 1941. He received his Ph.D degree in June of 1942, after passing his final exam which took him four days of writing in October of 1941 and earning him a grade of 87.5.

Throughout the seven years of his graduate studies, Ardith's income as an employee in the Nebraska office of the National Youth Administration made it possible for him to carry on his academic endeavors and for them to live comfortably in rented apartments. Ardith typed his master's thesis, and

with help, his doctorate thesis, the latter titled “Flader’s Prairie.”

Edson's major professor, Dr. Irving H. Blake, an animal ecologist, wrote in a letter of recommendation: “Dr. Fichter carried on his studies under the writer's supervision [and] has shown himself capable of independent research. He is a naturalist at all times, devoted to the study of wildlife.”

Edson had written in his journal as a college freshmen: “I have hopes of being a naturalist some day.” Many years later, as he was jotting down his memories, he wrote: “I am now reasonably sure that when I recorded such desire in my journal I had no conception of the diversity of demands and opportunities that confront a naturalist, whether a teacher or a loner in the field, and especially the role of diversity in the living landscape---and in human creativity.”

In November of 1942 Edson applied and was enrolled with the American Red Cross as a medical entomologist. He was sent an enrollment card and was instructed to notify them if, and when he was called into military service. Within a few weeks (no dates known) he contacted the Naval office in Lincoln, Nebraska, and reported that he would like to serve as a medical entomologist in the Navy. He was subjected to a physical test in which it was found that he was slightly colorblind in the blue-green area. For that reason he was denied consideration for an assignment in the Navy.

By way of cooperative agreement by two employers (Nebraska Game, Forestation and Parks Commission and the University of Nebraska State Museum), Edson did beaver research from October 1942 to April 1943, as well as studying muskrats. Edson was assistant curator of zoology at the University of Nebraska museum during this time.

MILITARY SERVICE

Edson was drafted into the army as an “enlisted reservist” (or private) and reported to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, for active duty on 5 May 1943 via train. After five weeks of basic training in Ozark country, he was sent (after he applied) to the U.S. Army's Medical Department Enlisted Technicians School, Springfield, Missouri, to receive training in the techniques used in medical laboratories. At the end of four or twelve (conflicting info found) weeks as a student there, he was retained to serve as a laboratory instructor in a one-week course in medical entomology. To carry out that teaching effort, which lasted over a year, Edson had to start immediately collecting mosquitoes, fleas, chiggers, head lice, pubic lice, etc!”

The following poem was written while Edson was in the Army in Missouri:

SONNET FOR ARDITH

These things remember while I am away:
The mockingbird that leaned his song of love
Against a morning moon; one timeless day
Replete with spring's discoveries above
The lonesome Shingobe; the brittle pall
Of winter nights on Little Beaver Creek;
The whisper of the pines, the great owl's call,
The water-talk of paddles under Snowshoe Peak.

These silences and sounds of blue beyonds
Keep always for your memory of songs
We learned together. Now in my heart
A sweeter music beats against the bonds
Of silence that is pain: this song belongs
To you, imprisoned while we are apart. E,F.

“Shortly after Edson arrived at the Technicians school, Ardith went to Springfield, lived in an apartment and worked for the YWCA. Her husband could be with her on weekends and, eventually, was allowed to live off the Post. They found a two-room apartment in a home (which involved sharing the bathroom with the family) a few blocks from the Post.

During the year or so that they lived there, their first child was born, a girl whom they named Nancy Alice. She was born in Springfield's Burge Hospital to which they were taken by their landlady, Mrs. Ball, because they did not have a car.

Following the closure of the Technicians school early in 1945, Edson was stationed in a holding company until July. During that period he was trained to be a litter bearer and lived in a bivouac in wild country---and waited.

OZARK BIVOUAC

Morning

An amber dawn, a whip-poor-will's last cry,
A thousand eyes beholding morning sky:
No bellow here of senseless gun, no sight
Of bleeding death, no terror at the fight---
But thoughts at reveille this woodland peace belie.

Evening

A day-tired butterfly that seeks a flower---
To hover in the aura of delight
And find its rest – accentuates this hour
Of retrospect. The friendly night
Will hide my tears; for the stars will bond
My brief escape---for I must seek
A space where I can look beyond
The earth and hear the silence speak. E.F.

While in this situation, Edson had the opportunity to contact the supervising officer from the Technicians School in Springfield. That officer got him assigned to be sent to Panama City (via Camp Crowder and then Louisiana) to join four officers attached to Gorgas Memorial Laboratory, an established public health institution. They were doing research on disease-carrying insects and arachnids, related species of which were known to be, or might be, native to Japan. When, on his first day there, the officers learned that he was a scientific illustrator, he was immediately put to work preparing drawings for their publications. He also assisted in research efforts in villages and wild country outside the Canal Zone. At the end of four months or so, and after the United States had dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, he was returned to the states via airplane and given Honorable Discharge from the Army at Leavenworth on the 27th of October, 1945. Before leaving Panama City, Edson was invited by the head of Gorgas to stay with them as their scientific illustrator, and if he did, they would bring his family to live in Panama. He said something like, “Thank you, but no, thanks---I'm a high, dry country man.”

The following is an account in Edson's words describing his experiences in Panama:

“After a few days at a military post in New Orleans, I went to Panama as a “one man shipment” on a ship that was captured from the Germans during World War I and, on this trip, transporting far more men than it was built to carry.

At Gorgas Memorial Laboratory, where I was to serve as a Technician 3rd grade, I joined four

army officers---a major, a captain and two lieutenants---all of whom were doing research on the life histories of insects and arachnids that might be closely related to species known to be transmitters of diseases of humans in Japan. The purpose of such research was to determine the point in a pest's life history at which it would be most susceptible to control measures; information needed if the United States did carry out a military invasion of Japan.

Upon arrival at Gorgas, I met with the two lieutenants who, within minutes, were asking about my professional background. When I mentioned having been a scientific illustrator during the preceding seven years or so, they immediately said that my duty at Gorgas would be to prepare illustrations to be used in the publications of their findings. One of these officers soon asked me to “ink” some pencil drawings he had made to illustrate the developmental stages of an arachnid. At the start of this undertaking, it was clear that there were inaccuracies in some of his drawings. Rather than proceeding in the manner he requested, I drew the planned illustrations from the start, using a camera lucida which helps one's efforts to achieve accuracy.” After the war ended the officer and a co-author had an article on this organism published in a well-known magazine and illustrated with the drawings Edson had made at his request. The scientific illustrator was in no way identified in a Natural History publication in 1947, wherein there were eleven of Edson's drawings.

Incidentally, because of the high humidity in that part of the world, it was necessary to put drawing paper into a so-called 'dry closet' overnight. If not done, when a pen with ink was applied to it in the morning, the ink would immediately spread out slightly among the fibers of the paper so that drawing a clear-cut line was not possible.

“I also participated in some efforts regarding two species of disease-transmitting insects in the jungles outside of the canal zone, namely, (1) anopheles, the mosquito that transmits malaria, which was being suffered by many people in the villages along the Shagras River (and believe me, the two of us from Gorgas working in those villages wore heavy applications of mosquito repellent) and (2) a tiny fly that was, or thought to be, closely related to one in Japan transmitting a disease that might have the potential for weakening a military invasion. I collected specimens of this fly inside of hollow trees and once in a small, rocky cave. They were so small that they were difficult to see, even in the light cast by a miner's headlamp. This problem was overcome by making them move with a puff of cigarette smoke. Because their escape flights to another landing were quite short, one could be kept track of and captured with an inspirator.

Hollow trees were large, hollow from the ground level up to various heights, such as ten to fifteen feet, and widened at the base where an opening had formed. They were commonly called 'bat trees' because of the large number of bats typically in the cavity from dawn till dusk. Two other kinds of animals were noticeable there: (1) A scorpion of which only a few would be seen—and avoided. (2) A large cockroach in abundance, the presence of which was especially notable because of the loud clicking sound they made when disturbed---a surprising but not unpleasant chorus and a feature I most clearly remember. Another sound heard in the Panamanian jungle, one that I recall with pleasure, is the remarkably loud call of howler monkeys.

Gorgas personnel were taken into the country outside of the Canal Zone by way of the Shagras River in a carved, canoe-like boat with its motor inside and with a man named Enrique (Henry) VanHorn as the engineer. Enrique was from an island near Panama.

An important segment of our research on female anopheles mosquitoes—the vectors of malaria—was in a house in a riverside village. The walls of that home were covered inside by pages of magazines published in the United States. More than once we collected anopheles mosquitoes in that little house, quantifying the collecting by limiting it to one hour. A considerable percentage of the mosquitoes taken in this manner had within them the protozoan parasites that cause malaria. Anopheles mosquitoes were sometimes seen on the faces of napping children in that house. Upon coming to that home, we would be met at the door by the mother whose spoken message for us, immediately uttered, was always, 'No mokeetos, no mokeetos!'

Lists of the names of army personnel then [after Hiroshima bombing] eligible for returning to the U.S. began to be posted at weekly intervals. For several weeks, my name was not listed. Becoming somewhat concerned, I talked about my problem with the director of Gorgas. Almost immediately, he went to see the officer in charge of the listing and found that man, not knowing how to deal with a one-man assignment, had continued to put my papers at the 'bottom of the pile.' As a result of the director's thoughtful behavior, I was on an airplane headed for Florida the next day; within a day or two, to Georgia, then on a train that was equipped to carry military personnel, to Leavenworth, Kansas, where I was given Honorable Discharge; thence to Lincoln, Nebraska, where I was met by my wife, Ardith. Together, we went to the home of my father and sister, Mabel, in Randolph, Iowa---the home where Ardith and our baby daughter, Nancy, had been living after we left Springfield. Soon after arriving I sensed my father's devotion to Nancy, who, during her stay there, was five and six months old. Father spent much time close to her and talking to her when she was in her carriage or on a blanket spread upon the floor. Later I learned that he was especially delighted when she took her first step. After a few days in Randolph, we got ready for returning to Lincoln. A relative had offered to take us, and as we drove away, sister Mabel and our father were watching from the front yard. Sometime later Mabel told me that, as he watched us leave, he said that with Nancy gone, he had nothing to live for." [Edson's father died December 19, 1945.]

“During my time in the military, prior to going to Panama, I had four official experiences which left me variously disappointed, confused, irritated, disgusted and even angry, if not a bit frightened:

1. A so-called 'overseas' interview:

Psychologist: 'Are you married?'

My answer: 'Yes.'

Psychologist: 'Happily so?'

My answer: 'Yes.'

Psychologist: 'That's all.'

2. In the company headquarters during basic training:

A sergeant scanned a yellow sheet of paper which, along with many other data, outlined my background.

Sergeant: 'Don't worry soldier. The army will find a place for you.'

3. In turn, as one of many lined-up members of my military unit, I took a few steps to a position in front of a major and two lesser officers who were seated at a table, came to attention, saluted, and was told to stand at ease and give my name. The major quickly scanned a piece of paper, muttered: 'Another one of these,' uttered an oath, turned to each of his fellow officers and said in a loud voice: 'What are we going to do with these Ph.D.s?'

4. Following the closure of the Medical Department Enlisted Technicians School and while marking time in a holding company, I was interviewed by a Sergeant. Having produced a Medical Entomology Laboratory Manual for use in the entomology laboratory at that school, I took it with me to show to the interviewer, which I did.

Sergeant: 'Aren't you aware that the army is not interested in brains, only in bodies, preferably warm ones?' ”

A CIVILIAN AGAIN

During the autumn of 1945, Edson returned with his wife and daughter to live in Lincoln (driving a Ford Model A coupe?) They first resided at 432 North 36th. In 1947 they bought a house at 440 North 26th Street.

From October, 1945 to August, 1949, Edson had resumed working for Nebr. Game, Forestation and Parks Commission as a wildlife biologist. His principle undertaking in that capacity was a study of the effects of predation by coyotes on population levels of the ring-necked pheasant, to be carried out with Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Funds. Need for this research was felt by the Game Commission because of marked declines in populations of that game bird during the '30s resulting in political pressure by pheasant hunters to get the coyote bounty raised from \$5.00 to \$10.00 and to be paid by the Game Commission rather than by the counties. This Phase I study was carried out over a two-year period and was completed with success. The findings were reported in a paper written by three co-authors and published in 1955. Phase II of the “coyotes vs. pheasants” study was canceled by the Game Commission—ostensibly for financial reasons.

Edson was also assigned a research project on the beaver in Nebraska ('45-'49) “to evolve an effective method of controlling beaver damage that will satisfy landowners, fur takers and fur buyers, and yet not lead to extermination of the species.” This study resulted in a Nebraska Trappers' Guide, a handbook published by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission in 1948, submitted by Edson Fichter, biologist and fur investigator, and George Hytrek, trapper.

While he was a Nebraska wildlifer, Edson also did the following: 1. Assisted in planning and completing a wildlife research laboratory. 2. Worked on a study of feeding patterns of coyotes in Nebraska with George Schildman, and J. Henry Sather. Their 1947 data was published in Ecological Monographs in January, 1955. 3. Put an extensive coyote stomach collecting program into operation involving 48 private coyote hunters and 16 group wildlife organizations; collected about 50 coyote stomachs. 4. Attended a North American Wildlife Conference in St. Louis, Missouri. 5. Was on a one-day “cruise” in Nebraska National Forest on March 2, 1948. 6. Designed more than 5,700 trappers' report cards and mailed them, also in March of 1948.

Sometime during the latter half of the '40s, Edson served as the editor of Nebraska Bird Review, but only for a short time because he enlarged the journal by including articles about birds---an augmentation that was officially considered to be too expensive. As the leader of “birding” field trips on weekend mornings during this same period, Edson became aware of a practice that was somewhat less than instructive: some of the participants would have decided, before the trip began, what species of birds they would see---and so they saw or heard those birds despite their absence!

The Fichter's second daughter, Sarah Jane, was born in December of 1948. When her arrival was imminent, Edson hurried to get their car, but could not get the garage door open. He called their friends, David and Margaret Damon, who came immediately and took them in their car to the hospital in Lincoln.

The decision not to fund further the coyote study came in June of 1949; the four Fichter's moved to Pocatello, Idaho, three months later in response to a letter from a friend telling of an opportunity for joining the faculty of Idaho State College and teaching in the Department of Zoology, but making no mention of what the rank and salary would be. For a second time, a major change in their lives was decided upon by Ardith and Edson during a midday meal---a decision considerably facilitated by their having seen some of Idaho on their way to Washington in the summer of 1937.

On their way from Lincoln to Pocatello in a black Chevrolet Club Coupe, 8-month-old Sarah would have her bottle of milk heated on the engine of the car during roadside stopovers. They arrived a day before the movers brought their household goods, so they stayed in a motel. The movers arrived on August 31, 1949, to 256 South 11th Avenue (their home for almost 50 years) traveling about 1,000 miles for a cost of \$595.07.

Edson began teaching at Idaho State College in the Department of Zoology---a three person

faculty, with Rufus Lyman, chairman. There were about 1,250 students in the college and Edson had 15% of them in his first class—Introduction to Zoology. Apparently someone at registration had not monitored the numbers for class sizes.

For a few years, Assistant Professor Fichter taught several courses, but as the number of faculty members increased he was able to develop emphasis on a few courses: those often referred to as field biology and more in keeping with his special interests of mammalogy, ornithology, entomology, ecology, animal behavior and conservation. He was promoted to Professor of Zoology in April of 1959 and to the Graduate Faculty in 1965. He was on sabbatical leave from ISU during the second semester of 1968.

Students' views of Edson Fichter (which he had titled, "Glory Be" when starting his memoirs.)

In an unsigned letter: "You are the most Christlike teacher I have ever had ."

Somewhat violently: "You are the most unfair teacher I have ever had." (A bit of inquiry found that this young man was flunking all his courses.)

to Dr. Fichter: "It would be difficult if not impossible to enumerate the many ways in which you have enriched my life."

to Dr. Fichter, "We have long admired your interest and talents in the field of wild life and art, and we wish you many more successful years in these endeavors."

"There are many students on campus who admire you for your use of the knowledge you have gained and conscientiousness as a teacher in teaching and toward the students."

"I have never adequately expressed to you my gratitude and appreciation for your influence, insights, and support during my years at ISU. I want you to know that it was your patience and skill as a teacher that helped me most at that time."

"I stormed into your office to protest some silly grade that I thought was unfair. It had to do with proper spelling and terminology in naming parts and processes concerning the course. You calmly explained to me why these were important, but moreover, you taught me something that I have never forgotten. I think I learned something from that meeting that changed my entire attitude about the value of learning for its own sake."

"I remember in 1970 when a small group met to bring about an environmental awareness to the public in Pocatello. A great deal has happened since then. Some of us went on to wildlife and environmental jobs as a result of our awareness. It is with deep appreciation that I joined that small group, that you provided the initial stimulus for me, and that I now work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a biologist."

When asked to write a letter of recommendation for a student's graduate study and not wanting the closing statement to be "not graduate material" Edson instead wrote this: "It may be that this department has failed to develop a climate in which this student could do his best---a situation perhaps evidenced when a graduate student changed major professors (which the department allowed)." This student eventually earned his PhD and was involved with river and riparian systems; he also worked in the management and protection of the high deserts of the west.

Edson's comments: "As I sat just under the crest of a big basalt ridge in the Pahsimeroi valley watching pronghorns, a summer storm was forming over the lost River Range northwest of Borah Peak. As the clouds darkened and their shadows moved easterly across the upper Pahsimeroi river valley, I felt an elemental self, a longing for the lost years, an uncertain glimpse of faces, a vague hope probing the mystery of what was yet to be, but above all, a special serenity mixed with exhilaration of the moment. Withdrawal? Perhaps. But, "yes" or "no," of little consequence then or now. Only in remembering that aloneness has confronted me with that question.

Instead of hurrying off the ridge as I would have done if there had been lightning, I moved cautiously down a rocky game trail. No evidence of the presence of my own species except myself. I have not the slightest notion if I was experiencing self-awareness---what everyone is supposed to seek in these latter days."

MAHOGANY CREEK

Beyond these hills in memory now
I walk among the elms of Honey Creek
where first I knew the way
of nature's stillness in my life.
Across the moonlit waters of a northland lake
I hear the haunting cries of loons
giving voice to wildness in the night.
I sense the loneliness of country roads
that were part of boyhood home.
A rolling plain of sandhills
reaches far beyond its measureless horizon
and calls to me
with tranquil thoughts of solitude.
I watch the evening come to prairie hills
and feel the hush of twilight
quieting the fields of homeland.

Among these hills I found
the culmination of all those treasured years.

Keeping in mind that Edson Fichter was a perfectionist extraordinaire, the following are some of his experiences with "people being people" during his teaching career:

While teaching full time, he was once assigned half-time to the museum without any reduction in teaching load. At the museum, while identifying small mammal skulls and jaw bones found in digs, Edson and a student (who had an artificial right hand) requested from the appropriate authority that a pen with a finer point was needed because of the smallness of some of the specimens. The answer: "No." Edson bought an appropriate pen locally for \$5.00 and used it for many years thereafter. This occurred in the early 1960s.

Members of the Scholarship Committee listened politely to the earnest plea of a young man who had been dismissed from the college because of low grades. After the young fellow left the room, the chairman, who was a dean, said he knew this boy's father and that man would be very pleased if the committee voted to allow his son to return as a student, where upon the chairman was asked this question: "What if his father was a shepherd in the Sawtooth Mountains and none of us knew him?"

A professor at Idaho State College was once heard to say: "Do as I say, not as I do."

The president of ISC once requested that the college photographer, Lloyd Furniss, and Edson secure the information and photos for a pamphlet telling about all of the creativity being effected by faculty members whether it was relevant to the subjects they were teaching or not. They found much more creativity than was generally apparent on the campus and spent hundreds of hours contacting their colleagues to request that they each write what they wanted to be printed about their creative efforts and to photograph both the people and the evidence of their creativeness. When their compilation was ready for publication, they thoroughly described it to a committee of which a dean was a member. When they told this group of faculty members that the estimated cost of publishing the pamphlet would be \$1,800, the dean said: "You can't sell anything with pictures," thereby junking the pamphlet.

AWAY FROM CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

Summer 1950: Edson was project leader (volunteer) for a biological survey at the National Reactor Testing Station (now Idaho National Engineering Laboratory) for the Atomic Energy Commission (now Dept. of Energy). What was to be a 30-year study was terminated after 10 weeks. The time his team of ten spent in the field amounted to 10-16 hour days.

Montpelier, Idaho, February 20, 1951, he was invited to speak at the Bear Lake Soil Conservation District banquet and program. This was held at the Burgoyne Hotel. According to the invitation, Edson was to impress people that the problem of soil and water conservation concerns everyone, not just the farmer.

In 1952, the American Society of Range Management held its fifth annual meeting in Boise, Idaho. Edson presented a paper titled "Jack Rabbits and Prairie Dogs: Control Measures and Effects of Range Lands." After returning to his seat in the front row, the editor of the Journal of Range Management sat down beside Edson and said that he wanted to publish his paper. This appeared in the Journal of Range Management in 1953.

Also in 1952, Edson went to Salmon River country with Rufus Lyman, Al Taylor and J. Bentley to learn mountain goat country with S. Brandborg. This was in preparation for a mountain goat hunt.

A study was undertaken in 1953 and 1954 to obtain information on mourning doves breeding densities and reproductive success in orchards. The field work was conducted in four old orchards located a few miles southwest of American Falls (near Aberdeen) in Power County, Idaho. Some bird-banding and coo counts took place during those summers. Edson's research was published in the Journal of Wildlife Management in 1959.

During the summer of 1954, Edson took several thousand feet of 16mm color film of wildlife and farming operations for the Portneuf Soil Conservation District. The resulting film, for which he wrote the narration, was titled "We Are All Neighbors." He was expertly helped by Marshall Edson.

In 1955+, Edson was one of 500 lunar observers from Hudson Bay to Panama learning more about the migratory habits of birds. The observation station (the only one in Idaho) was in the driveway of his home, with a comfortable chair, his telescope and warm blankets for night work looking at the moon. These stations were manned two days before and two days after a full moon, while the night of the full moon in March, April, May, September and October was "target night." The object of this work was to see birds "flying across the moon" through the telescope. One bird a minute indicated that there are a tremendous number of birds in the air during darkness, and they are all flying singly except waterfowl. Studies similar to this one have shown that nocturnal migration (safer from predators and more stable air) begins soon after dark and builds up to a peak shortly before midnight, then gradually dwindles to essentially none by dawn.

Also in 1955, Edson studied salting in relation to deer and elk for the Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game.

Following are Edson's words about a radio show: "Later in 1955 or early in 1956, I was invited

by a Pocatello radio station to undertake a 15-minute presentation, primarily on wildlife, once a week. I was glad to do so, but refused to have a sponsor, so my series of broadcasts (which I labeled 'Wildlife Scrapbook') was terminated after the 13th week.

In one of those sessions, I was critical of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's attitude---which I stated was political---toward coyote control. Not long after that presentation, I was visited, in my home, by a man from Fish and Game. He was a fellow with whom I was well acquainted having carried on wildlife work together in Nebraska. He reported that I was being offered a summer job, inasmuch as I was not teaching in summer school. He said that research was needed on three species, including the pronghorn---which I chose---whereupon he said that data were needed on the reproductive success of the pronghorn (which he called antelope!)” The result of this conversation was the aforementioned years of Edson's life with pronghorns as a “Field Consultant.”

During one of these busy summers, Edson participated in an archeological dig in the Little Lost River Valley (year unknown). Some observations were made in the Warm Springs drainage, Camas National Wildlife Refuge and National Reactor Testing Station.

June 20, 1958 found the Fichter family in McCall, Idaho. Edson gave a speech to the Idaho State Pharmaceutical Association, titled “An Old Tranquilizer.” The main emphasis of his topic was the interdependence of humans and all other forms of life; wilderness can teach man, if he chooses to learn, about his dependence on the total community of living things.

On this trip, to and from McCall, with the family traveling in a yellow GMC Carry-All, Edson collected reptiles and amphibians. One night, camp was made in an area of southwest Idaho without access to water. The drone of jets and booming sounds could be heard; the next day, the family learned that they had been parked on or near a military practice bombing range!

Some time during the early 1960s, Lawrence B. McQueen, a graduate student, spent two summers in the field with Edson studying the relationship of golden eagles to pronghorn antelope. Edson said, “He was one of the best field ornithologists I've ever worked with---he knew more about where birds are likely to nest than the birds did.” McQueen also illustrated hummingbirds, as well as birds of the garden of the U.S. and Canada.

Edson was a member of the Non-game Advisory Committee for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for 8 years.

MUSEUM

During Dr. Fichter's second year (1950-1951) on the faculty of Idaho State College, its president established a Museum Committee. Edson was named chairman (for 1952-1954) in view of his experiences in the museum at the Univ. of Nebraska. This committee was assigned the task of designing the floor plan for a museum in the basement of the new library building. It did so, and had it drawn by a professional architect. Edson and the 12-member committee, which had unanimously approved of the plan, presented it to the assigner; he looked at it for a minute or so, then said, “No. Here is my plan.” Also, as chairman, Edson was automatically in charge of the college's museum program, which at that time was evidenced only by two or three glass “candy counters” containing little more than unrelated keepsakes. These counters were being stored in the then Student Union building. Largely invisible were many museum items variously scattered among several of the institution's departments or inappropriately stored, such as within one half of the stadium which was---at least once---broken into and some of the museum materials damaged by vandals. The several thousand specimens in the museum collections were almost single-handedly catalogued by Dr. Sven Liljebld.

A new library was built in 1954 and the original plans did not call for a basement. The college president took steps to have one included to allow for a progressive museum program. With that development, Edson was in charge of securing equipment for effectively storing museum specimens, but was told by a dean that the equipment he had ordered would not serve their needs. In his own words, “Some time after that assignment was made, the 'appropriate authority' told a dean to take charge of the museum, but did not tell me he had done so. I soon knew what is meant by “total

frustration” resulting from having all of my ideas and logistic results tossed aside---and could not help wondering about the standards of administration.”

Prof. William Kitaj, Prof. Merrill D. Beal, and Dr. Fichter scraped heavy accumulations of dried mud from the concrete floor of the basement in the new library building---about 10,000 square feet. Remaining dust was removed with a vacuum sweeper by Edson following which the floor was mopped by a crew of students provided by Maintenance.

The date for officially opening the museum was set by the administration. The timing of that event was made known to Edson by the president two weeks in advance. With this direction, Fichter and Liljeblad hurriedly prepared exhibits representing the projected divisions of the museum program in the aforementioned old glass display cases during that two week period. They completed the preparations about one hour before the doors were scheduled to open.

Dr. Fichter was formally named Curator of Mammalogy in the Museum on 1 November 1959 by Director Earl H. Swanson, whose letter informing Edson of this action stated: “Recognition of your many efforts to establish and develop this museum are long overdue on the part of the college, and perhaps when the new president is appointed we can establish a clear policy with respect to curatorial positions in the museum which will result in more concrete benefits than are at present possible.”

This appointment was officially recognized by the State Board of Education three years later; on 28 January 1963. President Donald E. Walker wrote the following in a letter to Fichter: “This title, Professor of Zoology and Curator of Mammalogy, Idaho State College Museum, designates the responsibilities which you have been carrying out without additional pay.” No decrease in teaching load was effected.

In the spring of 1962, Edson was considered for director of the museum, but he knew he had no aptitude for administration and that being head man would have kept him away from the studies in which he was most happy.

The following activities were carried out for the museum by Edson over a period of about 20 years:

Designing storage and display facilities.

Designing and preparing some of the displays---”Horns and Antlers, Wanting to Know”

Building (with little financial support) reference collections of amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals, the latter including skeletal material.

(A room in which vertebrate specimens could be prepared was made available in the basement of the Pharmacy building by the late Dr. Laurence E. Gale, then Dean of the College of Pharmacy.)

Curating the bird and mammal collections, and moving them five times involving four campus buildings.

Identifying skeletal remains of birds and mammals secured in archeological digs in support of archeological research: perhaps most time was given to this.

Two students who aided in these last two efforts were in the Work Study Program of the Department of Biology.

Preparing relatively small and “scattered” exhibits in the ISC/U museum, and a series of very small exhibits for a window in a business building in downtown Pocatello.

Preparing a Monarch butterfly exhibit with help by Nancy Cole. This exhibit was borrowed by the Utah Museum of Natural History.

Edson and Marty Ahart organized a Bird Art Show for Cooper Ornithological Society, at which time, he got to know John Pitcher.

During his teaching career, a departmental colleague confronted Edson with the view that he was more naturalist than he was scientist. Edson was glad that it was evident!

MONARCH---A MILKWEED BUTTERFLY

In response to an invitation given by the director of the ISU museum in the summer of 1981, Edson prepared a major exhibit with the above title which took 8 weeks to set up with the help of student, Nancy Cole. This Lepidopteran had interested him for 65 years or so and he had secured 740 35mm slides during that summer. The exhibit was on display from April 1 to October 30, 1982. An unusually large number of people attended the opening during which Edson gave a slide show with narration and/or poetry and slides of the Monarch. An outgrowth of that exhibit was its being loaned to the University of Utah Museum of Natural History in response to a request from that institution. An evaluation of the Monarch exhibit and slide show was expressed in a letter from the Curator of Exhibits at the Utah museum to the Director of the Idaho museum:

“...I still want to extend my thanks to you, your staff, and especially Dr. Edson Fichter for allowing us to show your incredibly popular exhibit. What will be remembered most long after it comes down is its charming beauty and sheer delight. Thank you very much for loaning to us what became the most popular exhibit during the calendar year of 1982.”

Ten years later, Edson wrote, “The enthusiasm expressed in that letter reflects the widespread popularity of the Monarch throughout much of North America---and possibly out of concern for the future of these insects in view of the destruction that much of its wintering habitat in Mexico is suffering at the hands of man.”

SLIDE SHOWS

Edson's seventeen slide shows, with narration and/or poetry, were crafted from the early 60's to 1990. He had 173 audiences ranging from first grade pupils to retirees, the Southeast Idaho District Medical Society and Sigma Xi, from Vancouver, B.C. To Rio Rico (near Nogales), Arizona. Some of the titles of these shows were: The Language of Silence, Look with Wonder, Backyard Birds, Butterflies in Your Own Backyard, Behavior of The Pronghorn, Sweet Diversity, and Let Nature Be Your Teacher.

PAINTED LADY---THE THISTLE BUTTERFLY

In April of 1991 (or 1992?), one of the largest painted lady butterfly migrations of the century fluttered through Bannock, Power and Twin Falls counties of Idaho. Thick swarms of the salmon orange and black butterflies could be seen several hundred feet in the air. This migration covered an area perhaps from the Pacific coast to Idaho's eastern border on their way from Mexico and Arizona to Canada. Edson and Ardith observed this scene in their backyard, many being sighted one day and thousands the next. After three or four days all were gone except some which may have stayed in Pocatello to lay their eggs in thistle plants and then die. Similar migrations have occurred in the Pacific Northwest in 1956, 1958, 1966 and 1973. It will likely happen again.

Edson collected 27 species of butterflies on the residential property of South 11th, most of them in the backyard. They were probably attracted by the considerable variety of flowering plants cultivated there—exemplified by the presence of a California tortoise Shell on the flowers of the Michaelmas daisy.

GRADUATE FACULTY

In 1957, Edson was appointed to the Graduate Faculty at Idaho State College. In his words, “I enjoyed being the major professor for graduate students doing research to earn Master of Science degrees.” His promotion to Professor of Zoology came in April of 1959.

Here are his words about having graduate students: “There is an element of excitement in seeing them discover the diversity of demands and approaches to scholarly investigations, resulting choice of

procedures, their willingness to change procedures in response to discoveries, and developing the discipline that keeps one from diverging from the central problems in response to the discovery of tangents exciting enough to lead to digressions from the research that is under way.” He found this quite a different atmosphere than that which soon developed while lecturing to a group, especially a large one, in which some, if not most, of the students were not interested.

During the second semester in 1961, Edson took a sabbatical leave to study pronghorns on winter range with Errol Nielson of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

He also declined appointment to chairmanship of the Dept. of Zoology.

Edson's open-ended study of pronghorn behavior began in 1963, prompting another sabbatical leave during the second semester of 1968.

The total of all his pronghorn research was over 300,000 words of field notes!

Within the 19-year period of the study of pronghorns, Edson took 11,300 feet of 16 mm color motion picture film. A black-and white version was secured via Hollywood. Michael Perry, then Director of the ISU Museum, helped with considerable skill and enthusiasm to put together a black-and-white 28-minute movie titled “Watching Pronghorns” for which Edson wrote the narrative. Thereupon, support for having a color version produced in Hollywood could not be found on the ISU campus. “Watching Pronghorns” was put in a drawer!

IDAHO STATE COLLEGE became IDAHO STATE UNIVERSITY on July 1, 1963, by action of the 37th Idaho Legislature.

~RETIREMENT 1975~

Edson reflects: “I retired in 1975 after teaching biological subjects at ISC/ISU for 26 years. During the earlier years of the 70's, I found myself 'riding in opposite directions.' I was enjoying what I was doing and looking forward to not doing it anymore.”

In March of 1975, Edson was chosen by the Silver Jansel Chapter of Mortar Board, to be Professor of the Month. He received this recognition for his “ability to make the subject matter relevant to the student's life, [his] preparation for class, willingness to spend time outside of class with the students, and outside community endeavors.”

Also in March, Edson and Bob Autenreith published their monograph on pronghorn fawn behavior.

His retirement from teaching earned him Professor Emeritus status.

The President of ISU stated at graduation: “The ultimate success of a teacher such as Dr. Fichter lies with the hundreds of students he has taught, counseled and advised. The patience, wisdom and kindness he has given those students will always be his most lasting and cherished contribution.”

In February of 1975, Edson gave a talk (to whom is uncertain), in favor of hiring an ethologist as his replacement in the department, stating some good examples of how studies in animal behavior had resulted in better range management and in the natural regulation of animal members.

HUNTING WITH A CAMERA

Edson and a friend went hunting for deer in the Pahsimeroi valley. Both hunters had the experience of shooting a deer most likely in their antlers and having the animals fall down but then soon get up and run out of sight. No amount of searching could locate either deer.

After that experience, Edson decided that was his last hunt with a gun. Here are his words: “Although I had been photographing wild creatures for some years, it now became a considerably increased joy in my life...stalking and hiding to take a wild animal's picture was more exciting and fun. During the field seasons of spring and fall, from 1956 to 1979, I took 1,024 35mm slides of pronghorns.

During the mid-80's, a female Sharp-shinned Hawk frequented our backyard during two and a

half winters. I took 501 slides of her, some as close as 10-12 feet.

I cannot resist adding a bit about my photographic response to a universal but non-living feature of our habitat: clouds. My plastic print files contain 329 slides of clouds. For the last few years I have had to struggle with myself to keep from photographing more clouds.”

ARTIST

Edson began showing the beginnings of artistic talent as a boy when he started out with pencil drawings of “stick people,” farm machinery, and houses. Among his favorite things to draw were animals, birds, butterflies, scenery, flowers. In his teens and early twenties he used watercolors as well as pencils.

After high school, his pen, ink, charcoal and block printing were used for drama programs, note cards, student directories, letterheads and invitations---just to name a few.

MUSICIAN

Edson took piano lessons as a boy but always played by ear. He sang in a quartet at his brother's wedding in 1924 at age 14. In high school he performed in plays and operettas, and played the trumpet in the school band. During the Depression, he played the drums with several different dance bands. As an adult, he sang tenor in at least three church choirs. He directed Pocatello's Methodist Church Choir for eight years, refusing payment.

WILDLIFE ARTIST---THE BEGINNING

The 7th Biennial Pronghorn Antelope Workshop for 1976 was held in Twin Fall, Idaho, and Bob Autenrieth was the chairman. Earlier in 1975, he requested that Edson prepare a drawing for the front cover of the printed program of that meeting. Together they chose a 35mm slide of a doe being courted by a mature buck. When Erica Craig, then a university student at ISU and now a prominent wildlife artist, saw his drawing, she enthusiastically told Edson that he should have prints made for sale. He did, and they were soon selling for \$10.00 per print. This was the beginning of his being a wildlife artist, with responses such as the following: “Thanks Edson for sharing your work and happiness with wildlife with us” and: “We do thank you for adding beauty and pleasure to our home and our lives.”

INVITED

Edson taught Biological Illustration at the Department of Zoology (or Biology) in 1976.

Beginning in the fall of 1982, Edson was invited to teach a non-credit course in Museum Illustration requested by the staff of the ISU Museum of Natural History. This class was available for students and non-students. It was held once a week in the evening with up to 10 students in each 10-week course. Edson convinced many people that they didn't need to be artists to enroll.

The drawing procedure taught, with the objective of obtaining reality, especially of animals, was tracing the image of the desired object as it appeared in a 35mm slide projected in preferred size and position on the drawing paper. One can be assured that this tracing is followed by much free-hand drawing with charcoal pencils on stipple board and at other times with pastel pencils.

(Some professional artists are opposed to this method. However, the position that any technique that gets the results one wants is right and must be respected since “freedom” is the necessary context for creativity.)

All who completed the course (several hundred folks) came out drawing! Many beautiful pictures came out of the class.

On several occasions, Edson was assisted by Loy Burgemeister or Suzi Johnson, both accomplished artists. At Edson's request, Loy taught the class after 14 groups had already participated. Suzi taught the class in the early 1990s.

ARTWORK PRINTED IN PUBLICATIONS

- Edson had drawn covers for, or had artwork printed for, the following:
- 1943: Christmas card and newsletter, Randolian Players drama programs, Randolph Garden Club and covers for Nebraska Academy of Sciences, including 1946 issue
 - 1948: Drawings and diagrams in the Nebraska Trappers Guide book
 - 1948: December Wildlife Management Notes; Nebraska Game, Forestation and Parks Commission
 - 1951: Cover for ISU Golden Year anniversary, Parents and Patrons Day and a Student/Faculty Directory. Also another cover for the Nebraska Academy of Sciences.
 - 1975: June, Progress Report INEL Site; Radioecology-Ecology Report
 - 1976 or '78: Pronghorn Antelope Workshop, on cover: buck courting doe drawing; inside: pronghorn montage.
 - 1978: Program for A. Errol Nielson's retirement from Idaho Fish and Game
 - 1980: Gary Copeland's study on antelope buck breeding and behavior in Idaho Fish and Game Wildlife Bulletin
 - 1981: Bob Autenreith's Sage Grouse Management in Idaho
 - 1982: Bureau of Land Management, Little Lost and Birch Creek Antelope Habitat Management Plan
 - 1984: Cover for Linder/Fichter book: "The Amphibians and Reptiles of Idaho" (museum)
 - 1985: Illustration of bedding cover of a fawn in Idaho Wildlife Magazine
 - 1985 and '86; Black-footed ferret drawings for Wyoming "Wild Times"
 - 1985 and '87: Covers for TEBIWA, ISU Museum publishing
 - 1986: Montage of endangered species for National Science Week
Butterfly wing on the cover of Idaho Wildlife magazine
 - 1986: Black-Footed Ferret drawings for "Great Basin Naturalist Memoirs" BYU
 - 1986: Nov./Dec. Issue of Idaho Wildlife magazine article about backyard birding:
"An Enriching Relationship" by Ardith and Edson Fichter; bird photos, a pastel of a hawk, and poem: 'Eden Beyond'
 - 1986: Montage highlighting the diversity of the ISU Museum on the cover of TEBIWA, the museum's annual journal.
 - 1987: "Lone Goat" for cover of Idaho Librarian
 - 1988: Idaho Wildlife Montage for Idaho's Non-game/Endangered Species Program, for sale @ \$60.00---advertisement on back cover of Idaho Wildlife magazine.
Edson's photo of a robin in this issue with article "Christmas Bird Counts" by Wayne Melquist
 - 1991: "Idaho Bird Distribution" by Stephens and Sturts, museum publication
 - 1992: Friends of the Museum article for October, single mountain lion from montage
 - 1995: Spring issue of Idaho Wildlife magazine editorial about poets and Edson, with his Idaho Wildlife Montage and three of his poems. The end of the editorial said,
"Peace, Edson, and thank you."
 - 1996 or later...Edson Fichter Nature Area pamphlet

The following publications with Edson's art have no known dates:

- American Avocet---stationery for Non-game Wildlife Advisory Committee
- "Faculty Focus" cover for ISU biology illustrating the various departments.
- ISU Archaeological Field School (Bighorn)
- Cover for prospective students at Speech/Language Pathology and Audiology, ISU

Sawtooth Poetry and Prose, Twin Falls, College of Southern Idaho, cover:
Antelope Fawn Montage
A much-larger-than-life chigger on the cover of a pamphlet for ISU graduate
study in biology.
Letterhead for (1) Portneuf Environmental Associates, drawing of local mountains,
(2) Pocatello Zoological Society, Inc., antelope portrait
(3) Idaho Audubon Council, four ruffed grouse
Montage for Bob Autenrieth's horse study, 1978-1980
Small poster to advertise his book, "Pahsimeroi"
Notecards with endangered animal in the state of Idaho configuration

Bobcat, bighorn ram, pronghorn buck and coyote images from Edson's drawings printed for
note cards and beverage mugs, compliments of his son-in-law, Corey L. Dillon

ART SHOWS

1963 Horns and Antlers display at ISU's Museum of Natural History
1976 Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society
1977 Edson and Marty Ahart prepared a Wildlife Art Exhibit at ISU's Transition Gallery.
1978 Pot Belly Arts, Pocatello
1980 Show with George H. Lambson
1981 Wilderness Art Show at ISU's Transition Gallery
1982 Herrett Museum, College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, May 11-June 17
Artists featured: Joe Dadabay from Caldwell and Edson Fichter from Pocatello
1983 Standrod Mansion, four artists from southeast Idaho: George Wise, Anne Marie Oborn,
Hayden Lambson, and Dr. Edson Fichter
1985 International Arts Gallery, Pocatello. Edson's photos on sale to benefit the ISU Museum.
1985 Idaho Wildlife Art Show, Boise, November, featured artist: Mario Fernandez. Other artists
included Edson Fichter, Erica Craig, Hayden Lambson. It was an all art media show.
1986 Art Festival at Hawthorne Junior High, Pocatello, Idaho
1986 A request via letter from Artists Unlimited, Boise, for Edson's art for the Owyhee Hotel
dining room: The Gamekeeper Room. Whether his prints became part of the décor is not
known.
1989 Art Festival, "Celebrating Idaho's Centennial" at ISU's Transition Gallery with slide show
"Remembering"
1090 Artist of the Month at Boise, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Headquarters
No dates for the following:
Station Square, Pocatello
YWCA 'Starving Artists' show
Birds of Prey Festival, Boise

RESEARCH and PUBLICATIONS

1939: The dusky pocket mouse in Iowa. Journal of Mammalogy
An ecological study of Wyoming spruce-fir arthropods with special reference to
stratification. Ecological Monographs
1940: Studies of North American Solpugida, I and II. The true identity of Eremobates pullipes
and a second species of solpugid from Nebraska. The Midland American
Naturalist
1941: Apparatus for the comparison of soil surface arthropod populations. Ecology.
1942: Notes on a pale variation in the ground squirrel. (with L.D. Davis) Journal of Heredity

- Migration and distribution of the solitary sandpiper in Nebraska. Nebraska Bird Review (with M.H. Swenk)
- The role of owl pellet analyses in faunistics. Nebraska Bird Review
- 1943: M.S. Thesis research, ecological study of arthropods in spruce-fir forest, Wyoming
- ???? 1943: Ph.D. Thesis research, ecological study of invertebrates of grassland and deciduous shrubs savanna, Nebraska
- Wildlife Research Biologist, Nebraska Game, Forestation and Parks Commission:
 Fur Resources Survey: 1942-32, 1945-37
 Coyote-pheasant relationships: 1947-1949
- 1947: The Goss lemming mouse, Univ. of Nebraska, State Museum (with M. F. Hansen)
- 1947 & '49: Management of native deer in Nebraska (with J.H. Wampole) Wildlife Management Notes, Nebraska Game, Forestation and Parks Commission
- 1950: Watching Coyotes. Journal of Mammalogy
 Project Leader, Biological survey of the Atomic Energy Commission National Reactor Testing Station, ten weeks, summer 1950
- 1951 Management of mule deer in Nebraska National Forest. Journal of Wildlife Management (with L.L. Mohler and J.H. Wampole)
- 1951-1953: Reproductive success of the Mourning Dove
- 1953: Control of jack rabbits and prairie dogs on range lands. Journal of Range Management
 The occurrence of the black-footed ferret in Nebraska. Journal of Mammalogy (with J.K. Jones, Jr.)
- 1954: An ecological study of invertebrates of grassland and deciduous shrub savanna in eastern Nebraska. American Midland Naturalist
- 1955: Some feeding patterns of coyotes in Nebraska (with G. Schildman and J. H. Sather) Ecology Monograph
- 1959: Mourning dove production in Idaho orchards and some possible implications. Journal of Wildlife Management
- 1960: A red-headed woodpecker seen in Idaho. TEBIWA, Museum publication
- 1956-1962: Population dynamics of the pronghorn
- 1961: Nesting of the house finch at Pocatello, Idaho. (with V.E. Jones) TEBIWA, Museum publication
- 1964: The pallid bat in Idaho. TEBIWA, Museum publication
 The Amphibians of Idaho and The Reptiles of Idaho (with Dr. Allan D. Linder) Special publications of the Idaho State University Museum.
- 1967: Distribution and status of the red fox in Idaho (with R. Williams, Supervisor of Big Game, Dept. of F&G. Journal of Mammalogy
- date? An annotated list of the birds of the upper drainage of the Little Lost and Pahsimeroi Rivers, Idaho (with L.B. McQueen, student)
- date? A brief account of the pronghorn's behavior and social organization for inclusion in the book, "Mammalian Social Groups" for which Dr. John B. Calhoun assembled contributions.
- 1968: First specimen records of the dunlin and snowy plover in Idaho (with G.R. Downing), The Condor
- 1970: Book: "The Reptiles of Idaho" (with A.D. Linder). A special publication of the ISU Press
- 1971: On the bedding behavior of pronghorn fawns. International Symposium on the

Behaviour of Ungulates and its Relation to Management, the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.
1975: On the behavior and socialization of pronghorn fawns (with R. E. Autenreith). Wildlife Monographs
1977: The Amphibians and Reptiles of Idaho (with A. D. Linder) ISU Press
1985: Duplication of molars in a pronghorn (with A. M. Eskelsen) TEBIWA
date? Pronghorn groups: On social organization.
date? Pronghorn groups: On seasonal changes in size and composition.

BOOK REVIEWS

“Wild Animals of North America” M.B. Grosvenor, editor. National Geographic Society. In Journal of the Idaho Academy of Science, 1969

“The Oregon Desert” by E.R. Jackman and R.A. Long. In PNLA Quarterly, 1964

“The Grizzly Bear: Portraits of Life” by B.D. Haynes and E. Haynes, editors. PLNA Quarterly, No. 32.

PRESENTATIONS

Montpelier, Idaho, 2-20-51, banquet for Bear Lake Soil Conservation District.

Boise, Idaho, 1952, topic: “Control of Jack Rabbits and Prairie Dogs on Range Lands” to the American Society of Range Management

McCall, Idaho, 1958, Topic: The interdependence of humans and all other life.

Pocatello, Whittier School PTA, 1959: “What Do You Want?”

Logan, Utah, 1-16-64, Logan, Utah, USU, Sigma Xi

U.S. FOREST SERVICE:

- (1) Boise, Idaho, 3-23-65, Wildlife Habitat and Resources Meeting. Topic: Non-game birds: their ecology and place in wild-land management and activities.
- (2) Pocatello, Idaho, 3-17-66, meeting of USFS personnel. Topic: Predation
- (3) Lowman, Idaho, 5-5-67, Annual Ranger Meeting. Topic: Non-game birds, ecology and predator control.

Pocatello, Idaho, 4-8-67, Annual Meeting of the Idaho Wildlife Federation. Topic: “Sagebrush Eradication.”

ISU, 3-4-70, Faculty Seminar, “The Noble Art of Losing Face” (observation by naturalists).

Poem of same title by Piet Hein, a prophet and poet:

“The noble art of losing face may one day save the human race
and turn into eternal merit what weaker minds would call disgrace.”

Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 11-2 to 5-71, participated in the International Symposium on the Behavior of Ungulates and its relation to management.

Billings, Montana, 6-22-72, Fifth Biennial Antelope States Workshop. Topic: On the Nature of Pronghorn Groups. Traveled with Bob Autenreith, Errol Nielson, and Hadley Roberts (USFS).

Jasper Park Lodge, Alberta, Canada, 5-24-78, with Bob Autenreith. Topic: Is Trophy Hunting Fostering “Unnatural” Selection For Smaller, Less Vigorous and Non-territorial Pronghorn Bucks?

Rio Rico (near Nogales), Arizona, 1980, with Bob Autenreith, topic: Pronghorn Groups.

Pocatello, Idaho, October 1983, topic: “Pronghornography” which included the “environmental imprinting of fawns.”

Following are quotes from recipients of Edson's speeches and research:

“You have sensed the spiritual values that spring from faithful stewardship of the land and the

life that it supports.”

“Wise use of the land...is an extension of ethics, an expression of stewardship and spirituality.”

“In its broadest sense, ecology is the study of everything on earth---and it has been said that 'every study, in the final analysis, is an ecological study'.”

“...man is a part of nature...and since we can control so much...it is dependent upon us in a very special sense.”

In February of 1991, a scholarship for wildlife biology students was established in Edson's name through the Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society. He was present for the announcement and was very pleased.

