



EDWIN MEYER LOEB  
1894 - 1966

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Edwin Loeb died on August 16, 1966 at the age of seventy-two while vacationing with his wife, Ella Marie, in Santa Monica, California. In the spring of 1963 he suffered a stroke from which he did not fully recover. Despite the stroke's crippling effects and the embarrassment he endured by being dependent on a wheelchair, Loeb remained a spiritually lively, gentle and considerate man. He was an anthropologist first and always, and looked forward to a summer of work on unpublished African material, combining it with the diversions of swimming, theater, concerts, movies and renewing old friendships which, next to anthropology, were a necessary part of his life.

Loeb was one of three sons born to Albert and Rose Guggenheim Loeb, a prominent New York Family. He enjoyed an unhurried education in east coast secondary schools that stressed Greek, Latin, French and German, and his education included vacation trips to Europe. In 1916 he was a freshman at Princeton University, where he was disappointed with chemistry as a major. He transferred to Yale and earned the degrees of Ph.B., M.A. and Ph.D. (1922) in anthropology under Professor Keller.

He began his teaching career in anthropology in 1922 as Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, under Professor A. L. Kroeber. That year he combined teaching with an intensive field study of the Indians of north central California, and wrote several monographs on the general ethnography, religion and folklore of the Pomo Indians.

In 1923 Loeb did field work in New Zealand and on the island of Niue. He returned to teaching at Berkeley and continued field study of the Pomo Indians. The Guggenheim Brothers of New York gave him a grant for a study of Indonesia in 1926 and 1927. The first five months of this period Loeb

spent on Mentawai Island and other islands off the west coast of Sumatra, before he concentrated on Sumatra itself. In 1928 and 1929 he was granted a John Simon Guggenheim Foundation scholarship for the purpose of writing a book based on his Sumatra field work and a compilation of Dutch and other source material. The writing was done in Leiden, Holland, where he studied the language and enjoyed the friendship of Dutch scholars, and in Vienna, Austria. In Vienna, where the Sumatra book was published, he was aided by his friend Robert Heine-Geldern, a pioneer in modern Indonesian ethnology. Professor Heine-Geldern wrote the sections on the archeology and art of Sumatra for Loeb's monumental book, Sumatra: Its History and People (1935).

Edwin Loeb taught in the Department of Anthropology of the University of California, Berkeley, for nine years, along with Professors A. L. Kroeber, Robert H. Lowie, and Edward W. Gifford in the Museum of Anthropology. He had an enormous respect for his colleagues, although his theories frequently differed from theirs. He was a modest man, non-competitive, and always generous with praise for the achievements of colleagues and students. This was an era before the academic admonition to "publish or perish" gave rise to ulcers and an unnecessarily high consumption of pulp. Loeb never worried about perishing, and he published when he had something to say. Students remember him as sympathetic and helpful beyond even an ideal image of teacher, then or now. He shared his books, his information, and the hospitality of his home with them. He formed lasting friendships with several students, and collaborated with them in publications suggested by their interests.

Loeb's anthropological outlook was broad and flexible, and he expressed no fears that sociology, applied anthropology or other disciplines would contaminate the purity of anthropology as a self-contained science. He believed, long before this view became fashionable, that psychoanalysis and anthropology had much to give each other. He always felt

that the science of anthropology was young enough and strong enough to admit outsiders with fresh experiences.

As a field worker who had enjoyed the hospitality and helpfulness of colonial governments when he was in Polynesia and Indonesia, Loeb often expressed wonder that the United States Government did not employ the varied talents of American anthropologists in the field of foreign affairs. After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor he joined the O. S. S. staff in Washington, D. C. as a specialist in South East Asia. There he was delighted to find other anthropologists similarly employed and similarly dedicated to the idea that anthropology could be put to good and patriotic use.

Loeb resumed teaching in Berkeley in 1946 as Lecturer in the Department of Geography under the chairmanship of Professor Carl O. Sauer. The University of California African Expedition in 1947 and 1948 took him into the field again, this time to the tribes of South West Africa. Part of the field material is contained in Loeb's book, In Feudal Africa (1962), a study of the Kuanyama Ambo people. On this expedition he was assisted in the botany, the material culture, and the map making of the area by his wife, Ella Marie, a fine artist and trained cartographer.

Fortune favored Edwin Loeb by enabling him to return after a lapse of time to the areas of initial field work. He visited the Pomo and the Apache many times, returned to Polynesia, and in 1955 returned to Indonesia. During the intervening years his Dutch and Malay had improved, his knowledge of general anthropology had increased, and he was ready for field work in Bali, where he and his wife studied and mapped the ancient mountain village of Tenganan. Mrs. Loeb's drawings added to the accuracy and beauty of the project and made her a village favorite. In 1958 and 1959 Loeb enjoyed a happy reunion with old friends in Vienna where, as guest professor of the University of Vienna, he taught African ethnography.

It is impossible to do justice to the rich and varied interests of

Edwin Loeb in this brief account of his career. Only the highlights of his teaching years and field work have been touched. No mention has been made of the professional societies in which he took an active part. Most regrettably, no mention has been made of his significant contributions to anthropological theory. Schooled in three or more approaches to anthropological theory, he emerged uniquely Edwin M. Loeb. In Berkeley the Loeb home served as a meeting place for returning Berkeleyites and visiting anthropologists from many places. There was always much talk, good cheer, and the host's dry, sophisticated humor and refreshingly old-fashioned, Old World manners. When Edwin Loeb died, the science of anthropology lost a scholar, and Berkeley lost a gentleman. He is survived by his brother, Harold Loeb, his sons, Timothy Robert Loeb and Peter Alfred Loeb, his daughter, Barbara Loeb Kennedy, six grandchildren, and his wife, Ella Marie Karr Loeb.

Gertrude Toffelmier  
Oakland, California

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## SCIENTIFIC FILMS

Available at Palmer's Films, Inc., 611 Howard Street, San Francisco, California.

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- 1b. Reel II. The Ceremonial Life of the Kuanyama Ambo Bantu of South West Africa. (The University of California African Expedition's Field Work, 1947-1948.), around 40 minutes, sound, color, 16 mm.
2. The Island of Bali. (Including the Soul-Flight Funeral Ceremony), around 40 minutes, sound, color, 16 mm.
3. On Eastern Seas. (Port City Environs), around 30 minutes, sound, color, 16 mm.