

•The *Detroit News* no less than three times—on November 23, 25 and 26, 1979—carried news stories that declared the mosque in Mecca rescued from the rebels who had taken it over and never explained the discrepancies in these accounts.

•Ned Temko of the *Christian Science Monitor*, in his eagerness to find an American hook for a news story about the PLO, asked the PLO spokesman about his organization's reaction to the death of Elvis Presley.

•Yasir Arafat, so carried away by his own dovish rhetoric, replied to Barbara Walters when she read a clause from the Palestinian National Covenant about the need to destroy Israel, "I did not remember that."

•David Ottoway of the *Washington Post* compared Saddam ("The Butcher

of Baghdad") Husayn to an "American politician on the election hustings."

•Ottoway's colleague Jonathan Randal found advantages resulting from a large-scale massacre in Syria in February 1982: "What emerged from the Hama rubble, according to local residents, was a respect for the government in large part born of fear but also of a feeling of avoiding even greater catastrophe. Some analysts have argued that the destruction of Hama . . . marked the birth of modern Syria."

Double Vision combines wit, style, and intelligence to produce a devastating indictment. If it is true that informed citizens cannot, alas, avoid the press, this book provides a vivid reminder of just how vigilant we must be. □

SON OF THE MORNING STAR Evan S. Connell/North Point Press/\$20.00

William H. Nolte

In *Son of the Morning Star* Evan Connell has given us an utterly fascinating account of what led up to, occurred at, and then followed the fiasco that took place at Little Big Horn on June 25, 1876. That is to say, he has accounted for that landmark event insofar as an accounting can be made without stepping outside the bounds of evidence and entering the domain of conjecture. Had some of the 220 or so officers and enlisted men who accompanied Custer on his wild mission lived to tell tales about just what happened on that blazing hot Sunday afternoon, our interest would doubtless be less than it is and has been. Given the many hints and clues, the shards of palpable evidence strewn about the site, and the human obsession for solving such riddles, it is little wonder that such an immense literature has grown up around the leading actors in the little drama.

Still, I am puzzled by the interest we take in George Armstrong Custer, a man who was certainly unfitted by nature to play the role of tragic hero. In fact, it is not so much Custer who fascinates as it is the mainly sordid enterprise in which he played a part. That Connell is also puzzled by our interest in the man seems apparent

throughout this long study—as, for example, on page 106 when he pauses, as it were, in his chronicle to place the actor in cameo relief:

Even now, after a hundred years, his name alone will start an argument. More significant men of his time can be discussed without passion because they are inextricably woven into a tapestry of the past, but this hotspur refuses to die. He stands forever on that dusty Montana slope.

Just so. But I am still bemused by the very factuality of the figure standing

there "on that dusty Montana slope." Why should he, of all people, cause us to take so much as a second look? After all, he is a known entity and, aside from his physical appearance, not a very pleasing one at that. Though possessed of great vitality and courage, he seemed incapable of introspection and, indeed, carried little luggage upstairs, between his ears and beneath the long flowing blond hair which he carefully tended—and yet, oddly, had cut short before meeting his Maker on that final day. No matter how one explains Custer's renown, he seems to have been the pet and plaything of the ironic gods who chose to lodge him among us at a time and place so perfectly suited to his meager talent as to make him appear much larger than he was.

During the Civil War, which began just as he was graduating from West Point—thirty-fourth in a class of thirty-four—Custer became the youngest American ever to win a star, being promoted to brigadier at 23. But throughout the War his smashing victories were plotted by other men; in fact, he possessed little if any skill as a tactician. "In a tight situation," Connell notes, "his response was instantaneous and predictable: he charged. This response to challenge was not something he learned; he reacted as instinctively as a Miura fighting bull." Moreover, he never learned from his mistakes, which were frequent. The wonder is that he survived as long as he did. With few exceptions—Little Phil Sheridan was one—those who knew him best disliked him personally and doubted his ability as an officer. In an interview published in the *New York Herald* two weeks after Little Big Horn, an officer who knew him well explained his rise in plausible terms: "The truth about Custer is, that he was a pet soldier, who had risen not above

his merit, but higher than men of equal merit. He fought with Phil Sheridan, and through the patronage of Sheridan he rose; but while Sheridan liked his valor and dash he never trusted his judgment. He was to Sheridan what Murat was to Napoleon. While Sheridan is always cool, Custer was always aflame. Rising to high command early in life, he lost the repose necessary to success in high command." The two officers who were nearest him in his final years, Major Marcus Reno and Captain Frederick Benteen, were much harsher in their assessments, but they detested the man and hence may have been less than objective in decrying the officer.

But, as I say, it is less the character of Custer than it is the whole complex of Indian-Anglo relations that gives this book its special flavor. After all, Custer was only one of many actors in the play. At times he disappears altogether from the stage while members of the supporting cast stand in the spotlight and speak their lines. To be sure, the play (to maintain my image or figure a moment longer) has no moral whatsoever. Certainly Mr. Connell does not make the romantic (or sentimental) mistake of depicting the Indians as *noble savages*. No one so fond as they were of torturing and mutilating their adversaries can be considered noble. Nor, on the other hand, does he gainsay the cupidity and deceit of the Anglos who sought to corral the Indians on reservations and thus deprive them of their way of life, and when efforts to that end failed endeavored simply to exterminate them. The simple fact is that the Indians occupied land that the westward-moving Anglos wished to farm or mine for its minerals. In the inevitable clash that followed, the two opposing peoples responded in a perfectly human manner: They went at each other's throats with all the moral fervor that we mistakenly believe only fanatics display.

Reading this spellbinder of a book I was often reminded of Mark Twain's remark about "this damned human race"—to wit, his comment that the more he saw of men, the more they amused him and the more he pitied them. Twain would have delighted in *Son of the Morning Star*, as would Joseph Conrad, who late in life wrote his friend Bertrand Russell that he had "never been able to find in any man's book or any man's talk anything convincing enough to stand up for a moment against my deep-seated sense of fatality governing this man-inhabited world." More than anything else it is that sense of fatality that Connell conveys in this exemplary volume. □



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THE GREAT AMERICAN SALOON SERIES



THE LION AND COMPASS

by Benjamin J. Stein

To begin at the beginning, try not to hink about the tasteless dill sauce, the ooked-out vegetables, or the iondescript fruit. Do not waste a moment of your time thinking that the entil soup is less tasty than a glass of ce water. Food is not what The Lion and Compass is all about. Food may e important in some more slow-moving, better-established places in New York City or Los Angeles, but it s not even in the running in the Silicon alley, and the Silicon Valley is what The Lion and Compass definitely is bout.

"See that man over there?" asks Joe Heinrich, an integrated-circuit designer, ointing at a little fellow in a polyester hirt with full white plastic nerdpack hielding the fabric from ball-point pen nk and a badge with his picture on it. 'That fellow and his next door eighbor have a patent on an optical nk that can digitalize voice commands o a telephone. Just what," Joe Heinrich asks, "do you think that's orth?"

"A million dollars?" says a man at he table, stretching his imagination to s utter limits.

"Try three hundred million over ten ears, for him personally," says Heinrich. "The damned thing's gonna ake it possible to just talk to your hone and tell your phone what umber you want. You won't even have o move."

"Is he capitalized yet?" asks the sec-nd man.

"Oh, absolutely," says Joe Heinrich. There's no way on earth that he'd dare o come here to this place if he didn't ready have the venture capital com-pletely in the bag. If he came here with at guy," and now Joe Heinrich points t the man with the guy wearing the erdpack, who wears a dark blue suit rom Paul Stuart and an Egyptian cot-on shirt from Tripler, "who just creams 'venture capital,' his boss ould find out about it in two seconds nd fire him. The only way he'd ossibly come here with that guy, who think is from L.F. Rothschild, is if the

financing's all set and he doesn't care if he's fired." Joe Heinrich takes a sip of the California White Wines for which the chef assures him The Lion and Compass is famous. (In fact, the wine is excellent, but that is not why anyone is there.) "In two weeks that guy will be the CEO of his own com-pany and in a year, if the optical link gets picked up by GTE and AT&T, his company'll be worth as much as Chrysler."

The Lion and Compass was founded by Atari-founder Nolan Bushnell to be the forum for just such deals. It is a place where the food is nothing special, the decor is wildly derivative, but the deals that will define the future get made every day.

"This place," says Paul Solomon, a colleague of Nolan Bushnell, who owns most of The Lion and Compass, "is where the money meets the ideas."

"When an engineer has a really big idea," says Nolan Bushnell, who is on the run to Aspen, stealing french fries off an investment banker's plate (and shouting "bitesies" like a frat brother), "he first has secret meetings in a place nobody important ever goes, like some of those places with funny names like The Rusty Scupper and Charlie Brown's. That's so no one will see him. But when he's got everything in the bag and he's not worried about who sees him, when he *wants* people to see him with the money people from Bessemer

or Citicorp, this is exactly where he comes."

"**T**his" has a bar flown over from England, a library, ditto, a regulation gray-walled room, and a "garden room" with sash windows overlooking a parking lot. On a recent Friday, a table of men from the Financial News Network were grilling a bearded man about techniques of "IC-surgery." "That's when you have to stop your whole assembly because the chips aren't coming in right, and that guy comes over at four in the morning and fixes the automated silicon deposition machinery. He gets seventy-five hundred an hour," says Paul Solomon, "and he's worth every penny."

At another table, two engineer/en-trepreneurs were doing some heavy-duty reminiscing. "You remember on the Titan, how the guidance was by circuit boards?" one asks. "Now everything's IC's. I really miss those old days. Can you believe it? Copper conductivity? It seems like a million years ago."

"Yeah, we're getting old," says his partner. Neither one looks old enough to be out of graduate school. Both are drinking milk.

Lunch begins early at The Lion and Compass. The place is packed by noon, and fairly well filled by eleven-thirty. "Engineers eat early," says Nolan Bushnell. "They get in early and they go home early so they can work in their garages making new circuits and start-ing their own companies. That's what the Silicon Valley's for."

At the bar, at two o'clock, by which time the restaurant is completely em-py, an attractive woman wanders in for a Tab. "That's really rare," says the bartender. "She must be new in town. She doesn't know that engineers never stay here that long. If she wants to meet somebody, she'd be better off at the Electrical Engineers' meetings at the Marriott."

Jerry Sanders, who started Advanced Micro Devices in his hat (annual sales in 1983, \$400 million), says the Silicon

Valley needs The Lion and Compass. "There has to be some center," he says, "some place where I can take grad students who are hot and let them know I'm spending money on them, some place where people from Hitachi can come and feel like they're being shown a good time, most of all a place where the entrepreneurs can go to let people know they've made it. The food doesn't matter. As for the decor, the more imitative the better. It just has to *look* right, and The Lion and Compass looks perfect. Plus, the right people come here, and that's really all anyone wants to see."

"We don't care about a fresh John Dory here," Joe Heinrich adds. "Everybody's thinking so hard that he can't even taste the food anyway. Look at these people," he says, gesturing around with a giant hand at the mix-ture of Madison Avenue tailoring and J.C. Penney catalogue ready-to-wear. "One good idea, one good design, and they're as rich as a Rockefeller cousin. One good match-up with a venture capital firm, and they've got another Apple. Who the hell cares as long as the food doesn't kill you?"

Out in the parking lot, a valet in run-nig sweats brings up the battered Pon-tiac station wagon of the man with the optical telephone link that'll let you dial your numbers by talking to the goddamned telephone. "When the engineer meets the money, it's like own-ing a mint for both of them, unless somebody else makes them obsolete. That guy's too busy to buy a Mercedes, too busy to worry about gourmet food. Ideas turn into companies and into nothing again really fast," he says. "You can't waste your time worrying about the sauce on the sole or you just get buried alive. That's why The Lion and Compass works here. They know what's important is that they're part of the race track, not the refreshment stand."

Back at the bar, the woman lights a cigarette and looks at the empty "library" room. "Jesus," she says, "this place is as slow as an 8-bit chip."

"Wait until seven o'clock," says the bartender. "It gets up to 32-bit speed again by then." □



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