

els taught him to value the lifeways of the Indian nations he encountered. His journals show him to be a thoughtful recorder of the things he saw from day to day, not only the small details of weather or the shape of a particular ridge but deeper matters pertaining to religious custom and daily life. His pleasant memories of the Seri Indians of Tiburon Island, in the Gulf of California, make for an appreciative desert vignette: "It was very picturesque to see the Indians sitting about the fire under a big ironwood tree. I slept close to them. Coyotes, as usual here and on the island, howl in apparent chorus."

Sheldon knew, as many later conservationists would come to recognize, that in order to preserve animal populations a great deal of open space is needed: unlogged forest highlands, wild rivers, and unbroken tracts of ground. In his later years in Arizona he called for more than four million acres of Western desert to be set aside as a preserve for the desert bighorn. He held his own against local ranchers, who objected to turning more land over to the public domain, and against territorial governor George W.P. Hunt, who thundered in rage over the prospect of having a chunk of his land turned into "damned billy goat pasture." Despite his urgings, Sheldon's idea was never set in motion; with the advent of World War II, most of the land in question was turned over to bombing and gunnery ranges, and today fighter planes and rockets still shoot over the heads of the dwindling bighorn population.

The Wilderness of the Southwest is essential reading for desert rats, especially for those who haunt wild places like the Pinacate—graduate schools to most of the Sonoran Desert's romper room—and the Cabeza Prieta, Edward Abbey's favorite refuge. Neil Carmony and David Brown have done well in making this book available, in bringing so much learned research to the job of setting Sheldon's work in context, and in simply drawing the man to our attention once again. Sheldon's field notes are instructive lessons in how to observe nature and humankind, and his life is an object lesson as well in illustrating that while nature always bats last, someone has to act as umpire.

Gregory McNamee is the author of the forthcoming book *Gila: The Life and Death of an American River* (Crown Publishers).

Brief Mentions

The Patton Mind: The Professional Development of an Extraordinary Leader. By Roger H. Nye
Wayne, NJ: Avery Publishing Group;
224 pp., \$12.95

The perfect gift for the armchair warrior, *The Patton Mind* traces the intellectual development of a "profane man of action" who, Roger Nye notes, "left behind the most complete record of exhaustive professional study of any World War II general—or any general in American history, for that matter." Dyslexic as a child, Patton was the beneficiary of parents who continually read to him from the classics, ancient history, and Romantic poetry. He developed a prodigious memory, which undoubtedly helped nurture his sense of destiny, his belief in reincarnation, and hence his fearlessness. To perish bravely, like a legendary hero, was glorious, marking not the end of life, but an entry into Valhalla before one was reborn to take up the shield and sword once more. *The Patton Mind* is, in essence, a survey of the books that shaped and justified Patton's thinking. Patton disdained intellectuals, but he was a voracious reader of military history, biography, and tactics. The professional soldier had, in Patton's words, to "be so soaked in military lore that he does the military thing automatically." And though he said bluntly that soldiers were "killers," he was a good deal less bloodthirsty than some politicians. For all his aggressive fire, Patton was shot through with a famous religious sense and believed in victory with magnanimity, not retribution, and in targeting enemy soldiers for destruction rather than their cities and civilians.

—H.W. Crocker III

James B. Conant: Harvard to Hiroshima and the Making of the Nuclear Age. By James Hershberg
New York: Alfred A. Knopf;
948 pp., \$35.00

The career of Harvard President James B. Conant (1933-1952), chemistry prodigy and godfather to the A-bomb, refutes H.L. Mencken's opinion that a university president of "real intelligence" was as "improbable as a Bach festival in Mississippi." Among the first of the modern university presidents who prefer to be

knee-deep in much that has little to do with university life, the professor who began his presidency by carving out time to teach undergraduates soon found more important things to do, especially when it came to lecturing government officials on the evils of everything from communism to the H-bomb. Called to Washington in 1941 to help pave the road to Hiroshima, he never quite lost his attraction to the corridors of power.

An Eisenhower Republican before Eisenhower Republicanism existed, Conant was never quite at home in Harry Truman's Washington; a Cold War liberal, he was never at all comfortable in what he feared was becoming Joe McCarthy's America. But he was just as much a politician as the above three, and the bulk of James Hershberg's monumental biography details Conant's political life. Whether the issue was atomic policy or McCarthyism on campus, Conant invariably tried to find a way to claim the moral high ground and save his presidential hide and enhance his national reputation. Hershberg spends literally hundreds of pages exploring the twists and turns of Conant's mind as he wrestled with the consequences of the Manhattan Project before aligning himself with those who proposed to "ban the [H-] bombers." He accords somewhat less space to Conant's mealymouthed efforts to uphold academic freedom while appeasing his conservative board of overseers. One can only shudder at the prospect of the pusillanimously platitudinous President Conant bending before the politically correct McCarthyites of today.

—John C. Chalberg

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Letter From Utah

by William Norman Grigg

The New Race War



Last September, 17-year-old Utah resident Aaron Chapman found himself caught in traffic outside Salt Lake City's Triad Amphitheater following a rock concert. Chapman's red flannel shirt attracted the attention of eight to ten Tongan Crip gang members, who surrounded Chapman's car and began taunting him. Although Chapman ignored the harassment, the Crips began to punch him through the open car window. Chapman's niece, 17-year-old Monica Vigil, pulled him clear of the car. When a gang member approached Chapman with a metal pipe, she tried to shield her uncle with her body. The Crips hurled the girl aside, threw Chapman to the sidewalk, and continued the beating.

Vigil later recalled, "I was telling everybody to help, and they were looking at me as if I was stupid." Hundreds of spectators observed the atrocity with stolid indifference. Suddenly, 17-year-old Asi Mohi emerged from the crowd. Shouting "You want more, here's some more," Mohi drew a .22 pistol and shot Chapman point-blank. The boy died 45 minutes later.

Salt Lake police arrested Mohi the next morning at his Bountiful home. Mohi led the police to the murder scene and retrieved the pistol; he quickly confessed to the killing. Mohi was well-acquainted with police procedure, as his record at the time of the shooting included five felonies and 15 misdemeanors. A year before the shooting Mohi had completed a nine-month probation term for gang-related violence.

Chapman's murder made for predictably maudlin media coverage. In both print and television accounts of the incident, Utah's self-appointed molders of the public mind sermonized about the "tragedy" of gang violence. Utah Governor Mike Leavitt called the state legislature into special session for the purpose of devising "anti-gang" mea-

sures, including tighter gun controls. But the most arresting aspect of the incident was the utter refusal of Utah's elite to treat the beating/murder of a white teenager by a Tongan gang as a racial incident.

Granted, the Tongan Crips had initially been provoked by the color of Chapman's shirt, not the color of his skin. But it is useful to speculate how Utah's "tolerance" industry would have reacted had a Tongan or another "person of color" been beaten and murdered by a gang of eight to ten white youths.

As soon as the media had wrung the pathos out of Chapman's death, it began to lavish compassion upon the "other victim"—none other than the confessed killer, Asi Mohi. This effort began with a remark made by Salt Lake Police Lieutenant Dennis Tueller, who for some reason saw fit to minimize Chapman's murder: "Chalk it up to the heat of passion. Mohi saw his buddies in a fight and jumped out to help them." By what reckoning is a situation in which a gang is beating a single victim considered a "fight"? To how much "help" are eight to ten large Tongan men entitled in an effort to brutalize one helpless teenager?

Brian Preece, one of Mohi's coaches at Salt Lake's West High School, told the September 9 *Salt Lake Tribune*, "There are many victims in this tragedy. The potential of each one of these young men's lives will be permanently lost." Mohi had been a cocaptain of the West High football team. While Aaron Chapman's parents buried their son, Mohi's teammates wrote the confessed murderer's jersey number on their helmets as a protest and a gesture of solidarity with "the other victim."

"What went wrong?" sniffled the headline of a September 12 *Tribune* cover profile of Mohi. The paper portrayed Mohi as a troubled, misunderstood youth whose family had fled L.A. to liberate him from the tenacious grip of his gang loyalties. Mohi had been a dismal student and had fathered a bastard child. However, the *Tribune* insisted, Mohi had been "rehabilitated" and planned to start a new life before his sudden murderous atavism.

The story even took a stab at blaming Chapman for his own death: "The Chapmans insist Aaron was not in a

gang, and there's no indication he was. Still, investigators did find a gun in his car after the shooting, and students in both West and Granite high schools [Chapman attended the latter] insist gang members attended his funeral." It is impossible to imagine a similar effort to tarnish the dead with innuendo had the murder victim been a member of an accredited minority group.

Salt Lake attorney Ron Yengich, one of the state's most visible "civil rights" lawyers, stepped forward to defend Mohi. Yengich quickly deployed the race card: "It troubles me that if four white kids get together and beat somebody up, we don't say that's gang-related. But if they're four Samoans or four Hispanics or four blacks, automatically we assume it's gang-related." This is patently absurd: if eight to ten white youths were to beat and kill a "person of color" in Utah (or anywhere else), the act would be taxonomized a "hate crime" and become a global news event. But Chapman's death at the hands of an ethnic gang was referred to the Salt Lake Area Gang Project, rather than the state human rights commission, and left completely unreported outside of Utah.

Of all the contending varieties of ethnic gangs, apparently only "skinheads" are capable of committing "hate crimes." Utahns have been kept in a low-grade panic about the skinhead "menace" since a small group of the tonsured cretins took up residence near Zion National Park in late 1992. Immediately after the skinheads materialized, minority "leaders," from the NAACP to the state sodomite lobby, began to whine for a more stringent "hate crimes" law.

On July 1, 1993, a small group of skinheads was intercepted outside of an apartment complex in the northern Utah community of Layton. Police seized several weapons from the skinheads and filed misdemeanor charges. The Utah NAACP and the FBI urged the Davis County prosecutor to file "hate crimes" charges against the skinheads, noting that the Utah statute does not require the commission of a violent act—all that is required is "intent to intimidate or terrorize" an individual or group on the basis of race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation.

The Utah NAACP has also detected racial motives in the attempted murder