

Introduction

Bill Lane's Reflections

by Kevin Starr

Autobiography is a literary form and a way of writing history. Like all literary forms, autobiography is selective. Even the most candid and comprehensive of autobiographies—for whatever reasons, including privacy and space available—must make choices regarding just exactly what should be told. In the case of *The Sun Never Sets: Reflections on a Western Life* by L. W. “Bill” Lane, Jr., autobiography and history converge. Bill Lane tells us his story of growing up in the Midwest, moving with his family to California, and becoming a citizen of the West, and also recounts, from the inside, the history of *Sunset* magazine, which under Lane family ownership became an enormously influential publication, and which made all of Bill’s varied accomplishments possible, including this fascinating memoir.

Bill Lane’s story began in Iowa and remained rooted in Midwestern values, but was transformed when his family relocated to California in 1928 after his father purchased *Sunset* magazine. That story then expanded into the Santa Clara Valley and the Yosemite Valley during Bill’s teenage years and anchored itself in the travertine and russet-tiled cloisters of Stanford University, which for Bill Lane would always remain the emblem of his coming-of-age. Stanford also became an enduring symbol and catalyst for all that was best about the region he would uniquely make his own, especially once he took the helm of *Sunset* magazine.

That region extended from Iowa to the Bay Area to the Yosemite, to the Far West, and finally to the Asia/Pacific Basin, which Bill first encountered as a naval officer serving in the Second World War, and which he would later explore through travel and publication—indeed, helping to define the entire American relationship to this vast region. He capped this involvement by serving with great distinction as the U.S. ambassador to Australia in the 1980s, an episode he recounts in these pages.

The *Sunset* Saga

When Laurence W. Lane, Sr., stepped off the ferryboat at the foot of Market Street in mid-October 1928 after a long train ride from Iowa, a parade was in progress and the music of a great brass band filled the Ferry Terminal. All this was for Columbus Day, of course, but it might have been for Larry Lane as well, since a process was being set in motion—for the new publisher of *Sunset*, his wife, Ruth Bell Lane, and the two Lane sons, Laurence W. “Bill” Junior and Melvin Bell Lane—that would eventually present the Far West with its most successful magazine publisher and its most successful book publisher, from whom millions would learn how best to live in this still-new region.

Larry Lane had been advertising director of the Des Moines-based Meredith Publications, owner of the widely read *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Successful Farming*, and two other magazines. With the help of six other Des Moines investors, in September 1928 Lane purchased *Sunset*, which was struggling to survive, for \$60,000.

The Southern Pacific Company had founded *Sunset* with the premier issue of May 1898, naming the magazine in honor of its crack overland Sunset Limited, which operated between New Orleans and Los Angeles. The Southern Pacific, in establishing *Sunset*, promoted travel and migration to the states it served. California provided a delightful destination for Easterners and Midwesterners eager to escape the wintry rigors of the East and Midwest via a luxurious transcontinental journey on the Sunset Limited to hotels on the shores of the Pacific.

Southern Pacific had sold the magazine in 1914 to a group of its editors, who refashioned it into a literary magazine, a kind of *Atlantic Monthly* of the West. In purchasing the magazine in 1928, Larry Lane had something quite different in mind. He formulated new editorial policies and recruited as senior editors two talented women from *Better Homes and Gardens* to help him implement those policies. *Sunset* had begun as a vehicle to promote the West as a place, for both settlement and travel. That orientation continued more vigorously than ever, but now it reflected Larry Lane’s editorial credo that *Sunset* should be a practical, how-to-do-it magazine *for* the West, not simply *about* the West.

Like the *North American Review*, *Scribner’s Monthly*, and the *New Yorker*, Lane’s *Sunset* would help its readers define their intellectual preferences and tastes. Yet, also like the *Ladies’ Home Journal*, the *Woman’s Home Companion*, and *McCall’s* magazine, *Sunset* would help them articulate and direct their emergent tastes, guiding them through a thousand domestic decisions.

Under Larry Lane, *Sunset* became a staff-written magazine with a tightly controlled editorial process. Regional coverage and editions played a key

role in the new *Sunset*. As a magazine man from the Midwest, Larry Lane had become sensitive to just how important regional matters were to his readership—areas of gardening, home design, and home improvement were dependent on regional variation. Regional editions of the magazine, launched in 1932, helped *Sunset* weather the Great Depression, not only by opening the magazine to more focused articles but also by later bringing in local businesses as advertisers. In time, *Sunset* would carry more regional advertisements than any other magazine.

Larry Lane transformed *Sunset* into a family magazine by concentrating, always in a practical way, on four major editorial fields, which Bill Lane calls the “four wheels of the car”: gardening, travel, home, and cooking. Like most other periodical publications in the 1930s, *Sunset* was struggling, but within the pages of the magazine there unfolded a panoramic pageant of gardening, architecture, regional cuisine, patio dining, golf, tennis, horseback riding, and other leisure pursuits, which represented, in its own way, a cunning strategy for economic success.

Bill’s memoir makes plain that *Sunset* was a family-operated enterprise, with Dad at the helm and Mom advising throughout—especially, but not nearly exclusively, by testing recipes for publication in the magazine—and counseling the two female editors, who had been brought from Iowa and were part of the larger Lane family. Ruth Lane would step into the role of managing editor during and just after World War II. Young Bill and Mel, meanwhile, sold the magazine door-to-door, which marked the beginning of Bill’s remarkable career as a salesman.

Returning from the service in 1946, the Lane brothers began an intense apprenticeship in every aspect of the publishing business. This was the moment when the magazine, like the West itself, was taking off. In the upcoming decades the Far West, California and Arizona especially, would add millions of new residents, brought there by a booming economy and the desire for a better life, one that was free of Eastern winters and offered new job opportunities.

Literally millions of new homes would be built; whole cities and suburbs would be created, almost overnight. Millions of Americans who were born and raised elsewhere would now be seeking to transform themselves into Far Westerners. What kinds of homes should they build? What foods should they prepare? What trees, shrubs, and flowers should they plant in their new environment? Where should they go on family vacations? *Sunset* began to answer these questions in its own way, and by 1947 circulation, which had remained in the 200,000s during the war, increased by 100,000, then reached 400,000 in 1948. For many years, the rate of *Sunset* circulation grew even faster than that of the population.

Sunset also began to publish books in a serious way. In 1946 its first large-format, hardcover book, *Western Ranch Houses*, appeared, written by *Sunset* editors with San Diego architect Cliff May and illustrated with May-designed houses. No single *Sunset* book before or since has had such a profound effect on the architectural environment of the Far West.

In 1951 Cliff May designed new headquarters for *Sunset* in Menlo Park, on the edge of San Francisquito Creek, and renowned landscape architect Thomas Church laid out the gardens. Church had invented the deck, first recognized in *Sunset* and perhaps the Far West's most notable contribution to domestic architecture after the Spanish-inspired patio.

In the flush and expectant years following the Second World War, *Sunset* had become more than a magazine. It had become a key prism through which the people of the Far West were glimpsing possibilities and futures for themselves and their region. For one thing, *Sunset* offered a continuous stream of practical solutions for home improvement and remodeling. The magazine's persistent preference was for homes that were simple and straightforward, devoid of historical fussiness, a style that can be generically described as California Ranch.

Ambience came from the emphasis on roofline, wall, mass, and volume in dialogue with, but not slavishly repeating, the best elements of the Southwestern and Southern Californian adobe. The concept of a home ranged across the entire space between property lines, encompassing both interior and exterior as a single living space. Here the garden became vitally important. As metaphor and ideal, the garden offered one of the most powerful images associated with the Far West in the nineteenth century. The search for the Garden of the West was central to the epic of Western settlement and migration.

In the treatment of food themes, both the magazine and the many cookbooks adhered to the usual philosophy of balance and practicality, the cycle of seasons, and family values promoted through cooking and eating together. *Sunset* editors emphasized the variety of fruits, vegetables, and dairy products in *Sunset* country. Certainly, *Sunset* played no small role in helping to revolutionize American cuisine—such a meat-and-potatoes affair in the nineteenth century—by featuring recipes starring garden vegetables and creatively fresh seasonings.

In each instance, in keeping with the *Sunset* editorial program, articles not only described the Far West but attracted readers to the region, as visitors or as settlers, in a most engaging and practical way. *Sunset* was interested in scenery for its own sake, true; but the magazine was also concerned with the human equation, in bringing scenery, flora, and fauna together with people in an atmosphere of respectful appreciation.

In its travel articles, *Sunset* consistently focused on nature and a family-oriented enjoyment of the outdoors—unlike typical travel guides, which would most likely emphasize archaeology or historical monuments. In the 1950s, in fact, accessible, family-friendly vacations became a popular topic of many travel articles published in *Sunset* magazine and books.

Sunset had entered the twentieth century primarily as a tourist magazine. *Sunset* in the second half of the twentieth century was a Far West institution, its Menlo Park headquarters a place of near-pilgrimage. Through *Sunset*, the Far West—now expanded to include the Mountain States, Hawaii, and Alaska—voiced its deepest hopes and dreams: its collective pursuit of happiness through an equally intense pursuit of the good life.

Bill Lane's memoir is especially insightful in its description of *Sunset's* boom years after World War II, charting his own upward trajectory within the ranks of the magazine, as he becomes *Sunset's* top advertising salesman, on the strength of a whirlwind eighteen months living and making business deals in midtown Manhattan. In 1959, while Larry Lane remained chairman of the board, Bill Lane became publisher of *Sunset* magazine, and Mel Lane assumed the direction of *Sunset* Books. It was a new and continuously expanding era. In 1967 alone *Sunset* Books sold an astonishing 1.5 million copies.

Sunset was concerned with proper stewardship, use, and enjoyment of the environment: a direct continuity of its Progressive heritage. Hence, *Sunset's* continuing interest in national parks, places of natural beauty set aside specifically for human enjoyment. After Bill and Mel Lane took over for their father, *Sunset* had even more of an influence on shaping the way people lived in the Far West and exercised their stewardship of the environment. *Sunset* readers were encouraged to learn to live with nature, side by side, and to partake of nature's gifts in a respectful, caring manner.

With the enthusiastic support of Bill and Mel Lane and their editors, *Sunset* magazine, books, and films advanced a steady, if occasionally subtle, program of conservation advocacy. In the February 1979 issue celebrating fifty years of Lane ownership, *Sunset* took pride in its role in advocating environmental living, leading-edge technology, the new agriculture and aquaculture, good nutrition, preservationism, and public parks. These concerns were then reflected in articles on traffic, open space, waste management, urban design, water conservation, and other social and environmental matters.

By 1990, when Bill and Mel sold *Sunset* to Time Warner, the magazine's values and interests had become ingrained in the mentality of its sizable and influential readership, and in the wider culture.

The Lane Family

While *The Sun Never Sets* is not an overly personal or even psychological narrative, it is obvious throughout this memoir just how much Bill Lane loved his family, respected and befriended his colleagues, and worked alongside high-ranking officials of every sort in a spirit of non-partisanship. In this regard Bill's brother, Mel, younger by two years, holds special status. A reader of this narrative loses count of the times that Bill Lane acknowledges his creative and vibrant partnership with his brother. Were ever two brothers so successfully joined throughout a lifetime in such a trailblazing enterprise as *Sunset* became?

Likewise, this memoir is a tribute of a son to parents who raised their sons according to what we like to think of as traditional American values and, when the time came, turned over to them the enterprise that had been the all-consuming work of their own lives. The vignettes of family life that Bill Lane recounts here are classic American scenes, right out of a novel by Booth Tarkington, and so are his memories of hard work demanded and challenges met. Larry and Ruth Lane cherished their boys and gave them an abundance of love and support but refused to coddle them in any manner whatsoever. From the beginning, the boys worked, and worked hard, learning life and the magazine business from the ground up. Can there be any more dramatic example of starting at the bottom of a business—literally from the ground floor—than Bill Lane's account of taking off his naval officer's uniform at the end of the war and assuming command of the elevator at the *Sunset* headquarters in downtown San Francisco? Far from being bitter over the homecoming assignment, Bill Lane—who had recently served on an admiral's staff as a full lieutenant after sea service in the Pacific—seemed rather proud of this brief but symbolic postwar apprenticeship.

Equally charming is his account of his courtship of Donna Jean Gimbel, a graduate of Northwestern University, whom he briefly dated in Chicago before her move to California, where they resumed their friendship, which developed into much more: marriage and family in the 1950s, a time when young Americans in droves were moving west, and marrying, and starting families, and building or buying homes, and providing *Sunset* with a rapidly expanding readership as they explored for themselves the promise of Western Living. As in the case of his parents and his brother, Bill Lane brings his wife and children into this narrative—not at great length, certainly, but in vignettes, snapshots even, that show them pursuing and enjoying the good life at the high tide of the American Century.

The *Sunset* Family

Like his father and brother, Bill Lane was a businessman, and a very good one at that. He could be demanding, and he knew how to say no, especially when it came to what kind of advertising *Sunset* would carry or what kind of stories it would run. Yet fifty to sixty years after the postwar *Sunset* culture was fully established by the Lane brothers, we can admire the family nature of the business, so vividly described by Bill in his memoir. Here was a time in the American economy when those who owned companies not only invested in them, or bought and sold them, but ran them personally and created among their employees a cooperative spirit, a sense of solidarity and belonging akin to family. Here, too, *Sunset* was on the cutting edge.

To work at *Sunset* during these years was to enjoy a career connected to a meaningful enterprise as well as to earn a livelihood. With few exceptions, employees remained on the job for twenty, thirty, or even more years. Innumerable times in this narrative, Bill Lane recognizes and praises editors and staffers—even one very talented, albeit contrarian, editor who did not fit into the *Sunset* ethos and was asked to retire. There was no such thing as layoffs, for the Lane brothers kept income and expenses in tight alignment. They took from the enterprise a good living but felt no need to squeeze it dry. *Sunset* was, after all, a family company. If an employee was facing a financial difficulty, the Lanes discreetly helped out. The very headquarters that Cliff May designed for *Sunset* recapitulated the design and feel of a family home in the Spanish colonial style, California Ranch, a national favorite by the 1960s. At Christmastime, Bill Lane—who prided himself on his abilities as an actor and speaker—played Santa Claus for employees' children, arriving by fire truck or, on one occasion, by helicopter.

Midwestern Origins and Influences

The entire Lane saga, as Bill Lane tells it, is permeated by Midwestern people, places, and values. Larry Lane was born in Kansas. Bill Lane's beloved grandmother, in Illinois. His mother was born in Iowa; his wife, Illinois. Ruth Bell Lane's father served as president of Drake University, where Ruth and Larry met and married following graduation. Larry Lane's career was shaped and facilitated by Iowa-based magazines such as *Successful Farming* and *Better Homes and Gardens*. Bill and Mel Lane were raised on a small farm outside Des Moines, where they were responsible for routine farm chores, including milking the family cow, a skill in which Bill Lane took pride for a lifetime. On the farm there was a pony and a German shepherd named Cleta, who moved to California along with the Lane family. Bill Lane's rec-

ollections of growing up in such an environment are reminiscent of Tom Sawyer: the farm and its animals, walking to school along a train track, his mother's pride in her garden, Larry Lane away on sales trips, then returning to the family with supplies of such surprising new foods as avocados, oranges, and brussels sprouts, which his mother learned to prepare for the family table.

Within the framework of autobiography, Bill Lane is remembering these things and telling us about them because he is also defining for himself and for us the origins of the *Sunset* mystique: its focus on home life, on work around the home and garden, and, underlying all of this, the promise of American life as expressed in places such as Iowa, where the Lane family lived, or Minnesota, where the Lanes vacationed, or Kansas and Illinois, where the Lane parents had been born and come of age.

To be happy at home, Dr. Samuel Johnson once remarked, can be considered the end of all human endeavor. Bill Lane wants us—and himself—to realize that he understood this point of view from personal experience, and it animated such magazines as *Better Homes and Gardens*, for which his father then worked, and *Sunset*, which he would soon acquire and revitalize.

As a family, the Lanes were not exempt from struggle and disappointment, of course, but that is not what Bill Lane wants to talk about. Rather, he wants to relate the story of what the family enjoyed, the values and pursuits that held it together, and the way that those values and pursuits, centered on the home and on family, radiated outward into a larger message, which formed the basis for an impressively successful magazine.

California Dreams

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this Midwestern point of view was translated wholesale to California, especially Southern California, as a generation of Midwesterners migrated west, among them Bill Lane's maternal grandparents and his mother's four brothers, all of whom moved to Los Angeles in 1919 as an advance guard for subsequent Lane migration. This influx of Midwesterners into Southern California constituted the determining social dynamic of the first three decades of the twentieth century. It began in the 1880s with affluent Midwesterners who were attracted to Southern California for the climate. Initially, they came on a seasonal basis to escape the brutal winters of the Midwest. Then many of them decided to stay, and by the early 1900s they had upgraded Southern California with the establishment of colleges—Pomona, for example, where Bill Lane spent his freshman and sophomore years before transferring to Stanford, as well as USC, Whittier, and Occidental—along with multiple churches, choral groups, and the beginnings of the Hollywood Bowl.

Midwesterners came to Northern California as well, albeit in smaller numbers. More than half the population of the state at this time lived in the San Francisco Bay Area, and San Francisco itself, an international city since the Gold Rush, had one of the highest ratios of foreign to native-born residents. Still, even Northern California, the Bay Area especially, experienced certain changes and developments as a result of this in-migration from the heartland. The newly founded Stanford University, for example, recruited its first president, David Starr Jordan, from Indiana, as well as a number of its founding faculty from the Midwest, and the first student to present himself for registration was a young Iowan by the name of Herbert Hoover.

By the time the Lanes arrived in San Francisco in 1928—Larry Lane in October via railroad, Ruth and their sons in December, chauffeured there from Iowa in the family Packard, its sideboards stacked with luggage—Midwesterners and Midwestern values had taken strong hold in the Golden State. Long Beach, for example, was known as Iowa by the Sea, and Los Angeles County had so many resettled Iowans living there that each year they gathered in Long Beach on a county-by-county basis, some 25,000 strong, for wholesale picnicking and attendant festivities.

Midwesterners and Midwestern values helped bring the Progressive movement to California, indeed, transformed California into one of the most Progressive states of the nation along with Illinois and New York. In 1907 California Progressives organized the Lincoln Roosevelt League, with the express intention of reforming the state. By the legislative session of 1911, Progressives were in control of the governorship and the legislature, and under the direction of Governor Hiram Johnson, they recast state government for the next hundred years.

Bill Lane was suspicious of labels. He was even more suspicious of ideologies, as opposed to bedrock beliefs and values. Hence in later years he resisted—if ever so subtly—an identification of *Sunset*, even the pre-Lane *Sunset*, with “Progressivism” spelled with a capital *P*. This designation, in Bill’s opinion, could too easily be confused with “progressivism” with a small *p*, as in current usage, suggesting a left-liberal orientation. Still, whatever Bill Lane’s difficulties with the term, the *Sunset* venture, once the Southern Pacific detached itself from ownership, embodied early twentieth-century Progressive values anchored in and intensified by a Midwestern preference for good government, environmentalism, and a general sense of stewardship that promoted the good life for the greatest number of citizens possible. Although Larry Lane steered *Sunset* away from politics and Bill and Mel Lane continued that tradition, a bipartisan Progressive message, suffused with Midwestern values, animated the *Sunset* point of view. Life, land, home,

and garden should be appreciated, celebrated, and nurtured. The ability to do this implied that synthesis of private and public value so evident in Bill Lane's later years as he assumed appointive responsibilities on the state, national, and international levels.

The post-Southern Pacific *Sunset* reflected Progressive values linked to responsible and aesthetic living in a regional context, which was one of the reasons it so attracted Larry Lane. He intensified this dimension of the magazine even as he pruned back other kinds of coverage, refashioning *Sunset* into a lifestyle magazine openly concerned with the aesthetic, an orientation even further developed by Bill and Mel Lane and the talented staff that they assembled in the postwar era. Notice how frequently Bill Lane refers to aesthetic value in this memoir. For the settings of life—home, garden, hearth, and kitchen—to flourish, moreover, there had to be a proper and efficiently functioning society that would serve as a sustaining context. The more *Sunset* focused on domestic living, the more important this larger context became, and over time this orientation led Bill Lane further into public service. No home, no garden exists in isolation.

The very advertising carried by *Sunset* served the flourishing economy that was also necessary alongside a rightly ordered public sector. Local, state, national, and international well-being was implied as *Sunset* expanded its concept of Western living to include the Northwest, the Southwest, the Mountain States, Alaska, Hawaii, and the Asia/Pacific Basin. Spiraling upward with *Sunset*, Bill Lane was approached for cabinet office, which he declined, held the rank of ambassador as well as other important federal and state appointments, but also served as the first mayor of his hometown, Portola Valley, a community near Stanford that he helped bring into being and design as a civic entity.

Yosemite, Stanford, and the West

This memoir opens and closes with recollections of the first visit of the Lane family to Yosemite, in the summer of 1929. Throughout his life, Bill Lane was sustained by the memory of that boyhood experience.

In the early 1860s, the Unitarian minister Thomas Starr King of San Francisco urged Californians to build within themselves “Yosemites of the soul,” which is to say, to take Yosemite as the reality and symbol of all that California—as place, people, and society—promised in the way of social and spiritual development. Bill Lane would never have expressed himself in such grandiloquent terms, but he does describe for us on a number of occasions the thrill of a boy from the flatlands of Iowa at first beholding the soaring granite walls of the Yosemite Valley. He also relates in some detail his early employment in the valley and beyond as a packer of horses

and mules for trips into the high country, as well as, later, the member of the Camp Curry staff responsible for calling out, "Let the fire fall!" signaling the descent of a cascade of gleaming coals from Glacier Point while a female vocalist sang Rudolf Friml's "Indian Love Call." Indeed, well into his eighth decade Bill Lane, upon request and in the proper circumstances, would repeat this stentorian call in honor of a firefall that was now impossible because of the environmental movement in which he had played such a prominent part.

So, too, did Stanford University, along with Yosemite, embody for Bill Lane not only the memory and promise of his college days as a fraternity man, aspiring actor, student publications manager, and all-round Stanford man in corduroy pants, V-neck sweater, and saddle shoes, but also the promise of California and the West, as well as the stewardship that these regions deserved and received from Stanford and Stanford alumni. A product of the Palo Alto public schools in their golden age, including the legendary Palo Alto High School of the prewar era, Bill Lane matured intellectually and imaginatively in the shadow of Stanford and all that Stanford represented, and in later years, in symbiosis with *Sunset*, Stanford for him was linked in memory and service with the best possibilities of the West. Over the years, Bill and Jean Lane contributed generously to Stanford—in the restoration of the original Quadrangle, for example—and the most notable of their gifts to Stanford established an institute devoted to the study and advocacy of the very same West that had not only produced Stanford but also accounted for the success of *Sunset* itself.

Asia/Pacific Basin

The *Sunset* acquired by Larry Lane in 1928 was California-oriented, and the writers and artists of the magazine through the 1930s, as well as their editorial preoccupations, were California-oriented as well. In the immediate postwar era, California received the bulk of the American population heading west, but rather soon this westward tilt also began to populate the Southwest, the Northwest, and the Mountain States, all of which became zoned territory for *Sunset* coverage. Likewise, the territories of Alaska and Hawaii were appropriated as *Sunset* country. Even before World War II, however, *Sunset* was adding to its repertoire—at least through advertising, and through some coverage as well—the Far East, especially Japan. Just as *Sunset*, both the magazine and the books, helped to define Southern California—followed by comparable definitions of other Western regions—the expansion of coverage by the publications to include the Asia/Pacific Basin, gathering momentum from the 1960s onward, documented and fostered a growing awareness of that area as the Mediterranean of the twenty-first century.

Bill Lane was instrumental in helping to generate this wave—and he rode it to personal success and recognition. Among his many accomplishments, he played a major role in founding the Pacific Area Travel Association. In 1975 he served as high commissioner with the rank of ambassador to the International Exposition on Okinawa, where the Lanes spent an entire year, an experience that he recalls fondly in these pages. Bill Lane's nomination by President Ronald Reagan in 1985 to serve as ambassador to Australia and the Republic of Nauru brought to Canberra an experienced public servant who had a long association with the region. After all, in 1978 and 1980 *Sunset* Books had published widely popular travel guides to Australia and New Zealand, annexing them across the Pacific as *Sunset* country. As ambassador, Bill Lane served during the final years of the Cold War, when the United States Navy stood in danger of losing its ability to operate its nuclear-powered ships freely in the South Pacific.

Working on behalf of American interests in the area, Lane showed a bulldog tenacity and a steely resolve that was one part of his nature, albeit frequently masked by his sunny disposition. At the same time, he communicated to Australians his love for their island continent and his recognition of the debt that California owed Australia in matters as diverse as eucalyptus trees and irrigation engineering, as well as the similarities and convergences of the Australian and Western American lifestyles. When Ambassador Lane, in full Western gear, including a ten-gallon hat, rode in an Australian parade, Australians readily understood that the ambassador was alluding to two comparable frontiers on two sides of the Pacific and recalling the horsemen who had driven cattle across comparable plains.

Salesman . . . and Horseman

The realistic, hard-nosed side to Bill Lane that made him such an effective Cold War ambassador was rarely evident, as by and large he maintained a pervasively genial demeanor. Bill was the kind of man who could openly speak of his love of home, family, and country. He was regularly courteous and caring—and smiling. But he was also a shrewd and effective businessman.

Bill Lane was proud to call himself a salesman: someone who had something good to sell—a way of life and travel, a way of conservation and stewardship—and he was proud to sell it. As a salesman, he spoke effectively. But like any good salesman, he also knew how to listen. Listening closely and persistently, he and his brother, Mel, like their parents before them, came to understand certain dreams connected to the American West: dreams of a better life, enhanced by efficiency and beauty, attuned to private, public, and institutional values. This memoir suggests the range and

depth of Bill Lane's involvement in the people, places, and causes he loved and worked on behalf of throughout a long and productive life, well spent in the cause of Western living.

For Bill, the most powerful symbol of it all—of his move from the Midwest, his new circumstances in the West, the possibilities that lay before him—was the figure of the horse (as it was for the young protagonist of John Steinbeck's *The Red Pony*). Bill was even more passionate about horses than about salesmanship. He would love and cherish and ride horses, with great skill, across a lifetime. As varied and successful as this man's life became, as filled with achievements and affiliations as it was, Bill Lane always loved riding and continued to list it, along with hiking, as his lifetime hobbies. Perhaps the most iconic image this memoir suggests is that of Bill on horseback, reveling in the interactivity of man and horse, landscape and sky, the promise and magic of a life lived to the fullest in the American West.