

scaled so much larger than life that it's hard to take him seriously. Then again, maybe this age of instant celebrity has blinded us to the qualities of a true hero.

—PRESTON LERNER

CAPTIVES:

The Story of Britain's Pursuit of Empire and How Its Soldiers and Civilians Were Held Captive by the Dream of Global Supremacy, 1600–1850.

By Linda Colley. Pantheon. 438 pp. \$27.50

Linda Colley made her name as a highly original historian with *Britons* (1993), which explored the deliberate creation of “British” (and anti-Catholic) identity and patriotism after the Act of Union brought England and Scotland together in 1707. Her equally innovative *Captives* examines the British imperial enterprise through its less publicized failures and the experience of British citizens taken prisoner.

Whatever the anthem “Rule Britannia” might say, Britons were made into slaves with dismaying regularity. By trawling through the archives, Colley can account for at least 8,000 British taken prisoner by the North African pirate beys in the 17th and 18th centuries. And in the wars against Tippoo Sultan of Mysore starting in 1768, some 1,300 British soldiers were held captive—a strikingly high proportion of the approximately 10,000 British troops then in India. These numbers usefully challenge the orthodox narrative of endless success through British military and naval prowess. In land warfare, the British enjoyed little technological advantage once the Indian states hired or suborned European artillery specialists.

Colley places the initial British defeat in India, at Pollilur in 1780, squarely in the context of the parallel reverses suffered a world away in North America. By seeking to hold both India and the North American colonies, the empire was overstretched and humbled. In 1784, when Parliament passed new legislation to regulate the affairs of the chastened East India Company, any further attempts at imperial expansion were explicitly ruled out—“schemes of conquest and extent of dominion [are] repugnant to the wish, the honor, and the policy of this nation.”

That changed swiftly with the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars and the threat of a French alliance with Tippoo Sultan. The British concentrated naval assets in the Mediterranean to defeat the French in Egypt and sent troops to India to fight Tippoo. The outstanding Admiral Horatio Nelson and General Arthur Wellesley (the future Duke of Wellington) secured India and the Mediterranean, and the reborn British Empire advanced to its most glorious and rapacious phase. Colley splendidly and readably places this triumphal comeback in the context of the nation's previous losses.

British propaganda often emphasized the interior lives of the country's captured soldiers—“the strength of their sympathy with one another,” in the words of a 1788 memoir. “Teetering on the verge of unprecedented global intervention,” Colley writes, “the British then—rather like Americans now—needed to be persuaded that they were not only a superpower, but also a virtuous, striving, and devoted people.” She goes on to draw further parallels with the U.S. response to accounts of prisoners of war in North Vietnam. Great powers whose populations are accustomed to victory, it seems, make overseas humiliations tolerable by focusing on individual suffering rather than strategic miscalls.

Colley has something in common with military historian John Keegan, who found a new and illuminating way to retell old tales by focusing on what battle did to its losers and to its wounded. But unlike Keegan, Colley brings a contemporary edge to her writing, as in that reference to the Vietnam War. Some may object to modern politicking in a book about the past, but it adds the spice of controversy and provocation to the writing of one of the most interesting historians at work today.

—MARTIN WALKER

DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY:

The Life and Legacy of Prescott Bush.

By Mickey Herskowitz. Rutledge Hill Press. 229 pp. \$24.99

Despite having produced two presidents and a governor of Florida, the Bushes reject any suggestion that their family is a political dynasty. They insist, as George W. Bush told me in a 1995 interview, that public service is “just

part of a strong family tradition” and “much more of an inherent trait.” Or, as he later told Mickey Herskowitz: “To talk about a Bush dynasty would be an act of conceit.”

A Houston-based sportswriter and celebrity ghostwriter and biographer, Herskowitz has written a useful overview of America’s premier political family. Though not a traditional chronological biography, it focuses principally on Senator Prescott Bush (1895–1972)—father of the first President Bush and grandfather of the current one. Herskowitz credits Prescott Bush with instilling the family’s sense of noblesse oblige, “persons of privilege behaving nobly, serving unselfishly for the greater good of humanity.” Venerated by his descendants, Prescott is Herskowitz’s “founding father.”

Prescott developed properties before attaining prominence with what became the Wall Street investment banking firm of Brown Brothers Harriman. A further financial lift came from his 1921 marriage to Dorothy Walker, heir to a midwestern business later known for its flagship holding, the G.H. Walker Investment Company of St. Louis. While working and raising five children, Prescott served for decades in the town government of Greenwich, Connecticut, a training ground for his subsequent legislative career.

He ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate in 1950, but tried again two years later and was elected to serve out the balance of a deceased incumbent’s term. In Washington he proved to be a quintessential northeastern, internationalist, moderate Republican. He embraced civil rights, abhorred Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, and even, according to the author, quietly opposed a second term for Richard Nixon as Dwight Eisenhower’s vice president. Such positions put him at odds with party conservatives, and some Republican leaders opposed his bid for reelection in 1956. (His son’s presidency after 1990 provoked similar misgivings in the party, a lesson not lost on the current president.) Nonetheless, Senator Bush won reelection, served for six more years, and retired.

Herskowitz describes Prescott as central to the family’s political rise. Certainly the family’s endorsement of the book is unambiguous—the former president supplied a foreword and agreed to help promote it. The research, however, is thin, relying heavily on interviews with Bush family and friends and on a long oral his-

tory left by Prescott in 1966. For example, more intense work might have kept Herskowitz from saying merely that George H. W. Bush “gladly accepted” President Nixon’s offer of the United Nations ambassadorship in 1971. As now-public documents make clear, Bush lobbied for that appointment—Nixon had intended to make him just another White House assistant.

Though Herskowitz’s tribute to those dedicated to “duty, honor, country” pretty much confines itself to the official story, it constitutes a worthwhile guide to the world that helped create our 41st and 43rd presidents.

—HERBERT S. PARMET

PAKISTAN:

Eye of the Storm.

By Owen Bennett Jones. Yale Univ. Press. 328 pp. \$29.95

Pakistan matters, perhaps more than ever. Events have given a new urgency to a book such as this, which seeks to explain Pakistan to the general reader. Owen Bennett Jones, a BBC correspondent posted in Pakistan between 1998 and 2001, examines the nation’s tormented past and equally troubled present not in chronological fashion but through thematic chapters on Pakistani nationalism, the 1971 schism that broke the country in two and resulted in the creation of Bangladesh, the Kashmir quandary, the army, the Bomb, and the ever-present struggle between Pakistan’s civilians and military.

By carrying his account into early 2002, Bennett Jones makes the narrative relevant to today’s headlines, yet in some respects his story is already dated. Witness his opening sentence: “Pakistan is an easy place for a journalist to work.” Poor Daniel Pearl found otherwise. Or his statement that there is no evidence that Pakistan has shared nuclear secrets with North Korea. Alas, credible press reports in fall 2002 suggested that Pakistan, in exchange for Nodong missile transfers, substantially helped Pyongyang with its enriched uranium weapons program.

The storm in the book’s subtitle is not simply the one that has occurred since 9/11; Pakistan has always been turbulent. The 1947 partition of British India led to the massacre of at least a million people and triggered one of history’s largest mass migrations. The agony that accom-