

Lindbergh. By A. Scott Berg. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1998. 628 pages. \$30.00.)

Charles A. Lindbergh (1902-1974) took his military physical at Chanute Field in Rantoul, Illinois in early 1924. Two years later he was the first chief pilot for the Robertson Aircraft Corporation for the new Chicago-to-St. Louis airmail route, pioneering also in emergency parachute jumps near Ottawa and Springfield. In 1940 and 1941 Lindbergh gave major speeches at Soldier Field and the Chicago Arena opposing United States entry into World War II, initially at the invitation of Avery Brundage, and then under the auspices of General Robert E. Wood's America First Committee. In 1945 Robert M. Hutchins brought Lindbergh to Chicago for a conference on the control of atomic energy, and during the following years he served as a consultant for a secret U. S. Army ordnance research project at the University of Chicago.

All of these facts, and many more, are contained in A. Scott Berg's authorized biography of the Lone Eagle. Berg, who previously published biographies of movie mogul Samuel Goldwyn and editor Maxwell Perkins, was the first author to have access to the full range of Lindbergh's voluminous papers and diaries, as well as to the papers and diaries of Anne Morrow Lindbergh. Berg also conducted interviews and correspondence with many involved in Lindbergh's life, even including the woman who served as the Lindbergh baby's nurse in 1932 at the time of the kidnap-murder and the "trial of the century" that followed it. Lindbergh's widow and his five surviving children (one has since died) also aided Berg's research.

The result is a volume that makes special efforts to get at the private man behind the public hero and to explain those qualities of stubbornness and ego that underpinned Lindbergh's remarkable accomplishments and major mistakes. It is also a dual biography, for Anne Morrow Lindbergh looms large in these pages as wife, partner, adviser, mother, and often victim. As Berg notes, Anne Lindbergh "kept no thought unexpressed either in diaries or any of a dozen active correspondences all her life" (p. 200).

Berg argues effectively that Lindbergh's upbringing as the

often solitary, only child of an unhappily married rural Minnesota populist lawyer-politician and a Detroit-born schoolteacher, both troubled people, helped forge the combination of curiosity, energy, restlessness, intractability, and self-absorption that spurred him to fly alone across the Atlantic in May 1927, but which served him poorly after he became the world's most lauded celebrity at the age of twenty-five. Suddenly wealthy because of book royalties, prize money, and his relatively quick marriage to the daughter of a Wall Street financier, Lindbergh made significant, often unsung contributions in areas that drew his attention—aircraft design, medical research, and late in life the preservation of endangered species and indigenous cultures around the world.

Yet Lindbergh found himself on the defensive for decades: owing to press coverage of the kidnapping of his child, on account of his ties to monopolistic airline companies, because of his apparent indifference to Nazism during a crusade on behalf of American isolationism before Pearl Harbor. He seemed to ask to be misunderstood. Lindbergh took charge of investigating the kidnapping but was insensitive to his wife's need to grieve. Wrongly called a Nazi sympathizer, he resigned his U. S. Army commission but refused to return a medal Hermann Goering had given him. He eschewed invitations and awards in the United States for years but hobnobbed with Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos to help save the Philippines' *tamaraw* (a small buffalo) and monkey-eating eagle. He hectored his children to select eugenically appropriate mates.

This portrait includes the warts. Berg discovered, for example, that Lindbergh's supposedly candid World War II era diaries, published in 1970, had been silently expunged of anti-Semitic entries evident in the manuscript originals (pp. 385-386). Yet analysis rarely interrupts the story. Narrative set-pieces on Lindbergh's youth, the kidnapping and trial, the mid-life pains of the Lindbergh marriage, and Lindbergh's death are very well done. The detail is prodigious, encompassing day-by-day accounts in which broad themes sometimes get lost. Readers seeking specific interpretations of Lindbergh's role in early aviation and in opposition to World War II should still turn to the works of Richard P. Hallion and Wayne S. Cole

respectively. Teachers may prefer the recent brief analysis by Walter L. Hixon in the Library of American Biography. And Kenneth S. Davis's *The Hero*, almost forty years old, remains the best account of Lindbergh's career up to World War II.

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