

HST 209: American History: Civil War W14 (Escobar 32165)

Home ► My courses ► Winter 2014 ► HST 209 W14 (Escobar 32165) ► February 23 - March 1 ► Forum
5 ► Petersburg - Graveyard of the Confederacy



Forum 5



Petersburg - Graveyard of the Confederacy

by Joe Escobar - Sunday, February 23, 2014, 1:37 PM

To post, you will click the "reply" link MY post. If you want to reply to a specific comment made by another student, click the "reply" link located on that student's specific post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

As in all forums, put something descriptive in the subject line of your post, based on one of the numerous topics you can choose to discuss. Other students wanting to talk about the same issue can click the "reply" button to your post, thus helping organize this discussion.

DO NOT attempt to answer all questions by posting a mini-essay that is difficult to respond to or discuss.

Sum of ratings: -

[Edit](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Comparring Petersburg

by Katherine Frank - Monday, February 24, 2014, 4:23 PM

I think the "Petersburg: The Graveyard of the Confederacy" video focused on the battle for Petersburg because it was the last big battle of the war. It was the reason for the final collapse of the south and the defeat of Lee. I found the different perspective interesting. The voice inflections sometimes said more than the words.

There were many references to the different Commanders on both sides. Beauregard defended Petersburg well with a lot less troops, while Lee was coming as fast as he could to help. On the Northern side there were commanders with little combat experience, two drunks, one who looked after himself first and an army that would not help build the tunnel that Pleasants thought would get them past the fortifications around Petersburg, while Grant was determined to end this here.

All of the resources we studied said basically the same thing, the troops of the North were not as battle able as they had been due to the losses and the leaving of some whose time had been served. The draft did not work well at that point, but the northern troops were well

fed, clothed and housed. The southern troops were malnourished, tattered and tired but no more troops were available. Deserters were a problem for both armies.

The biggest difference I saw in this battle was Grants determination to win at Petersburg. His grand strategy was to keep fighting, battle after battle, no retreat and no let up. He said he would fight it out on this line if it took all summer. He didn't want a siege but to charge into the trenches and battlements around Petersburg would have been a slaughter. He wanted to force Lee out to meet him at a place chosen by Grant. The book says Grand didn't want to fight a battle of attrition, but that was what he seems to have done.

The focus on Petersburg by the second video was a more southern view and I think it portrayed the southern people and the battle in a way we didn't see in the book or the Ken Burns video. I thought it was worthwhile and for the students of Virginia who probably are taught this video more so than Ken Burns, it tells of the ending of the war with a little more compassion and tells some things that we wouldn't know, like the starvation parties, the Blandford Church and its memorial to the southern states windows. Like Lincoln said to Grant when asked what to do with Lee when he was captured "Put him down softly". I felt that The Graveyard video did just that.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Comparring Petersburg

by Kylie Emory - Tuesday, February 25, 2014, 10:36 AM

I also felt that the Graveyard video was a nice piece to round out some of our understanding of this last large battle of the Civil War. It is important to our understanding of the war to see thing from a little bit different viewpoint than we are used to, and this compassionate, detailed, video provided that for us.

I have really enjoyed the videos provided in this class because when we read a story we add our own prejudices, voices, and inflections. When viewing a video we allow the producers to shape how we feel. You also mentioned that with the voice inflections.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Comparring Petersburg

by Jessica Mitchell - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 9:41 PM

I agree that the most intriguing thing about watching the Death of the Confederacy was the obvious perspective change from neutral & slightly pro-Union to distinctly pro-South. It painted the strategies' and tactics of the South in more detail and focused more on their strengths and the North's weaknesses then vice versa. When paired with the book and Ken Burns Civil War it made it easier to see the battle in a more complete way, it rounded things out for me. More attention being given to the motivations and ideas of the Confederate commanders was a change I was eager to hear about and made me feel like I understood it all better. As neutral as Burns and the book try to be, they sometimes fail. I think maybe it is impossible to be. Death of the Confederacy wasn't neutral by any means either. Giving proof to the term every

side has a different story.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Comparring Petersburg

by Jacob Nelson - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 9:14 PM

I'm also am in agreement that the most interesting thing about watching the Death of the Confederacy was different perspective we gained as viewers. Not only did we get a more in depth look into the strategy and ideals that the Confederacy held, but we also learned about the catastrophic toll this war had on the soldiers and families of the Confederacy. Burns mostly did take the neutral route in the making of his documentary. However, I'd argue that if he did show any sort of bias toward a side it was indeed the Union. With this being said the Death of the Confederacy was a nice change in pace from some of the other material we have viewed. While it was indeed focused on the points of view of the Confederacy it was still extremely helpful learning more about them.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Comparring Petersburg

by Austin Crook - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 1:08 PM

Your point that this new film covers Petersburg in so much depth because it is really the last major series of battles of the war is important to understand. Many people can get caught up in some decisions General Grant made to continue fighting without retreat no matter what the casualties could be taken very differently with that concept in mind that the war could be over soon. It is important for people to understand that Grant began this "war of attrition" that our sources refer to, because he was willing to do whatever it took to take Richmond. He realized that this could end the war! This new documentary did a better job describing specific events and people leading up to the end of Petersburg than the book and the Ken Burns film in my opinion.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Comparring Petersburg

by Lauren Grant - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 10:21 AM

I also liked that the Petersburg documentary portrayed the siege in a new light. Rarely do you watch a video that is more of a southern viewpoint and paints the southerners as anything but the enemy. Both McPherson and Burns are more of a northern view and having a southern view is a refreshing way to look at the same events in a different light. I enjoyed learning new information about what was going on in southern cities like the starvation parties that you talked about. I thought that the Petersburg video did a good job of giving a new point of view.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Comparring Petersburg

by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 8:56 PM

It was very interesting to see a piece of media with a southern slant to it, definitely. I don't ever remember seeing anything like that before. Throughout all the years of school, I can't recall it. I thought it was one of the most interesting things we've looked at all class because of this. It's always nice to get another perspective on the same type of information.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Quality

by Eryne Grant - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 10:36 AM

In regards to my learning of the quality of the soldiers fighting at this point of the war, I felt like all of the three sources touched on very similar facts and ideas. For example, the McPherson source said that the Army of the Potomac didn't fight with "the vigor and force" that they had in the Wilderness, and the other two sources supported this claim. Also, all three sources touched on the ideas that the good soldiers were dead, and morale was low. The documentary, to me, didn't seem to add much more knowledge about the quality of the soldiers fighting the war. I felt like McPherson and Burns did a superb job in depicting the quality of lives of the soldiers on both sides of the war. But, something I did enjoy about the documentary was that it showed real-life visuals of the battle sides and very descriptive explanations to events.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Petersburg

by Joyce Garipey - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 4:23 PM

It seems as though all three sources are doing a good job with giving us similar types of details, facts, and concepts about Petersburg. However, I don't believe the "Death of the Confederacy" documentary really added anything more than the other two sources have already given us. I think the tone of the documentary made it seem more "dull," I guess, than the Ken Burns series, so I had a more difficult time keeping my attention on it.

We learn from all three sources that at Petersburg, Lee's entrenched army was held in a siege by Grant for two months. However, the Petersburg documentary definitely has a different perspective and shows a lot of compassion for the Confederacy. One gentleman talks about Grant instructing Sheridan to "do all the damage you can...we want the Shenandoah Valley to be a barren waste." He goes

on to say that the campaign is known in his local area as “The Burning.” The Ken Burns episode mentions that the Union General Phil Sheridan “would gleefully wreck every farm and village he could lay his hands on,” but doesn’t mention the instructions given to him by General Grant. On page 777 of the McPherson book, it does talk about Grant’s instructions to Sheridan, but starts at the part of the instructions to turn “the Shenandoah Valley into a barren waste.” So, we are getting similar details, but just in a different context.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg



by Austin Crook - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 1:26 PM

I was surprised that you felt that it was harder to stay focused on this film compared to the Ken Burns documentary. I do understand that Ken Burns throws in some more emotion and personal affects such as music and explosions in battle to make it feel like we are there, but I thought it was easier to stay focused on the facts in this film. I really liked how it was very simple and exact with labeling its sections. It started with Petersburg, then went to talking about Generals, and that led into Cold Harbor and so on. It was very easy to follow chronologically. After watching it again, I find myself learning much more from this film compared to our other sources.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg



by Joyce Garipey - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 5:48 PM

I think the emotional factor is what keeps me interested in the Ken Burns documentary. After reading some other posts, I did go ahead and watch the Petersburg documentary for a second time and found that I was able to focus a little more on specific things, such as the labeling of the sections that you mentioned. Those labels do help to organize the documentary immensely.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg



by Austin Crook - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 8:56 PM

I would definitely agree that the Burns film gives you a more emotional

connection due to the music and different narrators telling stories, but I also think this film is easier to understand and follow like you witnessed during the second time.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg

by Kristine Wallace - Friday, February 28, 2014, 10:17 PM

To be honest, I love reading (especially history books) but movies can definitely bring you to a whole new visual level where you can feel at times like you are right there in the midst of the drama. Films like Cold Mountain(if anyone has seen it) bring you right into the crater at Petersburg and give you a great sense of what it really was like being there in the middle of the battle. I can't believe that the Union army did not have ANY way of getting out of this mess(as mentioned they could have used some ladders). I think this was a great strategic measure on the Confederate aspect but yet so cruel as it was mass slaughter.

But in saying that, I do not think there was anything un-cruel about any war. It is for the most part a living hell!!

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg

by Jessica Mitchell - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 9:44 AM

I found it easier to stay focused on the new clip as opposed to Ken Burns also. The pace was quicker and it held my attention more. I think sometimes getting caught up in the emotion Burns is trying to convey can also take away from retaining the important information. I remember more about what I learned in the new clip, whereas I remember more about how it made me feel about Burns piece. The new voice might have also had something to do with that. We have been hearing the story through Ken Burns "voice" for many weeks now, and this new clip set a new tone. I think I preferred the new clip over Burns'.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg

by Austin Crook - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 1:37 PM

I am glad someone else also felt that this film was easier to follow compared to the Ken Burns film. The way it separated it's content by battles and military generals made it very clear what or who they were discussing at any given time. It was very clear when they started to discuss Petersburg and the specific events throughout the siege such as the fences and deep trenches used to slow down the Union.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg

by Jacob Nelson - Friday, February 28, 2014, 5:02 PM

I would go to the extent of saying that the way Ken Burns tries to evoke emotion out of his audience can sometimes create some sort of distraction while viewing his documentary. In the last two videos that have been provided for our forums the facts were laid out in a more direct fashion which I personally preferred over the Burns documentary. While I agree that the video provided for this weeks forum may have not been as glitzy or glamorous as the Burns documentary is, I still think it was a valuable source of information. I think I just tend to get caught up in the emotional aspect of Burns filmmaking which can sometime distract me from the factual information being presented to us.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Petersburg Siege

by Lauren Grant - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 7:25 PM

The Petersburg documentary went into greater detail in many aspects of the siege at Petersburg. I felt that it added to my knowledge of what it was like during this siege compared to previous ones and how it affected the soldiers as well as the citizens. The siege fortifications made by the Confederates to defend Petersburg that were shown in the documentary is an example of something that both Burns and McPherson weren't able to go into detail about and were an interesting thing to learn more about. Overall I thought that the facts were pretty similar to Burns and McPherson but just had a bit more detail. For me I found the documentary to be less interesting than Burn's with the constant narration but added more to my knowledge of the war when it came to the siege.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Siege warfare

by Keeler McJunkin - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 9:56 PM

The video did a great job of really showing us how a siege is performed. The real aspects of what they are trying to accomplish and how it's done. It really did add a new dimension to warfare that we had never seen before. Something more demoralizing as it goes on. It can make a big difference when you focus on not just beating the other troops physically but mentally as well.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)

Re: Siege warfare

by Austin Crook - Friday, February 28, 2014, 12:43 PM



I was extremely interested when the film showed the different strategies the armies used to set up various barriers or obstacles that would slow down the opposition. It gave you a visual example of the obstacles that soldiers would have to overcome. When they showed us the fence made of giant logs, then backed up by the sharp sticks fence, and then the giant steep trench, I did not think there would be anyway for a soldier to get through all three.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Siege warfare



by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 9:00 PM

Agreed. It really kept my interest the whole time. It was something I had never really thought about before that became a big factor in the war. And to think that a simple thing like ladders not being available caused so many problems was amazing. The whole point of the siege, making it as worse as possible for the opposition was really interesting. Especially the mental aspect of it. Deteriorating them over time, slowly but surely.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg Siege



by Eryne Grant - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 9:13 AM

I also thought that the documentary was less interesting than Burn's, but that's probably because Burn created this documentary for a TV setting and included music along with his colorful narrations. I didn't notice much of a difference between Burns and the other documentary either. They both covered very similar facts, but they were varied none the less.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg Siege



by Melinda Parks - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 9:28 PM

When this documentary started talking about the siege fortifications, my immediate reaction was, "Nice! This is so much more detail than the Burns documentary gave me!" I thought that it was definitely worth it to go into more detail, as it gave me a better and more complete mental picture. I also liked that this documentary went into a more detailed descriptions of the Union and Confederate living conditions.

I agree with you when you say that you "found the documentary to be less interesting than Burns'...", although I didn't necessarily find it to be less interesting; I found it harder to focus while watching it than while watching the Burns documentary.

However, I still thought that this documentary did a really awesome job of giving us details.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Important new developments

by Timothy Wilson-Haley - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 8:20 PM

I think spending this much time on the Petersburg siege was very valuable because it marks a new development in that war, as well as the history of warfare. This was noted by both Burns and McPherson, but the point didn't really sink in for me until watching this one. What it offered was a better explanation of what the siege situation was, how the opposing forces trapped themselves in the situation, and why it was most unfortunate for both sides.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Important new developments

by Austin Crook - Friday, February 28, 2014, 12:53 PM

I did enjoy how much detail they were able to get into with Petersburg. I also enjoyed that they were able to paint a vivid picture of what happened at "The Crater", and how that event took place.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Petersburg

by Robert Richardson - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 8:40 PM

It's really very strange to see a recounting of the civil war from a more Southern perspective, I never figured such a thing existed. It's weird how both documentaries recount the artillery shells hitting Petersburg. Ken Burns' showed that shells hit so frequently that women and children were no longer afraid and would go outside to assess the damage, while Graveyard of the Confederacy reported that shells were rarely being fired.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg

by Joyce Garipey - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 9:25 PM

It is good to get all sides of this important part of the United States history, but I would have to agree that it was strange to hear Southerners perspective on it. They seemed a little biased at times and maybe kind of "romanticized" some of the Confederates that played significant roles in the war.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg



by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 9:02 PM

It did seem a little slanted or a skewed point of view. Although I still found it interesting to get the other point of view as well. Whether it was skewed or not. It was something we don't normally get to experience.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg



by Katherine Frank - Friday, February 28, 2014, 12:04 PM

I agree that it was a different point of view. The best example for me was the crater. We had learned that the northern soldiers could not get out of the crater and the southern soldiers, finding this out, fired into the crater, sort of like shooting fish in a barrel. In the second film, a more southern point of view, said the soldiers did get out and were killed at the lip of the crater while they attempted to charge the southern forces.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg



by Debra Moran - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 1:47 AM

I have only been out of the south for three years and I can tell you that the southern perspective is taught in schools (granted I am older now so things may have changed). I was always taught that Grant was a vile, unscrupulous drunk (I don't recall ever hearing of McClellan) Lee of course is the hero to Grants villain. I had no idea that he (Grant) was considered a courageous man. I learned more about Stonewall Jackson than any American president including Washington. The video was probably a little watered down compared to the debates that happen in the classrooms of Virginia. So saying all that, I didn't find it overtly southern, in fact I thought they were very liberal seeing as they were from Virginia. The Battle of Petersburg was the final battle of the Civil War and deserved the full treatment it received in the Petersburg documentary. In many ways the Burns video while trying to remain neutral, has a more northern bias. The northern officers quite frequently left a lot to be desired and often failed the enlisted man as seen in the disaster of the battle of the Crater with Ledlie getting drunk on the sidelines and Burnside not giving support when most needed, they sent these men into an overwhelming slaughter. The North seemed to have a lot of commanding officers that didn't know how to command. They were able to come up with brilliant tactics but couldn't (or wouldn't) follow through on them. Furthermore they didn't seem to have the straight up loyalty to the commanding officer that the south had produced in the enlisted man. The northern soldiers' loyalty seemed to lay with the Union, the reason they were there, rather than with the officer leading them. Whereas the south has an undying love of their heroes of war that lives on long after

the war ended.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Petersburg



by Timothy Wilson-Haley - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 12:11 PM

Debra, I question some of the implications that *Graveyard of the Confederacy* makes, such as how Confederate generals enjoyed a greater loyalty and affection from their soldiers than did Union leaders. Graveyard only briefly mentioned the desertion problem, which implies a smaller amount of loyalty and affection, whereas McPherson discussed how it was a serious and growing problem. Also, as mentioned in other posts, it made no mention at all of the slaughter of black Union soldiers at The Crater when they surrendered. This is an example of a large focus on supposed honorable behavior, without any mention of behavior that, under the same parameters, should be considered dishonorable. Honor is a major factor in the Lost Cause narrative and only works if a great amount of information is completely ignored.

I think your experience in Southern schools is fascinating. I can see that, by comparison, *Graveyard of the Confederacy* seems balanced. I think that is a testament to how biased the South still is in some cases. As you mentioned, you were taught more about Stonewall Jackson than George Washington, which is a rather extremist perspective to teach. I would argue that it wasn't just "the Southern perspective [that was] taught in schools", but rather the Lost Cause mythology that is indoctrinated into young people's minds.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Petersburg



by Austin Crook - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 1:42 PM

I am glad someone caught that important event at "the Crater" when the surrendering black soldiers were killed in massive numbers. I did not catch this while I was watching the film, but that is a very important and controversial fact to be kept out of a film like this.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Petersburg



by Jacob Hutchins - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 9:45 PM

Now this is interesting. I've never visited the South myself, and know only a few people from there, and i've never had the chance to hear a Southerner speak about how the Civil War is taught in schools. I spoke with a girl once that told me (she was from Georgia) that the pro-southern sentiment was so crazy where she was from that they had re-enactments of the war and pretended the South won!

Granted, that is an extreme example, but it was still pretty eye opening.

And it's not like Lost Cause apologists don't have a lot to work with- the North was *plagued* by incompetent generalship for much of the war. McClellan's failure to act on *finding Lee's written plans for a battle* is a truly breathtaking example of how bad some of the Union generals were. But critique is one thing.... and denial is another. But the question of loyalty is, I think, a stickier wicket. Even McClellan, who was TERRIBLE- engendered a fierce loyalty in a lot of his men. As for actually competent commanders, such as Grant, Sherman, Hancock, and the lesser known (but very capable) Thomas, I imagine their troops loved them a lot. Part of why the South has that "undying love of their heroes", I think, is well deserved praise for their ability coupled with the intellectual ghosts of the Lost Cause.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Petersburg



by Tiffani Brizendine Schnetzer - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 11:40 PM

I disagree with the question of Northerners loyalty to their commanders. There are exceptions such as McClellan who lacked his men's loyalty, but in general I believe the soldiers were just as loyal to their commanders as they were to The Union as they probably saw their commanders as representations of The Union. Yes, Union soldiers were generally treated and paid better than Southerners, which could bring about the argument that Southern's must have been more loyal, but I think the soldier mentally was the same across the board generally.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Petersburg



by Jacob Hutchins - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 9:29 PM

Not only do they exist, but, from what I can tell, much (if not most) of the writing done on the Civil War from Reconstruction and through the early parts of the 20th century came from a very heavily Southern apologist position. It was very common for books, and eventually movies, to paint a position sympathetic (if not downright glorifying) of the South. Ever watch *Gone With The Wind*? The character Scarlett O'hara is strongly flavored with pro-southern sentiment. The term for this movement was the "Lost Cause". here's the wiki link:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_Cause_of_the_Confederacy

While the documentary we watched for this forum doesn't go full Lost Cause on it, you can see the shades of that old movement still coloring how the Southern speakers talk about the war. The point you mention at the end of your post- how the southern speakers described few shells as hitting the town, is a tell tale sign. While acknowledging that the Northern forces had them over the barrel, the Southern idea that it occurred simply through sheer numbers and (implicitly) that strategy had nothing to do with it is reminiscent of Lost Cause rationale.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Petersburg - Graveyard of the Confederacy

by Melinda Parks - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 9:07 PM

This documentary certainly had way more detail about Petersburg than did the book or the Burns documentary. I enjoyed that it gave more information about all the tunnels that were dug during the siege, and more information about "The Crater" and how it was made. This documentary also gave us more information about the fortifications on both sides.

One detail that I enjoyed in this video is that Grant refused to live in the nice house he could have lived in during the siege, and instead lived in a tent, then in a cabin. He also had his family with him. This documentary did a good job of mentioning previous battles that the various commanders had been in, I thought, as well as mentioning some personal details.

I noticed that this documentary mentioned that at first the soldier's morale was high, but that it dropped on both sides as the siege went on, or at least on the Confederate side: "Morale was comparatively high on the Confederate side; discouragement was widespread throughout the North."

Another thing I appreciated about this documentary is that went into more detail about the black troops, something that the book and Burns video mentioned, but didn't spend too much time on.

It was interesting to hear a perspective that is more sympathetic toward the Confederate side. It resulted in some interesting word choices.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Petersburg - Graveyard of the Confederacy

by Lauren Grant - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 10:33 AM

I also liked that the documentary gave more details regarding the Crater and the black troops. Knowing how the Crater was made was very interesting and I also liked how different tactics used during the Petersburg siege like the fortifications were shown. I liked learning more about Grant and how he didn't want to live in a nice house but lived in a cabin that his soldiers built that was amongst them. I liked that the documentary included the fact that his family lived with him which is something that I found very interesting.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Petersburg - Graveyard of the Confederacy

by Benjamin Trautman - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 7:39 PM

Thank you for pointing out the kind of morale each side had during the siege. I feel like

the soldier's morale played it's deepest and had the greatest impact on the outcome of this siege. No other battle was effected by the spirits of the soldiers as much as Petersburg was, in my opinion. I would go out on a small limb to say the Confederates morale in Petersburg lost them the war. And the morale of the Union eventually won them the war in Petersburg. The daunting images of those trenches keep playing in my head, there were so many obstacles to try and get through while bullets whiz by and through soldiers. The Union soldiers needed their morale to be at it's highest while advancing through the trenches of Petersburg.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Focus on Petersburg

by Christopher Plourde - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 10:48 PM

I think the focus on the siege of Petersburg to be justified. I was the last major campaign of the war (not counting Sherman's march to the sea..) and its aftermath saw the end of the Confederacy. The documentary definitely had a pro-southern flavor in so far as "immortalizing" the efforts of the South's soldiers and commanders, but it did not demean the North and was rather flattering in pointing out Grant's sincere humility. Also if it happened it will always be justified as an object of the study of history. Every battle and campaign of the civil war has numerous books and novels, like "Killer Angels" by Michael Shaara about Gettysburg (Great book, and the 4 hour long movie "Gettysburg" a very faithful rendition...highly recommended)

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



the Good the Bad and the Ugly

by Debra Moran - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 11:14 PM

This was an in-depth documentary that really showed the art of Civil War trench warfare. The siege at Petersburg must have been a massive undertaking that required great skill and commitment from men who were hungry, tired, and sick, you name it. It changed the art of war forever. The trenches set up by the Confederates and the tunnels dug by the Union these were extraordinary. The Petersburg documentary complimented both the textbook and the Burns video series. The Petersburg Documentary wasn't as Southern flavored as expected it to be and they also treated Grant with respect as well. Whereas the Burns video series has a definite Northerner flavor to them, that can be quite obvious. I don't think any of the resources we have used have spoken poorly about the commanding officers on either side and there have been some that a lot could be said.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: the Good the Bad and the Ugly

by Lauren Grant - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 10:30 AM

I agree that I didn't think that the Petersburg documentary was as pro-southern as I

expected them to be. I was expecting it to be obviously southern biased as Burns is northern. I was surprised and pleased at how balanced the video was in describing both sides with respect and detail in regarding most of their commanding officers. I also enjoyed the detailed description of the tunnels and how they were made which I found truly amazing. I agree with you that it changed the art of war forever.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



First Impressions of Petersburg: Graveyard of the Confederacy

by Jacob Hutchins - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 11:22 PM

Despite knowing that this was going to be a pro-southern documentary, I find that my first impressions of it are generally positive. While the.... emphasis (shall we say) of the speakers clearly lends itself to a more apologetic stance than the previous sources we have used, I still think the volume of information is both compelling and useful. Whatever their intent, I still appreciate learning new facts and data about the war. This documentary is good for reminding me that new and interesting parts of history can come from sources whose interpretations of that data may be different than my own.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: First Impressions of Petersburg: Graveyard of the Confederacy

by Joyce Garipey - Friday, February 28, 2014, 1:48 PM

With the Petersburg documentary we get a good idea of how the Southern perspective of the war differs from the sources that we have already been introduced to. Before watching this documentary, I hadn't even considered that Southerners might still feel a connection to the soldiers that fought for the Confederacy. I guess I was a little naïve in that area, but now that we have had the opportunity to see the "other side" of the events, it totally helps to get a more well-rounded idea of the Civil War.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg - Graveyard of the Confederacy

by Kristine Wallace - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 12:06 AM

How well did this documentary add to your in-depth knowledge of the war concerning the issues above? With all of the battles mentioned in the textbook, to the smaller number of battles selected for the Ken Burns series, to the emphasis on this single campaign, was this narrow focus on Petersburg a worthwhile task? Why or why not?

I believe that the documentary was quite helpful in explaining some of the different issues as stated in the question. It gave more insight into what happened at Petersburg and gave the viewer a good idea of how important this siege really was. Unfortunately, despite the thousands of lives lost, the many months of fighting in this particular area and the countless injuries, this battle was very influential in the decline of Lee's army and ultimately the fall of

Richmond.

I myself lived in Richmond for 6 years and was able to visit Petersburg as well as numerous other Civil War sites and I have to say that Petersburg is such a sullen area now to the point that a person can almost feel the anguish that went on there. Again, it was unfortunate that so much had to have been lost but it is my belief that this was necessary to start the real "ending" to the war.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Petersburg - Graveyard of the Confederacy

by Katherine Frank - Friday, February 28, 2014, 12:13 PM

I too believe that Grant had to begin to fight the war as a total all out bid for winning instead of the piecemeal approach that had previously gone on. Without that mentality, the war might have gone on longer and cost even more lives. What I fail to understand is after the civil war how could anyone fight the first world war in trenches after seeing what hell it would be.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



comparing sources

by Austin Crook - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 9:57 AM

In regards to my learning of the quality of the soldiers fighting at this point of the war, I felt like all of the three sources touched on very similar facts and ideas. For example, the McPherson source said that the Army of the Potomac didn't fight with "the vigor and force" that they had in the Wilderness, and the other two sources supported this claim. Also, all three sources touched on the ideas that the good soldiers were dead, and morale was low. The documentary, to me, didn't seem to add much more knowledge about the quality of the soldiers fighting the war. I felt like McPherson and Burns did a superb job in depicting the quality of lives of the soldiers on both sides of the war. But, something I did enjoy about the documentary was that it showed real-life visuals of the battle sides and very descriptive explanations to events.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: comparing sources

by Melinda Parks - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 8:36 PM

Something I thought was interesting that this documentary mentioned that Burns' didn't was that the morale on the Confederate side was comparatively high at first. The Burns episode to me seemed more to focus on the negative aspects of the quality of the soldiers on either side, while this documentary mentioned more of the positive aspects, at least at first. I also liked the snippet it provided about General Grant, how he refused to live in the big house he could have, but chose a tent, then a modest log

cabin. I was surprised that the Burns episode would miss this chance to bringing Grant to life through this tidbit of information!

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: comparing sources

by Timothy Wilson-Haley - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 9:56 PM

I thought that was an interesting aspect of Grant as well that *Graveyard of the Confederacy* noted. Not occupying a mansion was the nice thing they had to say about Grant, whereas they made a big fuss about how honorable Lee was. Burns' film discussed Lee's strength of character too, but also included Grants character strength as well. What particularly stands out to me was Shelby Foote speaking of Grant's grieving after his mistake at Cold Harbor. It's difficult to pinpoint specific biases. Mostly it's the tone that emphasizes Confederate honor and downplays any honor the Union might have had that bothers me. *The Civil War* seems to at least include different opinions and engage them in conversation with each other better than *Graveyard* did.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Why I like the New Documentary on Petersburg!

by Austin Crook - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 12:49 PM

The new documentary did a great job introducing the battle and Petersburg. I thought how they introduced the specific general such as Beauregard and Butler, and then specifically explained how the first attempt to take Richmond failed for the Union. The film was easier to follow than Ken Burns' in my opinion. This film explained how Butler approached too cautiously and allowed Beauregard to move quickly, which eventually led to Butler's men being pushed back to Bermuda Hundred. They also described how Beauregard attacked the Union from each flank which is what pushed Butler's men back and ended the first attempt. This is why I enjoy the new documentary a little more than the other sources.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



I like the lay out of the New Documentary!

by Austin Crook - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 12:56 PM

The new documentary seems to be much easier to follow compared to the book and Ken Burns' film. The way they cover details as well as summarize material quickly helps me have a better total understanding of battles or people. I like how they labeled their specific sections of the movie such as "Generals". That way it was very easy to switch my mindset from facts about Petersburg to General Lee and the other leaders. When talking about General Lee they quickly were able to cover that he was a "good-looking" man in many people's eyes, and was very well respected by his soldiers, almost like a father-figure according the film. I really enjoy this documentary because I am able to retain all this

information much quicker and in detail compared to the other two sources.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Initial Reaction to the sources



by Benjamin Trautman - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 7:50 PM

First off I am writing this without reading chapters 25 and 26 yet. Having read through chapter 24, the book does a good job in setting up the siege of Petersburg. The book does a good job describing the kind of emotion involved when the Union arrived at the maze of trenches that lay before Petersburg. The Union men were exhausted from the 7 week long campaign towards Richmond and Petersburg, every day they had either been fighting, digging, or marching. The Union General Hunter is mentioned and Grant's desire for him to clear our railroads in the Shenandoah Valley, than moving eastward to Petersburg and Richmond.

Ken Burns video did also a good job in describing the foundation for the Petersburg siege. Talking about how the Union morale was low and tired from the previous battles. Talking about how Grant had destroyed his own army and that re-election would not happen due to Grant's "butchering" ways. I found one thing that Burns and the other video contradicted each other, which was the attitudes of the townspeople in primarily Petersburg. Ken Burns briefly says that the people who lived in Petersburg seemed to be calm towards the siege, and the random shellings it's buildings endured. The other video says the spirits of those people who lived in Petersburg were far from calm, they were deeply scared by the grueling and monotony acts of a siege. These two different views could maybe be explained the writer's bias towards a side. One more contradicting note, maybe I am wrong here, but Burns talked about General Burnside having the idea of digging under the Rebel forces and placing a bomb beneath them, whereas the other video said the idea came by a man named Pleasants? May have heard the name wrong but I was a little confused.

As for the itunes video it did an extraordinary job in explaining the siege of Petersburg. I will be looking forward to comparing it's information when I read the next few chapters in the book. But this video explained all of the key battles that took part in the siege, from Drewry's bluff to the Five Forks battle. Each of the battles explained had an important factor in the outcome of the siege. Ken Burns failed to get into these details. The kind of setting up the Union did was impressive, from building bread shops to blacksmiths, the siege kind of created it's own Union city. Listening about the obstacles that surrounded the trenches was very interesting and helped me to understand the difficulty of advancing for the Union and why many of them were very timid when they first arrived to Petersburg. There is much more to talk about from this video, but I will same some for other posts.

My initial reactions to the sources. Thank you.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



The nature of the siege



by Bryan Sanders - Friday, February 28, 2014, 1:42 PM

The siege at Petersburg holds qualities that separate it from other battles in the war. What

stuck out to me the most was that it brought the war to urban centers. Both the documentary we were presented and the other sources directly or indirectly mentioned this important fact. The siege forced commanders on both sides to work in ways they normally wouldn't on the battlefield in open country. We say the Confederates build trenches and fortifications that for a while kept Union soldiers at bay, and we saw the Union at Petersburg improvise by building a tunnel underneath to sabotage the barriers above. This culminates in what we know as the Crater.

In the grand scheme of the civil war, the siege works in the framework of the Confederacy's plan. It wants to hold out long enough at this point to demoralize the Union. However, if cut from supplies the siege could backfire against the Confederacy. We see this when eventually the Union succeeds in cutting Petersburg off.

All of these sources, while coming from different perspectives, really blend together. We have one documentary based in Virginia, which still felt balanced between both Union and Confederacy. This evens out the other two sources, which tend to lean in a more Nationalist Union approach.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: The nature of the siege



by Benjamin Trautman - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 5:33 PM

Really enjoyed your connection between the strategies used by the South in Petersburg, and how those strategies are directly correlated to "the framework of the Confederacy's plan." I agree that the South wanted to make the war as long as possible, and hopefully demoralize the Union as you stated. I feel as if the South knew quite well that the North outweighed them in numbers of men, weapons, and money. But possibly the South felt as if their values and energy towards the war would outlast the efforts of Northerners. The south had everything to fight for, their land and their dignity, whereas the North had less to fight for in my opinion. You make a great point that Petersburg asked for unconventional ways of fighting. I was astounded to hear all the kinds of construction that the Union undertook, building almost a city full of bread shops and blacksmiths.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: The nature of the siege



by Jacob Nelson - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 6:01 PM

This is a really good post about how the siege at Petersburg differed from more conventional battles fought during the Civil War. Both the commanders within the Union and Confederacy had to apply a whole different strategy and way of thinking for this specific battle. I am also pretty convinced that these commanders were never trained in urban warfare, especially during this era. Thus, fighting in an urban center must have been extremely new and odd for both sides. I also found this battle to be especially interesting since it was fought in an urban center. While this was quite an unusual battlefield during the time of the Civil War it wouldn't be considered odd in

modern day. When I consider conflicts that are occurring around the world most of them seem to be happening in urban areas such as Tripoli, Aleppo, and Baghdad. Which bring to the question of what has led to this change in battlefield settings.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: The nature of the siege

by Christopher Plourde - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 7:37 PM

The battle never did take place in the city of Petersburg but on the outskirts in the system of entrenchments that partially encircled it (and Richmond), so it wasn't urban warfare as we understand it today. What it resembled was World War 1 (well the western front at least). What is interesting is that many of the tactics that were used in Europe after the Civil War were picked up by the many foreign observers that were embedded with both the Confederate and Union armies. The use of entrenchments (which were a "organic" development that flowed from the increased firepower of the rifled musket and Minie ball) was but one of these. The use of the railroad to facilitate rapid troop movements during the Civil War was key to the German army's success in the Franco-Prussian conflict in 1872. In many ways the Civil War changed the face of warfare for the entire world to more defensive orientated tactics.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



The changing nature of war

by Bryan Sanders - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 11:45 PM

You illustrated a good point on the changing nature of warfare. This siege was essentially trench warfare, which got its start here to help minimize casualties. We also got a glimpse earlier of new naval warfare with the ironclads. This whole chapter of history has shown how wars help change the technology and tactics of societies. Even to this day with the recent world wars and cold war we see technology and the nature of war change. Nuclear energy and the internet for example have helped revolutionize warfare and international relations. In the end, all of these tactics and technologies are bred from one desire: to win.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: The nature of the siege

by Melinda Parks - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 8:55 PM

Yes. I, too, really appreciate the itunes documentary's attention to detail. I enjoyed learned more about the trenches and fortifications that were built. I also liked that they went into more detail about the tunnel. It helped me build more of a picture in my head than did either the Burns' documentary or the book.

All the sources blended together very well. Each source had details that the other sources didn't, I think, which is a pretty impressive achievement. I appreciated this focus on Petersburg and think it was well worth it. This siege was so different than all the other battles, and I think it deserved a closer look.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Comparison



by Joyce Garipey - Friday, February 28, 2014, 2:30 PM

One thing that I noticed on my third time watching the Petersburg documentary is that when the narrators are speaking about the crater they mention that there were lots of casualties on the Union side and a lot less on the Confederate side. According to my notes on the Ken Burns documentary, scores of black troops were killed during this fight and when they tried to surrender they were either bayoneted or clubbed. There is no mention of this in the Petersburg portion of the same incident. So that stuck out to me. The McPherson book mentions that Confederate soldiers murdered several black soldiers when they tried to surrender (page 760). Both documentaries as well as the McPherson book discuss General James Ledlie who hid in the bombproof shelter with alcohol instead of commanding his men.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Comparison



by Jacob Nelson - Friday, February 28, 2014, 8:45 PM

That is a really interesting observation I failed to make while watching the Petersburg documentary. Do you think the Petersburg documentary displays more of a bias than the Burns documentary or McPherson textbook; Since the Burns documentary and McPherson text document Confederate soldiers killing black soldiers being killed while trying to surrender?

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Comparison



by Joyce Garipey - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 6:58 PM

It seems with this particular incident the Petersburg documentary does indeed show some bias. However, I think for the most part the documentary gives us pretty good details from the Southern perspective about the events that transpired at this point in the war.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Comparison

by Lauren Grant - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 10:16 AM

Your observation of the Petersburg documentary leaving out the information of the black soldiers being killed and murdered was something that I had overlooked. Having watched the documentary back I realized that they did leave it out and I find that interesting especially since it is a more pro-southern documentary. It makes me wonder if they did it on purpose to portray the Confederacy in a positive light. The Petersburg documentary also seems to speak more about Lee I noticed compared to Burns who paints a glowing picture of Grant. Although all three sources talked about General Ledlie and his abandonment of his soldiers, the severity of that choice didn't register for me until I watched the Petersburg documentary which I found surprising.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Comparison

by Kylie Emory - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 1:51 PM

I also failed to make that observation, but it definitely points to this documentary being produced by southerners. I noticed a few other small things such as this that try to make the Confederacy out as the good guys, and the Union as the enemy. Lee was painted as a wonderful character, while they portrayed a darker picture of Grant.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Comparison

by Keeler McJunkin - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 9:06 PM

I didn't notice that originally either. But looking at it again it's definitely true. Really great point and it shows there is a definite southern bias to that documentary. To just completely leave something out like that is a for sure sign of the slant to it.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Battle of the Crater

by Bryan Sanders - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 2:15 PM

During the siege of Petersburg, the Union troops built a tunnel beneath the Confederate entrenchments and filled it with gunpowder. They ignited it and blew through the entrenchments, resulting in the Battle of the Crater.

In the battle, the poorly trained white Union troops were outmatched by the Confederate soldiers, who mobilized faster and counterattacked. Black Union soldiers had actually been groomed beforehand and trained how to handle the situation after the explosion. But

General Meade had the plans changed so a more poorly trained white division would lead the charge instead. It was believed there was too much political risk involved in having black soldiers lead.

This was considered one of the best chances to bring the siege to an end; instead, it backfired and the result left both sides at the same place they started. The decision by Meade to substitute the trained blacks with poorly trained whites may have been the deciding factor in who would ultimately win this battle.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Crater

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Battle of the Crater



by Kylie Emory - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 5:03 PM

I did not realize that the black men had been trained specifically to handle that particular situation. What a tragedy that the battle could have been ended here, but was continued for political reasons.

it is sad that something that took so long, and so much hard work was lost over few bad decisions. Maybe the poorly trained and ill-commanded white replacements could have done better if those in command had thought to provide them with ladders to get out of the crater. Instead they were slaughtered.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Battle of the Crater



by Benjamin Trautman - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 5:20 PM

You make great point that the battle of Petersburg, or some could argue the entire war, was continued due to a political decision. That Grant did not want to make the Union look bad by sending in the black troops first, he wanted to avoid any kind of idea that the black troops were being used as shield for the white men or acting as the test subjects for how the crater battle would be fought. I still wonder though if Grant was looking out for the best interests of the black troops or his own identity as a General. This act by Grant struck me to be very profound, he was fighting for the Union, the Union was fighting for black people, and even when he knew this black regiment was more trained for close counter combat, he decided to protect them by not sending them in first.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Battle of the Crater



by Christopher Plourde - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 8:09 PM

I think you can go farther "Up the food chain", so to speak, in laying blame for the

debacle. The fact that Burnside was the corp commander in charge is certainly one problem. His enthusiasm for the project was pretty low at first though eventually he became more interested as time went on. However his vacillating and indecisive nature led to the poor decisions that were made that day. Though I think that the entire Union command was at fault as no one really expected the massive hole in the entrenchments that the explosion created and, therefore, were not prepared with the necessary soldiers or basic equipment (ladders) necessary to carry it through. Even if the Black soldiers were allowed to take the lead I think there was still a good chance the attack would have failed for there were no preparations to follow it up. The poorly trained Union soldiers and their drunk, and absent, commander were just an overkill of failure to recognize the opportunity they had beforehand.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

2

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



The Siege!



by Kylie Emory - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 4:45 PM

This documentary was absolutely the best source for studying the Siege of Petersburg. The description and photos of the earthworks, and the living conditions within the city are unrivaled. The Burns documentary seems vague on the perspective of a siege battle in comparison. The amount of defenses they had are amazing. It is easy to see why it lasted for such a long time-no one could get through!

It was absolutely a worthwhile task to cover this battle so in depth. We really grasp the reality of a siege through its descriptions and photos, and are given a different, emotional perspective of the South. This was also the last major battle of the Civil War, and it encompassed 10 months, so any less does not do it justice.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: The Siege!



by Eryne Grant - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 9:10 AM

I agree with you on the point that the documentary's use of visuals is very helpful! It is VERY easy to grasp the reality of the siege (or the entire war in general) through seeing where the battles were fought and who fought them. Petersburg was truly remarkable in the sense that their defense was unlike anything else!

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: The Siege!



by Debra Moran - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 11:45 PM

Any siege of that length deserves recognition and I agree with you that the documentary did a fantastic job of showing us the earthworks. It was an amazing feat that they could do so much with so little.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Military commanders



by Kylie Emory - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 4:54 PM

This new documentary throws a little different light on the commanders of the war. It shows a few more of the shortcomings of the Union officers than we are generally used to seeing. I liked that it portrayed originally planning to send a regiment of black soldiers in after the crater, but then deciding not to, due to political reasons. These issues had not been discussed previously, and gave us a greater understanding of the role blacks played in the Northern Armies.

The documentary also gave us a larger understanding of the man that Lee was. Lee is portrayed in a way that makes us emphasize with him and his cause. His men loved him and viewed him as a father figure.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Post chapter 25 thoughts



by Benjamin Trautman - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 5:03 PM

After reading chapter 25, there were many things in the text that complimented detailed in the book was the small battle in the Crater. The book talks about Grant rather than Burnside's original plan of sending in the black troops first. I have learned that the Union's plan to charge into the crater was so disorganized, but the book does a great job in helping me understand that. Before the white troops first, he seemed very agitated about the decision, and maybe it was effected in a negative way. Burnside may have been a little scattered brain who ended up asking a group of troops led by a drunk to fill in the crater. This regiment was sent to the crater, but rather just charge in at the rebels with full force. A few other interesting things that the text brought light on was how the Atlanta campaign was going while the Petersburg siege was taking place at the same time. The book briefly mentions that the Union forces at Atlanta were struggling. Another is that the troops that were sent to Washington from Petersburg were the Union's most sacred city due to their combat experience. I was surprised to learn that after having had been a long 4 years of war but their soldiers had Petersburg and Atlanta suffer. One of the things mentioned in the text was the southern General Early's so called retributions on towns in Virginia. Because of the ways the Union troops acted in Virginia, it seemed to me to be

With all that being said I found the iTunes documentary to be helpful, more interesting than the Ken Burns series. The Southerners and Ken Burns seemed to be more of a northerner. The key battle was not just a siege, it was a siege produced by mostly lost battles by the Union. The reason it has been beneficial, in my opinion, is because for one of the first

wins and losses of the Union, as I feel we are with Ken Burns and McPherson has made me questioned that we might be missing out on a lot on the battles were two sides to this War, neither side foreign, each side had American values

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Post chapter 25 thoughts



by Benjamin Trautman - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 5:04 PM

Not sure why my format is all smessed up.

Sum of ratings: (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Post chapter 25 thoughts



by Kylie Emory - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 5:17 PM

"Neither side foreign,each side had American values"

What a poignant thought provoking line! I guess this is something we all know, but have never thought too much about. I honestly tend to associate myself with a more southern frame of mind. If my way of life were being threatened in the way that the southerners felt that theirs was, I would fight too!

I grew up in Oregon, but have lived in northern Florida, as well as Maryland, so I have seen the pride that both sides had/have for their cause. It often seems that the war is still continuing for many! I never realized this growing up in Oregon, so far removed from the heart of the issues and battles. But we are one strong, proud nation now.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Post chapter 25 thoughts



by Christopher Plourde - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 8:17 PM

The Civil War is called "The War of Northern Aggression" in the south and is still a sore point for them. I am originally from NY but lived in North Carolina for 20 years and had friends that thought Lincoln was a tyrant and the worst president we ever had. For them the war was about states right's, not slavery and would argue most heatedly if you were to disagree with them. In the North it is not that much of an issue at all. So it was interesting for me to see this contrast.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Post chapter 25 thoughts



by Jacob Nelson - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 9:31 PM

I think this is an important point that has been brought up within this discussion thread. While many of us may not have agreed with the reasons the South was fighting the Civil War we can understand why we may fight to protect our way of life. For the majority of the people within the Confederacy they were just trying to protect the way in which they were living without any disruption. For the majority of the war, the Confederacy was fighting a defensive war versus that of Northern aggression. Thus, while we still might not fully agree with the values of the Confederacy we can somewhat understand why they fought in this conflict. I have been lucky enough to travel through the South in such places as Jackson, Mississippi and Selma, Alabama and I can tell you first hand that some of this war has indeed continued for some of the population there. For many I believe they are just trying to defend the lifestyle they are trying to live without disruption or prejudice from the outside.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Post chapter 25 thoughts



by Christopher Plourde - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 12:22 AM

While all this is true it must be remembered that the Civil War would not have occurred if the institution of slavery did not exist. The entire conflict arose due to the congressional "tug of war" between the slave states and free states prior to the war. Also we know from the McPherson book how southern passions were whipped up by the "fire eaters" about how there white daughters would be forced to take black husbands and other such nonsense. Despite the apparent reasonableness of the notion of "saving their way of life" it can not wipe away the stain of slavery. It is quite possible that had not the Cotton Gin been invented thereby making slavery profitable the institution would have passed away as many of our slave holding founding fathers, such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson thought that it would and should. It is unfortunate that greed led to first turning a blind eye to the evil of slavery and then led to an effort to ennoble it by saying it was the "natural order" (also detailed in McPherson

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Post chapter 25 thoughts



by Jacob Nelson - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 7:35 PM

I do agree with you that the Civil War probably would have never occurred if the institution of slavery did not exist. I think I was just more or less considering why almost all of the people in the South were united in there fight versus that of the North. The people living in the South were fighting for there property, family, and in essence there way of life. While this conflict was mainly about slavery, the people in the South who weren't slave owners were simply fighting against an invading force in the Union army. Thus, while I obviously completely

disagree with the concept of slavery I can still understand why so many people in the South were ready to take up the fight against the North.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Worthwhile Documentary

by Lauren Grant - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 10:53 PM

Yes, I think that this narrow focus on Petersburg was a worthwhile task because it showcased a different type of battle than the ones in most retellings of the Civil War. Sieges aren't as commonly shown in documentaries so having one about a siege as important as Petersburg was interesting and insightful. Both Burns and McPherson mentioned the siege at Petersburg but I didn't truly understand the significance that it had during the war until watching the documentary. By narrowing down the subject to one campaign it gives the audience the information and details needed to understand how the siege took place, why it did, and what it was like to be apart of the siege. Details about the commanding officers, soldiers, and civilians created a personal connection between the audience and the people that were in the siege. I think that this documentary gave a different perspective with it being pro-southern and was a nice way of expanding my knowledge of Petersburg and the history of warfare during the Civil War.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Worthwhile Documentary

by Eryne Grant - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 11:48 PM

I definitely agree with you about the importance of Petersburg in the documentary. Without the specific mentioning of the siege, most of the facts would have flown by our heads. Learning more about the importance of the events (for example, the people who fought it and the places it was fought at) is beneficial to a learner of the event.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



A Worthwhile Cause

by Eryne Grant - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 9:08 AM

From the battles mentioned in the textbook and in the Ken Burns series to the narrow focus on Petersburg, I think that mentioning all of what they did was a worthwhile task. Sure, mentioning the Wilderness and major fights that occurred are obviously needed for an understanding of the war, but learning about other fights as well is just as important. Petersburg was a worthwhile mention because it altered the war in some way. I liked how we knew more about the specific people that participated in this siege and specific facts that only in the individual sources mentioned were worthwhile.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: A Worthwhile Cause



by Melinda Parks - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 9:41 PM

Petersburg was such a different type of battle than almost all the others, being a siege, so I think it was certainly worth a closer look. It also made such an impact on the morale of both sides and was an important turning point in the war.

I, also, liked the details this documentary gave about some of the people. Because it was more Confederate-friendly, I was impressed that it took the time to show the detail of Grant's living quarters. That detail portrayed Grant in such a humble light, one that definitely made me have more respect for him. I was surprised that the Burns documentary didn't include this snippet about Grant!

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: A Worthwhile Cause



by Timothy Wilson-Haley - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 10:02 PM

It is interesting that Burns didn't include that detail about Grant, but as far as Graveyard goes, that was the only nice thing it said about any Union general that I recall. It emphasized the poor organization and leadership of every general before Grant, and even described him as not that impressive of a strategist. McPherson discussed each general's failures, but also noted some of their successes, such as Butler's generally successful occupation of New Orleans.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



The Sum of Multiple subtleties



by Timothy Wilson-Haley - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 1:57 PM

Several little things, added together, make the biggest difference between all of our sources. Discussions of the quality of Union soldiers at this point in the war are an example of this. McPherson briefly mentioned this issue, while *Graveyard of the Confederacy* made a clear point of it several times. One could view this as simply part of the greater detail afforded when one hour is spent on one event, but it seemed that it was meant to emphasize that Confederate soldiers really believed in their cause. I think this is a reason why the tone is different than Burns or McPherson.

The glowing description of Lee versus a rather unimpressive description of "the little general from Illinois" also add to the overall sum. Grant was uninspiring and simply had an inexhaustible supply of troops, whereas Lee had honor and loyalty. Confederates were never portrayed as anything but brave for fighting against such overwhelming odds. It seems that criticisms of McPherson and Burns for being biased point to a failure to include descriptions of Confederate honor. I would argue that a truly pro-Union bias would blatantly label the Confederates as stubborn zealots, instead of simply minimally mentioning honor.

This is where I show my bias: I think there is no honor in tearing apart the country to protest future acts that limit the expansion of slavery. Holding tightly to that supposed honor is way for contemporaries to deny that the war shouldn't have happened. I understand that at the time, honor was of utmost importance. However, in studying history, contemporaries must not be afraid to condemn actions and decisions that, in hindsight, weren't the best for society.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Final thoughts



by Benjamin Trautman - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 7:29 PM

The perspective each of these sources had on a siege battle was very educating. Though I feel Burns did a better job than the other two sources, much was learned. Burns got into the construction and difficulties the Union had to face in providing goods to the soldiers and the way they transported these goods. The itunes video seemed to focus a little less on the actual town of Petersburg, but rather the surrounding towns and what kind of battles took place in those areas. The book helped me understand the battle strategies that the Union used, whereas the itunes video focused on the Southern strategies. Burns and McPherson seemed to high light the Union's accomplishments or failures in the siege, whereas the itunes video focused on the South's accomplishments. Though I did find McPherson to have more of a medium between sides, on the focus of accomplishments. The claims about the quality of soldiers that were fighting during this time seemed to be scrutinized by the book and Burns. They talked about the soldiers being exhausted and ill-fit for a siege. I am not saying Burns and McPherson were completely negative about the qualities of the soldiers, but they seemed to criticize a little more than the itunes video did. Lastly, this narrow focus on Petersburg is a must for understanding the ending of the Civil War. It had been a unimaginable 4 years, and right when the Union were advancing through the valley and towards Richmond at a fast pace, they were put to a halt. The grueling and monotonous ways of a siege were taking a tole on the bodies and minds of each side. I feel as if this siege demoralized the South more than it did the pursuing North. The south had fought mostly a defensive war, and when they arrived to what they knew would be a long siege, their morale dampened. I feel like a lot of southern soldiers just wanted the whole thing to be over with, and I think the siege helped them put that in their state of mind.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Closer Look At Petersburg



by Jacob Hutchins - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 10:02 PM

I feel that the closer look at the Battler Of Petersburg was a very worthy addition to our course study. I think there some things we can take from the Battle of Petersburg, and this documentary specifically, that compliment what we have been learning thus far.

First, I think it speaks volumes as to both why the Confederacy was so successful at times, as well as why they ultimately lost. The number one problem, tactically speaking, that the Union had to overcome was the daunting prospect of waging an offensive war against

entrenched foes on their own territory. We've all played Risk; we know the defenders get a bonus. Up until Petersburg, Lee had been at least partially able to attack from fortified positions (see Cold Harbor) and withdraw without technically losing the battle. With generals other than Grant, this technique had been enough to drive them mad. But with a prolonged siege, and the willingness to fight a prolonged siege, Grant was able to turn that advantage against them, effectively making their superior defense into a prison cell. Tactically, I think Petersburg really demonstrates how the defeat of the South's best strategy was accomplished on the field, and i'm glad we took a more detailed examination of it. The Burn's documentary offered a topical view of the battle, explaining the key points but skipping the nuts and bolts that often make Civil War study so interesting. As Shelby Foot notes in the Burn's documentary (and i'm paraphrasing here), it was basically a prelude to the tactics used in the first World War, specifically trench warfare, and I find that shift of overall military practice to be fascinating.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Closer Look at Petersburg (cont.)

by Jacob Hutchins - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 10:16 PM

Second, as far as "grand strategy", I think Petersburg works as an example of why the Union's overall war plan was so successful in the long run. Basically, they turned the whole war into a siege! From the specific example of Petersburg, to the larger picture of the South as a whole, the ability to hold them in place and grind them down was what really sealed their fate. Winfield Scott had it essentially correct from the beginning when he first presented the Anaconda Plan- cutting off the South from the rest of the world would slowly squeeze them to death.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anaconda_plan

It's true that, at the start of the war, many people thought it would be over quick and that the notion of a drawn out, trans-continental siege was silly, but Scott seems to have understood the tactic that eventually led to victory. Grant sure understood it, which is why he was able to keep Lee on his heels despite suffering horrendous casualties after losing one engagement after another.

The Graveyard of the Confederacy, despite the way in which it presents information, does supply us with what we need to make the connection between the small scale Battle of Petersburg and the overarching Anaconda Plan. Burn's touches on these things, but a detailed analysis of the events at Petersburg (even from a Southern slant) is useful in putting those pieces together.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

Show parent | Edit | Split | Delete | Reply



Re: Petersburg - Graveyard of the Confederacy

by Tiffani Brizendine Schnetzer - Sunday, March 2, 2014, 11:53 PM

I'm currently in the process of moving to Tennessee and was there this week checking out apartments. While there, I talked with a Chattanooga born friend of mine briefly about the differences in teaching The Civil War. He had actually been taught by both North bias and

South bias teachers. His biggest issue is that they were bias at all, though he, like most of my friends there, leaned Southern in most respects (not on slavery, but more so on the right to succession). Personally I find myself siding a little with both, but prefer Ken Burns less bias documentary to The Civil War in Virginia Series. The reason I say this is because I prefer how the information is presented, not because I prefer the content necessarily. I wish that Ken Burns had had more time and space for more information and really feel like the long pauses between segments showing pictures with music but no facts could have been shortened. I love that in this class, we explore additional resources in order to fill in all the gaps Ken Burns leaves out. My favorite source is still the book, partially because of the additional information and partially because I've always preferred reading. I'm someone who needs something in my hands while I work and I get distracted easily during films.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)

You are logged in as Joe Escobar ([Logout](#))

 [Moodle Docs for this page](#)

