

After considering the arguments for and against the book *Battle Cry of Freedom*, I have come to the decision that I will try to approach the book with an open mind. Since I have not read more than a couple of chapters I can not be certain whether I will agree more with the negative or positive reviews. If I try to approach the book with the mindset that it will be historically inaccurate or overall uninteresting then it will distract me from obtaining any new information. However, at the same time if I take McPherson's word as the absolute truth then I may learn some facts that are incorrect. By going into reading the book without any biases then I think I will be able to learn the most from it.

When it comes to historical accuracy I am most concerned with information and interpretation of the Confederacy and the main reason for the Civil War in general. Many of the reviews from Amazon complained about the obvious bias against the Confederacy by McPherson. This concerns me because if McPherson writes about the Civil War as a battle against good and evil then the interpretation of the Confederacy may not be completely accurate. Even the positive reviews express concern about some inaccuracies that the book has. However, since the Civil War is a difficult event to summarize into one book I think that inaccuracies are bound to happen.

I trusted parts of most of the reviews of the book. The review that I trusted the most was the New York Times review. Since it was from the New York Times I started out with greater sense of trusting than I did with some of the Amazon reviews because of the credentials. It is easier to trust a review that is published by a nationally recognized paper than it is to trust online reviews made by shoppers. The New York Times review was mostly positive and gave a large amount of praise for a book but also explained a couple of concerns which helped me trust it a bit more than I would a review that is completely positive or negative.

As a whole I am going into this class with a fairly positive amount of confidence in our main source of historical information, *Battle Cry of Freedom*. Although I will be attempting to read the book unbiased, I am slightly concerned about some of the historical inaccuracies due to the eleven pages of negative reviews. Since all of the reviews, including the positive ones, did not suggest using the book as your one and only source of information on the Civil War my confidence is not as high as it could be. The credentials and praise that *Battle Cry of Freedom* has gained keeps my confidence in the book positive.