

Austin Crook

History 209

Civil War Era

McPherson #1

Battle Cry of Freedom Review

After reading the various reviews about this textbook, I am confident in saying this book will be informative and most importantly, truthful. The different reviews had many positive comments about this book. Comments such as “It is the best one-volume treatment of its subject I have ever come across”(New York Times), and “It is informative and fair” which came from the second forum. After reading each of these reviews, I believe I can trust the New York Times review the most. The review came across as the most professional and objective of the numerous articles.

The review from the New York Times seems to be a well-written and very objective critique of the textbook. It starts by acknowledging some background about the Civil War and explains that it is the most written about historical event in the world. I did not feel as though the author was biased or trying to persuade me to either side of the review. It did however make some very persuasive and general comments at times, such as “May be the best ever published”. These comments could be seen as uneducated or without factual evidence. But according to the rest of his review he seems to defend this claim with solid evidence. This particular comment referred to all books written about the Civil War and definitely would give readers a positive feeling about the book. Yet, it also gave what seemed to be very honest and critical comments as well. Some of these passages started with “Not quite perfect” or “Lets his vocabulary run away from him”. These critiques help create a informative piece of writing, rather than persuasive, because he writes from perspectives as a fan and as a critic. The writer also criticizes the maps drawn in the book. Later he goes into detail about reasons why the titles for chapters seven and eight were not as accurate as they could be. Due to these specific and honest critiques it seems as though this is a non-biased and trustworthy review.

Reading the second forum review along with the individual customer reviews, could lead you to second-guess yourself about certain aspects of this book. I was finding

myself believing that there are portions of this story that may be partially biased toward the Northern Union and Abe Lincoln. Even though this is a natural feeling for anyone to have when discussing the Civil War, it leads you to think that this book may be missing some important views or stories from the Confederate perspective. During the New York Times Review when it critiques the seventh and eighth chapter titles, it starts to explain that McPherson may allow his vocabulary to alter the perspective or thoughts behind the Confederates philosophy. One interesting fact from the New York Times review as well was when it stated that there “never was a Kingdom of Palermo”. I am not familiar with the Kingdom of Palermo to begin with, but when a critic announces that a textbook refers to a location that apparently does not exist it definitely does lead you to question some validity. But overall each review and critic consistently came back to comments of praise and truthfulness behind this textbook, which gives me great confidence and excitement about reading this textbook.