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Week 7 Forum

The Divided Union

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The Divided Union

by [Joe Escobar](#) – Saturday, February 13, 2016, 5:01 PM

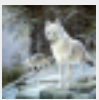
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BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which question(s) you are addressing . Do NOT simply leave it RE: The Divided Union

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Re: Strength vs Complimentary or not

by [Edith Ortega](#) – Wednesday, February 17, 2016, 7:39 PM

I would say that the strengths of these three sources were their ability to tell a story somewhat similar to each other, but that the weaknesses faced by all three, were the lack of accurate information for the most part. All three talk about how the Union had more soldiers, hospitals and supplies than the Confederacy. They also compare the character of Grant and Lee and how they had similar battle strategies, could understand for the most part, how the other thought. And even compare the losses on both sides. But as with the retelling of any story, over the years parts of the original story is lost or deliberately replaced with words to make it sound more glorious than it was. An example would be the amount of troops each side lost in any of the battles.

As for whether they worked well together and or complimented each other....I feel that they did each other a favor and filled in the gaps of the other's story. Helping to give as complete a picture as they could, based on what information was available at the time. In the clip from: The Divided Union, Wilson Greene helped to define and give an actual location visual so that one today could understand the "Battle of the Wilderness" talked about in McPherson's textbook, the Ken Burns episode, and the clip from the Divided Union documentary.

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Re: Strength vs Complimentary or not

by [Tyler Moffett](#) – Friday, February 19, 2016, 12:46 PM

You are right with storytelling and how people will retell stories and make them more glorious than they were. Do you think that should not be allowed in history? There is a gray area with how much is exaggerated and what is allowed to be true. I am talking about more published history documents then just normal conversations or interviews.



Re: Strength vs Complimentary or not
by Edith Ortega – Friday, February 19, 2016, 4:54 PM

In regards to published historical documents, I think (and feel) that the more honest they are done the better. But who is to say what is true and untrue when it comes to our past? Without letters from people telling us what they witness before their eyes, how then do we know what has happened at that time? And depending on the mental state of the soldier and or civilian reporters, how do we say that an event happened? In written history I would say that I am 50/50. This is due to an old saying from my childhood, that you should only listen to half of what someone says, and only believe half of what you read as well.

That said....having watched the mini-series: *Gone With the Wind, Roots, and North and South Books I and II*, McPherson's Book along with the Ken Burns series and now this clip from The Divided Union, I feel even more strongly that history whether good or bad should be 75/25 in regards to truth/fiction respectively.

Edie O!



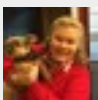
Re: Strength vs Complimentary or not
by Tyler Moffett – Sunday, February 21, 2016, 10:44 PM

I have never thought about it that way and that is very interesting point of view. When i think of history i think of the game telephone, were someone starts with a story and passes it along to people then the last person share it to everyone. It is crazy how much the story can change and how people assume different things. A lot of the time it is unintentional and people don't even realize they are changing the story.



A unified trio.
by Kayla Rogers – Wednesday, February 17, 2016, 9:24 PM

All three sources used a different approach. The strength of the Divided Union was that the information was coming straight from a historian’s mouth which adds validity to the information, which is important since the Ken Burn’s series has been questioned in that aspect. However, at least in the clip we watched, the information presented seemed to be biased in some regards. The text is helpful because it provides much more in depth information regarding the civil war. It has a lot of information which is both a weakness and a strength. The Ken Burns series is more on the graphically entertaining aspect, but as mentioned before has been known to have flaws in its factuality. All three of these pieces work well together because they all approach the information in a different way. Even though the Divided Union and the Civil War series are both videos they take different approaches on portraying the information. They also share different information so if one source is lacking in a specific aspect, one of the others seems to cover whatever was missing.



Re: A unified trio.
by Taralee O'Connor – Sunday, February 21, 2016, 10:34 AM

The Divined Union's use of historians in does lend credence to it's validity, the same could be be said for Ken Burns' Civil War as well. His series contains clips for historians such as; Stephen B. Oates, Barbara J. Fields, Shelby Foote along with former Congressman James Symington. The three pieces do work well together. Using all three sources gives a clearer picture of the Civil War and all the nuances of Grant and Lee's strategies not mention the costly mistakes made by both men such as the Wilderness for Grant and Gettysburg for Lee.



Re: A unified trio.

by [Edith Ortega](#) – Sunday, February 21, 2016, 3:51 PM

I would agree that information coming from the mouth of an expert could be seen as genuine, but what if it is found to be not so genuine after all but based on falsified testimony? What then does that do to the credence of the "expert?"

Taken with a grain of salt, one must realize that though an individual may or may not be retelling an accurate account of events in history, it also doesn't mean that they are deliberately putting false information in front of us with first hand knowledge. Nor does it mean they believe everything they put before us. It mainly is their way of presenting the facts as they know them and letting us "the audience" choose whether they have proven their side of the debate or not.

Your first sentence: "All three sources used a different approach" was to me, a picture of a triangle in which each corner has a story teller, who along with two others meet in the middle to form a more complete picture of the information presented. Thank you for helping me "see" the diagram you would be coming from. It helped a lot.

Edie O!



The Divided Union

by [Tyler Moffett](#) – Wednesday, February 17, 2016, 9:46 PM

Personally i thought The Divided Union did a good job in describing the Generals Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant. I liked how the documentary had many different historians talk and share their knowledge on the generals. The Divided Union felt more personable and felt like the historians were actually talking to you and it was not just a documentary. The divided union showed the forrest stretching from Washington D.C. to Richmond where Grant choose to fight because he was familiar with the land and wanted to go head vs head with Lee. Wilson Greene does an interview at the forrest talking about Grant and Lee and provides a lot of information. Although the civil war series is longer and does provide more information i feel like i got a lot more of the The Divided Union. I think they did complement each other well just the civil war series sounds to monologue.

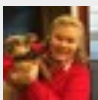


Re: The Divided Union

by [Edith Ortega](#) – Friday, February 19, 2016, 10:53 AM

I too liked how the in the clip from "The Union" had more people talking about the information they had researched and the conclusion they derived from it. And yes I liked Wilson Greene being able to provide a visual picture in real time. As I stated in my post, they each helped in my opinion to fill in the gaps that were missing in the other two formats.

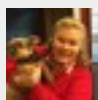
Edie O!



Re: The Divided Union

by [Taralee O'Connor](#) – Sunday, February 21, 2016, 10:12 PM

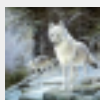
I agree. The Divided Union clip helped supplement and support our textbook reading and the viewing of Ken Burns' series. Having the President of Texas A&M University, Frank VanDiver, show the viewer the trenches at Cold Harbor altered my view of this sight. The series narration and period pictures are helpful and interesting, but to see trenches that are still visible 150 years later was amazing.



Re: Hospitals
by [Taralee O'Connor](#) – Wednesday, February 17, 2016, 10:48 PM

The three sources worked well together. The hospitals were a major factor for both armies. The clip, The Divided Union, helps to reaffirm the severity of the overwhelmed and out numbered medical staff, as well as the lack of proper facilities and cleanliness. The textbook states, “About the building you could see the Hogs belonged to the Farm eating [amputated] arms and other portions of body”. For me, the textbook has the most believe ability due to the expansive language and imagery it contains, such as the quote above. Knowing some of the pictures in Burns’ film are not historically accurate also lends more credibility to McPherson’s book.

Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era. New York: Oxford UP, 1988. 477. Print.

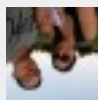


Re: Hospitals
by [Edith Ortega](#) – Friday, February 19, 2016, 5:22 PM

I also found the information about the level of severity do to unsanitary conditions, lack of medical supplies, and able bodied medical personal of extreme interest. It brought home (for me anyway) what it must have seemed like to the soldiers on both sides. My grandfather was in WWI and till his dying day would not talk of the atrocities he witnessed or was a part of. He also had an abhorrent outlook in regards to being in a hospital after he got out of the service.

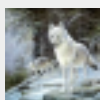
He would when responding to my question of why he didn't like hospitals, replied, "hospitals are for the dying, not the living." In episode 6 of the Ken Burns series, it talks about soldiers and their outlook on being wounded and in the "hospitals" and how people viewed the hospitals as: “*GIANT WAREHOUSES FOR THE DYING*”

Ken Burns: The Civil War: Episode 6–Valley of the Shadow of Death; (1864) time: 50:59



Short post, long week, more to come.
by [William Branstetter](#) – Wednesday, February 17, 2016, 11:55 PM

For the most part the 3 sources seemed to work well together. I got the vibe that the Burns episode seemed to be slightly more generous to the Union and General Grant, and lees so to the Confederacy and Lee. This is just a light vibe that I picked up on based on tone. I heard things in both videos that I didn’t see in the other which is why I say that they complimented each other. An obvious strength of the Burns episode is the time they had to explain the events was much longer then the preview of The Divided Union.



Re: Short post, long week, more to come.
by [Edith Ortega](#) – Sunday, February 21, 2016, 1:32 PM

I felt the same way about the Burns video on the issue of generosity leaning more towards Grant than Lee. But I also feel that both men were given equal amounts of negativity in describing their short comings first as soldiers then as men in general.

Grant's alcoholism and Lee's seemingly non existent humanity, hiding from the eyes of the soldiers

and civilians how remarkable both men actually were in dealing with the events of their personal lives and then the war.

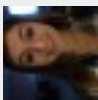
Neither man wanted to go to war, but felt they must as a duty of and to the nation and state for which they belonged to. Lee didn't believe in slavery and secession from the United States, but did believe it was his duty to his beloved state of Virginia. He is quoted as saying the following: *"I DID ONLY WHAT MY DUTY DEMANDED. I COULD HAVE TAKEN NO OTHER COURSE WITHOUT DISHONOR."*

Though Grant had his shortcomings, he too felt a sense of duty to the United States. He is quoted with the following statement: "I feel myself competent to command a regiment," Grant had diffidently informed the adjutant general in a letter of May 24, 1861.

As shown, both men had their reason's and beliefs as to why they chose the paths they did, which would not only shape their futures, it would make them figures due respect for their individual roles in a war that would not only divide but shape the way America looks in the eyes of her children today.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Short post, long week, more to come.

by [Kayla Rogers](#) – Sunday, February 21, 2016, 6:57 PM

Although both videos did seem to have a bias, that is somewhat to be expected. The videos both compliment each other by how they present the material. Burns uses more pictures and interviews, but from what I saw in the Divided Union, you have a historian talking directly to you which captures your attention in a different way. Having more than one way of hearing and seeing the material, to me, is a good thing.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Short post, long week, more to come.

by [Andrea Douglass](#) – Sunday, February 21, 2016, 10:06 PM

I completely agree with you that Ken Burns's documentary seems to side with the union, which is understandable considering the outcome of the war as well as the foundation of the conflict. To me it seems as though the two video sources we've been exposed to are trying to form a sympathetic response towards the union soldiers (which is completely understandable considering our growth past slavery) whereas "Battlecry of Freedom" is a less intimate, but more factual recount fairly representing the struggles and driving moral forces behind both sides. Pairing the sources has been an effective approach to analyzing whichever side we personally may not have considered to be in the right, allowing us to take their actions and motives into consideration with less bias.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Grant and Lee

by [Edith Ortega](#) – Saturday, February 20, 2016, 11:16 PM

Ulysses S. Grant, slouchy and un-soldier like in appearance, of undistinguished family, a West Point graduate from the lower half of his class who had resigned from the army in disgrace for drunkenness in 1854 and had failed in several civilian occupations before volunteering his services to the Union in 1861.

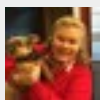
Lee on the other hand, distinguished family heritage, very well disciplined to the point of being called: "The Marble Model," yet well, liked by his classmates at West Point. Appointed to the Prestigious Corps of Engineers, promoted three times for bravery during Mexican War. Also referred to as the “Realized King Arthur” for as one person put it, “The soul that looked out of his eyes was as honest and fearless as when it first looked out on life.”

As with Burns series, McPherson's book and the Divided Union clip, also state what to them are the little things about each person that make you either want to clap them on the back and say well done. Or knock them along the head and decide they need be taught "respect" one way or another.

But no matter which avenue a person chose to take, in the end they both earned the respect of their peers. (Inmy opinion)

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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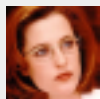
Re: Grant and Lee

by [Taralee O'Connor](#) - Sunday, February 21, 2016, 11:10 AM

The varying sources do give interesting and in-depth accounts of their lineage, temperament long with their military successes and catastrophic mistakes. Grant using "the Heavies" (Burns, 20:50) in the field and not retreating after his defeat in the Wilderness gives a clear picture of his dogged determination to succeed. The clip Divided nation states that Lee was " master of mid-nineteen century warfare but also contributed to it." Lee dividing up his already significantly smaller army was indeed masterful. The commanders had different styles and tactics but they seemed to work well for each of them. Reading and viewing the different material complement each other well and allows us get a cleared picture of the very complex war.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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A Solid Group

by [Andrea Douglass](#) - Sunday, February 21, 2016, 3:56 PM

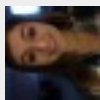
Lee and Grant were consistently described and represented throughout the source materials. Though, The Divided Union was slightly redundant paired with the Ken Burns material, in my opinion. Both seemed to speak in a similar voice providing the same information about the Wilderness, how Grant didn't retreat, the hospitals, etc. They even used the same image of Chattanooga.

The article was interesting because it pointed out things about the new video clip that we have heard many historians complain about regarding the Ken Burns documentary series. The decidedly unnecessary use of false reenactments (photos and documents in Burns' case), reusing photos, etc. I did notice the reuse of photos, portraits mainly, in the Burns documentary, but it doesn't bother me at all. There is limited visual material to be presented over such a lengthy amount of narration. However, the hokey reenactments in The Divided Union were a turn off that made the battlefield look far less grim that it was.

All in all, I think the materials do a great job of working as a group. The McPherson book goes much, much more deeply into the technical workings and politics of the war's operations--filling in holes and inaccuracies--while the documentaries and video clips make the surface information more accessible. Then, the article reminds us to take in information from each source critically.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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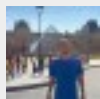
Re: A Solid Group

by [Kayla Rogers](#) - Sunday, February 21, 2016, 6:53 PM

I agree that the three sources worked well together. Everyone learns best in different ways and using all three sources helped to confirm knowledge from the book, but also grabbed your attention at other details. Both videos did a great job of describing the hospitals and lack of medical care. I like the historians talking directly to you in the Divided Union as opposed to the stream of pictures and interviews in the Civil War because it establishes a better connection with you as well as seeming less scripted.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Hospitals

by [Tyler Moffett](#) - Sunday, February 21, 2016, 10:31 PM

In the civil wars series it stresses about the battles and the generals the most. It does a great job in highlighting the battles,the generals in command, and who won. In the divided Union it spends about the last three minutes talking about hospitals. The short clip makes you realize how unprepared both sides were for the number of wounded and killed. They did not have the proper tools or medicine or even housing to keep the wounded soldiers in.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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