



HST 209: American History: Civil War W17 (Escobar 31664)

Home ► Winter 2017 ► HST 209 W17 (Escobar 31664) ►
Week 3 - 1862 - A Very Bloody Affair ► Week 3 Forum ► Two Decades Later


Search forums

Week 3 Forum

Two Decades Later

[• Subscribe](#)[◀ Creative License](#)[Two Decades Later ▶](#)[Move](#)[Pin](#)

Two Decades Later

by Joe Escobar - Thursday, January 26, 2017, 8:23 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Two Decades Later topic.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

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: Two Decades Later

Sum of ratings: -

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

The writer and the actor



by Jordan Okoniewski - Sunday, January 29, 2017, 7:36 PM

The Washington Post article on Sullivan Ballou's letter and Paul Roebbling does not change how I feel about the letter. It was beautifully written, and I felt that since the first time I heard it. However, the back story, about Ballou's corpse being exhumed by an angry mob, and Roebbling's suicide after the death of his wife are indeed more tragedies on top of an already heartbreaking story. I don't disagree with Burn's decision to have Roebbling read the letter while his wife was dealing with cancer- as someone who has a lot of acting experience, and experience with other actors, I believe that most actors would find a degree of catharsis in doing a job such as that while going through such a similar and difficult experience. It gives you a lot to draw from, as well as an opportunity to analyze your own experience from an outside perspective. Sometimes that's not enough though, and this story truly is tragic. At least we have his performance to immortalize him, as this letter goes on to memorialize more than just the man who wrote it.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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



The Article Didn't Change My Opinion

by Spencer Kellar - Sunday, January 29, 2017, 10:37 PM

I enjoyed the article for the info, as it's interesting to get a background on Sullivan Ballou and learn the details about his life; something that Ken Burns did not touch on. But it fails to change my opinion that the letter's placement at the end of the film, as well as Burns not mentioning that the wife wouldn't receive the letter until much later, doesn't really hurt the integrity of the series at all. If anything, the quote he provides regarding the letter completely sells me on its inclusion.

"It's the most beautiful letter I've ever read in my life," he said. 'It's a Grand Canyon of a letter. You can read the strata of meaning. It's all about love. First and foremost is love of country. ... It's about love of government. ... It's a love of cause. ... It's a love of family" (Ruane p.2).

The details regarding when the wife received the letter being omitted isn't a big deal, because that's not the point of why the letter was included. It's still highly emotional, because as Andrew Carroll points out in the article, these types of letters (of the "if I do not return" genre) require the writer to put "all of their heart and emotion into what they know will be their final words" (Ruane p.3). The most important aspect of the letter, in my opinion, is that a soldier wrote with such poetic and beautiful prose while also participating in a brutal war. It's an excellent juxtaposition. It brings the character to life, and it humanizes Ballou in a way nothing else can. Even if Ballou's letter had never found its way to his wife, I would argue its importance would not diminish at all.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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

 Moodle Docs for this page

Accessibility at Lane

You are logged in as Joe Escobar (Log out)

HST 209 W17 (Escobar 31664)

