

HST 209: History of the Civil War W18 (Escobar 31595)

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Petersburg Documentary

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Petersburg Documentary

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, February 24, 2018, 8:16 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Petersburg Documentary 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 bullet item you are addressing . Do NOT simply leave it RE: Petersburg Documentary

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Pro Confederate- but not bad

by Rose Thomas - Tuesday, February 27, 2018, 1:14 PM

Ken Burns shows the Confederate soldiers as men who have no idea what they are doing. They are desperate, inexperienced, and do not know what they are getting into. They are Southern plantation owners who think that the North is coming to ruin their way of live. In this documentary (Petersburg) they show the Confederate soldiers as smart, cunning and know they will never give up. People that the Union was not expecting. The narrator is prideful of Lee. Calling him "a father to his soldiers". He refers to Grant as "nothing inspirational". He boasts about the fact that people called Grant the Butcher. This documentary is very pro Confederate. But it is really good to hear other people's opinions and views.

Sources:

Petersburg Documentary

Ken Burns Documentary: The Civil War

The Battle Cry of Freedom

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Re: Pro Confederate- but not bad

by Miles Arnold - Sunday, March 4, 2018, 1:58 PM

I keep thinking about what we both said in our posts about seeing different points of view. I still agree, it's nice to hear a different point of view, but why is it necessary to hear that point of view?

It would be like making a documentary about how courageous the Nazis were in battle. My point being, both the Nazis and the Confederates held beliefs that are, for the most part, believed to be politically and morally wrong. Sure its "interesting" to hear another point of view but in the end, I have no sympathy for the way they died or what great guys they were.

We know what there ideas and moral foundations were. Why stop to appreciate it?

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A Turning Point

by Miles Arnold - Wednesday, February 28, 2018, 11:06 AM

I believe it's important to take a closer look at Petersburg and the siege there because of it uniqueness to previous sieges and the eventual turning point it created. Unlike the classic military siege, there were months of trench warfare, small battles that took place around the town during numerous attempts to dismantle the railroads leading into town. It was also one of the last Confederate strongholds and obstacles standing between the Union Army and Richmond which added a level of desperation on both sides. Im not sure the documentary does a better job than the text explaining it but I definitely feel like its important to listen to historians with a bit of "southern pride" tell the story with view point that expresses sympathy for fallen Confederate soldiers.

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The Death of a nation. Worthwhile.

by Brennan Blankenship - Wednesday, February 28, 2018, 11:46 AM

If two battles could be most important in the war it should be Antietam and Petersburg. To see two men hell bent on succeeding in their goals and not letting obstacles stop them. Grants determination to put an end to Lee at Petersburg and yet Lee's inconceivable invincibility and the ability of both men to defy the odds. Antietam could have been the turning point and forced the Union's hand causing the Confederate to ultimately win the war with a capture of

Washington. Yet it failed and Petersburg became the death of a new nation. Petersburg is a worthwhile focal point because like Antietam had the offensive won the capital would surely follow as history would have it happen.

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Worthwhile: Graveyard of the Confederacy

by Saige Sloan - Sunday, March 4, 2018, 5:39 PM

Petersburg Documentary--

After watching the Petersburg: The Graveyard of the Confederacy video, I had a more in-depth understanding of the the war, as well as the issues surrounding Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee. This documentary offered a more fast-paced informative outlook on the war, and also offered a more adequate timeline, filled with dates and notes of who/what/why and where took place as it did. Unlike the weekly episodes we watch, I found the narration in this film to be more informative, but also potentially harder to comprehend what was being said due to its extensive information output.

In the beginning of the video, that narrator addresses that both the North and the South suffered an unfathomable amount of loss on either side, all while pushing forward with the Petersburg campaign. Earlier stating, "After two days of fighting in the Wilderness, eleven days at Spotsylvania, another two at the North Anna river left fields scorched and lands stained by death." Within a single months time, general Ulysses S. Grant suffered more than 50,000 casualties, as well as Robert E. Lee's loss of 32,000 men, which was more than half his army. A man later found fit for the job, Benjamin Butler, advanced his newfound army of more than 40,000 men to begin the threat on Richmond and Petersburg. The documentary later goes more in-depth about the men vital to the success and failure alongside the war.

Similar to the textbook, the documentary Petersburg: The Graveyard of the Confederacy, seemed to have a more accurate representation of the war. I appreciated how a few of the narration were given in the places the battles took place, for example: the Siege of Petersburg. Beginning northeast of Richmond, called Cold Harbor, the narrator stood and explained how soldiers would place a piece of paper on their backs with their information to be identified if they were to be killed, as he held a piece of paper to his own.

Overall, I think the documentary of Petersburg was well worth while, as well as the battle itself. Though fast paced, the film was highly informative and truly interesting. Each narrator offered a different in-put of what had happened, yet all worked well together. Within the relms of the war, there was an unfortunate amount of grief and devastation on either side, yet played crucial part in the ending of the Civil War, likewise for shaping our country in its expansion. This video made a fine comparison with the Battle Cry of Freedom textbook, and could easily be related to each of Ken Burns Civil War episodes.

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Siege of Petersburg unlike any other

by Brennan Blankenship - Sunday, March 4, 2018, 8:31 PM

It is crazy and infuriating to learn that two so called "leaders" were not fit to command the Union troops that rushed The Crater. When one thinks of trench warfare it would appear that World Wars and the tunnelers instantly come to mind. It comes as a shock to learn about the massive failure and yet the counteractive success of the Petersburg Campaign. A siege that was totally different from all other previous ones. With just a few key changes for example ladders and the generals actually being sober and showing up for the fight and being on time The Crater would have been a huge success. Yet I still wonder if Grant had Lee surrounded why didn't he just sit back and wait him out. Lee had held out for over nine months and surely he couldn't hold out much longer. Yet again many soldiers' lives were lost in yet another stalemate between the two armies but ultimately the Union proved to be victorious with the capture of Richmond.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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A good supplement to fill in the gaps.

by Paul Geu - Sunday, March 4, 2018, 9:11 PM

After reading the Mcpherson text and watching the Burn documentary I feel that watching this alternative documentary was a good bridge to fill in the gaps that were left from the other sources. One part that I like was that this source had actual locations in modern times so we can actually see the defensive obstacles the confederates used, the sites where the forts were located, and where the battles were actually fought. One area that I felt was unhelpful was the maps that the Petersburg documentary used to illustrate the birds eye view of the area.

The inclusion of this documentary, I felt, is a good use of our time because the siege at Petersburg is one of the major battles of the civil war and also lasted for 9 months of the war itself leaving us a lot of material to cover. By focusing on just one battle of the long campaign, we are able to get more in depth of how these brave men fought each other. One aspect that I particularly liked was the visuals of the crater. While 150 years have made the landscape change I was better able to understand the difficulty faced by the men of the crater as they fought fruitlessly to gain ground against the defenders. The documentary also gave a insight to how Lincoln wanted Lee to be treated when he told Grant to "let 'em up easy." Overall, I felt that this documentary gives us the right visuals of the battle sites, more in depth analysis of the battles themselves, and also a good palate cleaners by using different historians than we have seen in the Burns documentary to make this a worth while use of our time.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

3

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Re: A good supplement to fill in the gaps.

by Saige Sloan - Sunday, March 4, 2018, 9:55 PM

Paul,

I very much agree with your post. The alternative documentary was an excellent source of information to incorporate with both the text and Burns episodes. It was such fast pace and highly informative, definitely best used for an additional resource rather than the main source for this class. I was appreciative at the amount of detail included in the film, and so far throughout the class. The detail involved was very in-depth and informative, especially regarding the siege, Petersburg, Grant, Lee, etc.. Really appreciated your post.

Saige

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Documentary gives great perspective from both sides

by Andrew Smith - Sunday, March 4, 2018, 9:31 PM

This documentary did a wonderful job at really explaining the full struggle on both sides during the battles for Petersburg. In examining the union, it really highlighted the lack of leadership and intelligence of many Northern generals. Specifically Burnside, who at every mention continues to be painted similar to McClellan in his inability to be the general the army needs. It is almost unbelievable to learn that Burnside's lack of decision making led to the decision making of a general who stayed in his bunker and got drunk during the battle. It's as if the North had every tool to win the war except the proper men to man the tools. Had it not been for Grant, the war may not have been won as quickly as it was. In examining the South, this documentary heavily showed the relentless courage and fighting of the Southerners despite a major lack in supplies and men. In addition, it showed that the South could very easily have won the war with proper supplies and more men. The South had incredible generals since the beginning of the war and Petersburg specifically showed how well they could defend their land. The documentary made it clear that the South defended the city all the way down until the lines were too thin to hold.

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2

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Focus on Petersburg

by Andrew Smith - Sunday, March 4, 2018, 9:45 PM

This focus on Petersburg was a very worthwhile task. It showed how this last final push won the war. It also shows just how hard the struggle was for both sides. Focusing on the ridiculous amount of pointless losses in the crater and the struggle to penetrate the city showcased the Union's leadership problems. Although, the tunneling and hard work that the soldiers put into the endeavor showed their relentless drive to win the war. On both sides, this focus on Petersburg showed how hard both sides would fight. The numerous tunnels and fortifications that the Southerners created made it clear that they were organized and ready. Nevertheless in the end, this focus on Petersburg showcased how the Southern fight was a lost cause. Despite their relentless will, they clearly didn't have the men or supplies to win the war. Many other battles showed that the South could still win despite everything but this siege specifically showed that the North simply had everything it needed to win and that the South was at this point doomed.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Benefits to the Petersburg Documentary

by Dakota Brotherton - Sunday, March 4, 2018, 9:51 PM

I personally believe that the narrow focus on Petersburg was a worth-while task due to the fact that it was one of the crucial endeavors of the civil war that eventually led to its end, and the way with which details and insight are portrayed in the video give valuable information that is

perhaps overlooked or misrepresented in Ken Burns piece. While I can admit that there seems to be a lack of the theatrical feel that Burns documentary has and because of this can be a bit harder to really tune into for an hour however there is a sense that the documentary is meant to be no-nonsense, right down to the facts. What I mean by that is there is close to no background music included, there are hardly any battle reenactment scenes and there is certainly a lack of emotional ties that Burnes tries to make by using personal letters and accounts to get a more personified feel. The historians are there just laying out all the facts for the viewer in a way that all just seems to connect better with my brain personally because there isn't a 3-minute segment that is using photographs, music and a personal letter to gain interest but instead a 45 second rant about who did what and when they did it and what happened. One example that comes to mind is the video segments description of the Battle of The Crater which provided me with a much clearer understanding of the event with the use of maps that you'd see in a class-room power point and the straight forward demeanor with which the historians render their version of the battle.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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One of the Informative Aspect of the Petersburg Documentary

by Dakota Brotherton - Sunday, March 4, 2018, 10:07 PM

One aspect of the video on Petersburg that I really enjoyed and gained quite a bit from in terms of understanding the unique perspective of a siege battle beginning in the 35th minute of the Petersburg documentary piece when Historian A. Wilson Greene appears on screen. I feel as if the elements of the siege fortification that he shows and explains to the viewers give me an understanding that just wasn't produced by reading the facts and numbers in a textbook or hearing about it over a piece of musical composition. He just points it all out so clearly and shows certain features of the battle field that give you a completely different perspective. It's aspects like this that I wish were included in Ken Burns documentary series more often because of the power that it would have in educating people. If great storytelling and directing could be combined with visual displays and informative examples, then I believe that historical documentaries could be one of the most important tools in educating people of the future.

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