

Agina Hale

HST 209

I know that it might sound crazy to say that I fell in love with a time in history that equates to the bloodiest time in American history, but I have. In my high school history class, the Civil War was a quick and typical look at the war. It wasn't until my college history class that a lot of the questions I had in my head fell into place. I had an epiphany of sorts one day in class when we went over the actual numbers of supporters for the war, on both sides. Somehow 1.5% in the north and 2% of the south turned the country against each other and what followed was absolute chaos. I decided in that moment that if my academics could back up my love for history, I would love to major in the Civil War. I even daydreamed that somewhere in the question of 1.5% vs. 2% was a graduate thesis.

My point to all of this is that there was a time when I was being taught that the Civil War was a "good vs evil", hinged solely on the fact that slavery was bad. It wasn't until I did my own research that I got a bigger perspective on the war. I learned a long time ago how biases can really make a big influence. The war has been over for almost 150 years, yet the strain is still evident. I was born here in Oregon, and have lived here all but two years of my life. I am married to a southerner; we have often compared the differences in our education, and overall sentiment towards each region. It became quite clear how much each side holds the other at fault, and I don't think that it will ever go away.

After reading the negative book reviews, I honestly decided to purchase the Shelby Foote's trilogy. I have become so used to biases on both sides, that I really do look for the impartial truth. I find myself defensive when people make rude assumptions about

southerners, just as much as I defend some of the remarks of my own region. I study the “why” in history. Every event in history has multiple “strings” of cause. For example: World War II didn't just suddenly erupt out of nowhere. Politics, religion, culture, economics are just a few pieces of information in the big cause and effect.

I believe you can actually learn something from biases, but knowing them does help when you are taking in what you are learning. What I feel I learn, is the emotional connection. I will give an example from my personal life. Since my husband is a southerner, and a Texan specifically, he tends to be very defensive about slavery reaching Texas. He hates the assumption everyone makes about how much of the south had slaves. We are still talking about almost 150 years and it's something still personal. Another of his issues shows how bitter the south still feels about the Civil War. The fact that before the war, the south was an economically prosperous region. The war flipped the economics between the north and the south, and it's remained so to this day. This is still something that southerners haven't forgiven. Here in the north and those who side with the north have a view that we are superior because we were on the side of the righteous. History does have a tendency to lose track of facts over the years. It's like the longest game of telephone. These are all reasons to take everything you read with a grain of salt. Learn what someones perspective is as best you can before you read what they have to say. I will read this book with the biases I have learned on both sides, and try to find the middle road.

Reading these reviews about Battle Cry for Freedom gave me great anticipation for the story and facts behind the civil war. In considering how I will be approaching the reading, I plan to take care to read all the footnotes associated with individual passages. From the books high praises I can tell it will be informative and truthful about all aspects of the war. It seems to me that most of the negative reviews were done by very intense history lovers who want more information than your average reader. There was also some comments about the writes personal bias affecting the facts. I think that it is incredibly hard to be completely impartial to any story. Having not read the whole book myself its hard for me to know where I stand. But I feel like I can trust myself to see if there is any bias in the book. I'm not really worried about the writers personal bias crating an discrepancy in historical facts. For the most part, the book has been praised for being factual and correct in the building of affairs the surrounded the civil war.

In regard to what review I trust the most, I have to say I take all of them with a grain of salt. If I had to choose one that was the most honest it would have to be the review done by the New York Times. I find the credible published reviews tend to be the most impartial when discussing the facts. However, I have always been interested in what the general pubic has to say about books through reviews on amazon. When I see that the majority of the readers really enjoyed a book it helps reinforce my belief that they might be right. In the end I don't know what their motives were behind their review or what information they were seeking in the book so I always try to trust my gut.

I think for this class the book chosen in perfect. Even if there is any bias I don't think it will take away from the information offered. Most of the review were very positive in regards to its accuracy and ability to be understood so that anyone can read it and learn form it. So I'm relativity excited to see what secrets it holds about our nations history.

Andrew McGarry

Joe Escobar

HST209 McPherson 1

January 11th 2015

After reading these reviews I am very unsure about the approach I will be taking while reading through this text over the course of the term. Since there are so many different reviews that have their own opinions about the book and author I am choosing to go into this book with an open mind. I have my own opinions and am going to reserve the right to make my own up as I go further into the information that is in the book. The civil war is not something that is taught in extreme depth through levels such as middle school and high school so reading that the details in this text are very extensive is a nice sign that I will learn a lot during the term in a subject that is overall a little bit hazy to me.

One thing that did kind of spark up my concern a little bit were the reviews that said the author was using his own bias during the writing of this book. I am hoping that this is not the case as that could skew the facts and details that are discussed. However, many of the other reviews said that it was a very detail oriented book that goes to great lengths to relay facts that are little known or discussed. My primary hope for this book is the detail I read about all of the political issues that were going on right before the start of the Civil War. This is stuff that is rarely talked about in great lengths by teachers in class so it will be a great part of the history to learn about. It is these facts that I am most interested in learning about during my time in the class.

Of all the reviews I have read on this text there is no clear source in which I trust more, some of the reviews are very professionally written by people who have continuously studied the topic while others are wrote by people like me, just everyday purchasers off of Amazon.com. Although I feel that the professionally written articles are more credible, I feel like I have more of a common ground with those reviews that were wrote by the "everyday citizens". It is because of these reasons why I will try to keep an extremely open mind during my time reading the book, as I would like to pull the facts for myself instead of going off of someone else's opinion. It is for this reason that I feel like the text that was selected for this term is very credible and appropriate. If it wasn't I do not feel like it would be used as the primary text for this course, I trust it will be a very fact-heavy book that will provide us with credible information on a very widely discussed topic on our nations history.

I don't think that I, personally, can come to an early decision about how I'm going to be approaching this textbook. I could take as many reviews as I possibly want to, into account, but I'd still have to go into it with an open mind. That goes for any book out there though. There are always going to be people who hated the book and people who praise the book to no end. But it won't be until I have read or tried to read a book, myself, that I could come to any decision or personally opinion about it.

History books are going to always have historical inaccuracies and depending where you are and what side you're reading from, could determine how many inaccuracies you might come across. The only issues I have with going into reading a history book, are personal biases. I prefer history textbooks written by more than one person because you get far more insight from any and all sides and biases when you read though them. So in reading a book written by one person, it is very easy to pinpoint the author's personal biases about the content they're writing about.

The best option is to take all reviews read, into account. As stated above, there are always going to be people who don't like what they're reading and there will be people who think it's the greatest book written on the subject. There were quite a few negative reviews that I read about the author's personal bias, so knowing about them before diving into the book is a big help and something I can be aware of right off the start. However, reading the good reviews was also very helpful and good to keep in mind when reading this book. I trust everyone's review for different reasons and will take every single one of them into account when I am reading the textbook.

I have a pretty decent confidence about this being the textbook for this class. Obviously it isn't going to matter that much what book we could have be using for the class, not everything within the book could be totally and completely accurate. It is nice knowing that this book gets into heavy detail about what happened before, during and somewhat after the Civil War, so I very much look forward to that. This is one of my all time favorite time periods in American History, so I might have my own personal biases about it. I am excited to really get into reading this book, regardless of how accurate or inaccurate things might be or what biases the author has. Getting different perspectives from different sources and writers is always a good thing. So my confidence level for the book is pretty good.

Bethany Hunter-Lehman

HST 209

Assignment 1: McPherson Paper

January 11, 2015

Going into this class, I knew that there would be some challenges with the material that I would be learning. I would like to think that I enjoy learning history, but being that the Civil War is such a huge subject I do have some uneasiness about being able to grasp the concepts that we will learn. In my opinion, there is not just one side or two sides to a story, but many. I know going into this class that there would be views of this subject that could be true or maybe not as true. Learning history takes an open mind, so all sides can be examined. Reading the reviews did prove to me that there are different views that people may or may not agree upon. The reviews just reminded me that I do have to keep an open mind.

The first review, "The Bloodiest Wars" demonstrated that I should pay attention to the illustrations that are in *Battle Cry of Freedom*. In the past I have learned that pictures of what I am learning do help me understand the subject more effectively. Throughout the term, I will pay attention to the illustrations because the review mentioned that they were done wonderfully and I know that I learn better this way. The review also mentions that some places that McPherson talks about are not known to the reviewer. In this particular case, I am not going to worry too much about the names because sometimes people have different names for places. By reading this review I do have more reassurance that the information is good quality material.

The second review by Dave Thomer was also a good source on what to expect from the book. Once again, the reviewer points out the excellent detail that is put into the book with footnotes that the author has provided. Since Thomer did point out the footnotes, I know that I will use these as I read the chapters to better understand the information. A negative that the reviewer did point out is that McPherson may be a little bias throughout the book. This does worry me, because I like to see all sides of a story and by being bias it could harm the other views' position. Overall the review did seem more positive than negative, so as a result I still feel hopeful that this book is going to be a great source.

The third set of reviews from Amazon definitely did worry me. It seems that everyone felt that the author did a good job leading up to the Civil War, but lacked in other departments. A positive that I read was that the reviewers felt that this was novice material. Even though it may have been meant as something bad, I see the positive side because I am a novice. It has reinforced that I can obtain a basic understanding of the material. Once again, the reviewers felt that McPherson was biased which will shut down that open mind quality that I want to keep.

After all the reviews I have read, I feel that all were helpful in detecting how I should prepare myself for the reading. The Civil War is such a huge subject; I feel that it

is impossible to learn every detail in a term, let alone in a 900 page book. In conclusion, we would not have this book if the instructor did not feel that it was a good teaching tool. Going into the term I will keep all the reviews in mind in how to approach the book, as well as keep an open mind.

I have gone over the book and have noticed it seems very small for a book that is about the American Civil War. I am guessing that this book is biased and based on the author's own point of view and how he is interpreting the events that unfolded during the Civil War. I mean the title is a little misleading in my opinion "Battle Cry of Freedom" seems wrong because who really wanted freedom during the Civil War and the answer is the black slaves did and by reading the title it makes it seem that the Southern whites wanted freedom. In a sense the only freedom they wanted was to keep their bellies full by using slave labor. When it comes to determining the historical accuracy of this book I don't have the slightest clue if this book is accurate because I have never taken a course on the American Civil War for all I know the war was fought by Storm troopers from Star Wars. I only know a few facts about the Civil War and those facts I have cross referenced from material on the internet and other books written about the that period in time.

The Civil War is a game changer in American social structure and I hope this book can show how the effect of the Civil War changed America. The Civil War was not fought by my ancestors so I guess I'm not really bothered by the accuracy in that aspect but it is American history so the book should be pretty spot on when it's explaining events during the Civil War. I don't have any sources that I trust the most when it comes to history I just like to read and learn as I go and double check information when I feel something doesn't make any sense but then again American history is filled with war and racism so it gets kind of boring reading how people oppress each other based on skin color. So if I was to pick a source of information I would go with any institution that is funded by the Federal Government due to the fact that they would try to get the information as correct as possible because of the Federal funding that institution receives.

When it comes to confidence concerning this book I would have to say that because the instructor of the class has chosen this book as our main source of reading my confidence is high. The main reason for my answer is due to the fact that I don't want to fail this class and because this is the required textbook for this class. I would hope that the book is accurate and pretty detailed about events leading, during and after the Civil War was ended. This is yet to be seen as this is only the 1st week of the course and this is all the information I have available on these questions asked as part of this assignment.

Gabrielle Jones

History 209

Assignment 1

I myself will be approaching this book with an open mind, seeing as I don't know much about the Civil War. I remember learning about it in middle school and high school but it didn't interest me that much. As I got older I started watching the history channel and they would show stories about the war and I got interested. I also grew up with a sister whose favorite war is the Civil War. It's not really an inaccuracy but in most text books they may mention the African Americans who participated in the war but they don't talk about it much.

I trust the newspaper book review source the best because it's his job to read books and write reviews on them. He probably went to school for journalism or something in that field. So I know he's educated in what he does. Or he is a history buff so he might know a lot about what he's writing about. I have a lot of confidence on this book because in all the reviews we read, they were all positive.

I may not know much about the Civil war, but with this class I'm betting I will learn a lot. It may not even be my favorite war but it is one of the good ones to learn about.

The way that I will approach *Battle Cry of Freedom* will be done with a just a small amount of caution. The reasoning of my somewhat skeptical thoughts would be in part to be able to differentiate what is fact and what is James McPherson personal opinion. I myself do not know much about the Civil War and therefore I am not certain of true facts. However, I would assume that because James McPherson is a Professor of United States History at Princeton University and that our teacher has choose this book as our reading material it should be pretty accurate. Again, I know that I should also make sure to separate McPherson opinions and actually into consideration.

There is not too much that I am worried about when it comes to the historical accuracy of McPherson's book. The reasons being is that he has studied this particular war for some time in order to be a Professor of United States history. I will make sure to ask any questions that may arise.

As for the sources/reviews of this book I would hands down trust the review from New York Times. I believe that this review has the most reliable background. The New York Times has been around since 1851 and the paper's print version remains the largest metropolitan newspaper in the United States (1). I also noticed that the NY Times Article was the only that was cited on the bibliography, which makes me question the other reviews. I am a little leery about the review from notnew.org. I could not really find very much about them or what they are exactly. Not knowing what they are and what their credentials are makes me skeptical. As for the reviews on Amazon, I take all of the reviews with a grain of salt. It doesn't say who any of the people are that are reviewing the book. Nor does it even say what their qualifications are on the Civil War or US History. It seems that they are normal everyday people that wanted to learn a little about the Civil War. Their comments were more about how the book read and not about the lack of facts or that the facts were incorrect. They seemed to review this book as a non-fiction book rather than an educational one.

As I researched more on who and where these reviews came from I became more confident in the historical information in this book. I will still try to take McPherson's personal opinions in to consideration but other than that I will look for facts. I can't wait to truly start reading this book and learning about the Civil War. Let's just say I am very intrigued about this part of US History.

Bibliography

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Date: January 9, 2015

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_York_Times

Jaime Baker

Hist 209 W15

McPherson Assignment #1

After reading the reviews on Battle Cry Of Freedom, I am excited to learn more about the Civil war. I will approach this reading both with the excitement of learning and the weariness of perhaps a biased author. That seems to be a universal flaw in the reviews provided on this book. The one thing that most of those reviewing his book agree on is he is a skilled, writer with the ability to cover a lot of material without giving a lot of filler, non-important information. That should make the book more enjoyable to read and easier to understand.

One of the issues in regards to historical accuracy that worries me the most is the lack of truth with who fought the war. There were African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans and multiple immigrant groups who fought in the war. These races are not written about thoroughly (per reader reviews) like the whites are. Was this simply the readers interpretation, or is this how the book was written? I'll have to read it to find out. The statement about pre-confederate voters in more than a dozen counties boycotting the election is also false per another reviewer. This is inaccurate because there were not polls in all 13 counties. Some of the polls were opened by force and guarded by the Ohio soldiers, who in turn were responsible for most of the votes that were counted. There are other inconsistencies regarding the treatment and release of the slaves.

The reviews I trust the most are the Amazon reviews from multiple readers. I trust these reviews because there are several different people providing a review on this book. They gave reference to different parts of the book that was concerning due to lack of facts, too much rambling, a biased opinion etc. I prefer to have several opinions to review when forming an opinion for myself. However, the review given by Dave Thomer was good very informative also. He too gave examples of where the book was accurate versus where it was not. He refers to specific examples in the book when giving his opinion during the review. I felt like the review by the New York Times was more of a personal review of the author and his ability to write instead of an accurate review of the book.

My confidence level is high that this book will be both educational and beneficial in learning about the Civil war. Although there are reviewers that voice their concern about the author being biased or the facts not being completely true, I think as a whole the book will be beneficial for learning. I'd also like to think that you as a Professor would not have us spend an entire semester reading a book that is not accurate or educational.

Janey Willis

American History

Escobar

1/11/15

After reading the reviews on 'Battle Cry Of Freedom' by James M. McPherson I am actually much less nervous about this course and think I'll have more focus when reading the book. I am looking forward to the fact that the book is from a standpoint that is more on military strategy rather than politics, since I feel like I will get less bored when reading about the civil war from this perspective.

Seeing parts in the reviews about this book being written in perspective that is more engaging certainly encouraged me, as the civil war can be a topic that while fascinating, is not always that exciting to learn about. Hopefully with the nature of the writing and narrative it will keep my attention and help me succeed in this class.

I am not particularly worried about the historical accuracy of this. From what I understand this is a well-documented and highly studied topic and I believe that those who study and write about it are focused on accuracy and truth. However, from the reviews it seems clear that things on both sides are reported on. Because of this I feel like most information that we will be receiving is fairly accurate. I do however worry a little about the fact that because this is an issue that has two sides there could be a little bias which can of course cause information that isn't exactly true to be presented as true or to be altered.

With all things considered after reading the reviews I have a lot of faith and confidence in this text and think that it will do a good job of teaching the subject. From the reviews I get the idea that there is a large amount of information presented in an engaging and easy to follow way.

The New York Times review struck me for a completely different reason than the Amazon reviews and Dave Thomer's comments about "Battle Cry of Freedom". What first stood out to me about the Times review was the praise for the lack of redundant details. In one breath, the reviewer is praising McPherson's literary genius by stating that he omits "nothing important, whether military, political or economic." In the next, he is claiming that the magic of McPherson's writing is in what he omits, such as Lincoln's assassination. It seems obvious to me that such a national shock would influence the country's military, politics, and economy. The reviewer claims that, "Lincoln's sudden disappearance from the book gives us something of a shock that his contemporaries felt when he died," and claims this to be a brilliant literary move. In my opinion, to assume that "everybody knows the story of the murder" is a little pretentious and myopic. For a volume the reviewer believes to potentially be the best ever written on the subject, it should be complete in all major events, even the ones the author may assume are redundant.

The second issue I took with the New York Times Review was the reviewer's admiration of McPherson's ability to "argue his readers" into his viewpoint. The reviewer is enamored by the "living relationships" in the book, which he describes as "magical". It seems that he or she read "Battle Cry of Freedom" strictly from the viewpoint of a literary critic, rather than a historian. The accolades given the book are largely based on McPherson's gifts as a persuasive writer, rather than historical accuracy and objectivity. That is, until the last couple paragraphs, in which he nitpicks the choice of titles for chapters seven and eight. For one so hell-bent on semantics and accuracy, you would think the reviewer would expect a more unbiased approach to historical writing. I dare say, it even seemed that the reviewer penned the last couple paragraphs as a matter of prestige, to give himself weight as a history buff, in order to make his review seem more legitimate.

Dave Thomer is much less enthralled with McPherson's opinions. Though he concedes that the book is "fair and extremely informative," he cannot call it balanced or objective. This alerts me that I may require a fine toothed comb to separate the fact from opinion. I've found it especially true in textbooks that it is hard to recognize where absoluteness ends and rhetoric begins, which makes me hyper-sensitive to whatever slant may be present in McPherson's writing. I am concerned that my relative ignorance of Civil War history will hamper my ability to detect inaccuracies. My hope is that although this is our main text, we will have additional readings from other perspectives in order to formulate our own opinions.

For several reasons, I feel most inclined to trust the customer reviews of the book. Most of them seem to be written by people who are either disputing historical inaccuracies, or who believe that the book was written with an unrealistic opinion. These reviewers care less about the style of writing, and more about the accuracy of the content. They have nothing to gain from writing a review at all, and many of them seem to be well-versed on the subject of Civil War history, even offering alternative books to read. The customer reviews call McPherson's book, "disappointing and very biased," claim that, "McPherson takes the easy way out and sides with his own bias," and argue that he "embarks upon an anti-Southern crusade." I feel these reviews make it necessary for me

to approach “Battle Cry of Freedom” with an air of skepticism for the opinions presented, and an intentionality for absorbing only the facts. I feel confident in my ability to extract fact from opinion, especially being armed with the knowledge that a bias most likely does exist. The vast majority of events and depictions of relationships are probably accurate, and I can certainly learn a lot from McPherson’s writing, even from his opinions.

Jamie McKinney
Joe Escobar
HST 209
1/11/2015

Assignment 1: Trusting Your Source

Trusting your source for accurate information, historical accounts, and unbiased delivery is incredibly important when writing academic papers; especially since students are so trusting of professors, scholars, or those that display merit. But when dealing with topics, such as the civil war, I think it would be impossible to find a completely accurate and unbiased delivery of the historical accounts of the civil war. After reading the reviews from the newspaper book reviewer, online blogger, and the reviews from Amazon.com book buyers; I am going into "Battle Cry of Freedom" open to possibility.

After reading the review from the New York Times book reviewer, I felt excited. Looking forward to "... the best one-volume treatment of its subject I have ever come across. It may actually be the best ever published (New York Times Reviewer)." He did point out some discrepancies, like the chapter titles; but he made it quite clear it was not at all a ding in McPherson's credibility or work as a whole. The book reviewer also seemed especially enthusiastic about McPherson foot notations and bibliography at the end of the book, which I would assume in his line of work (checking his sources when doing a review) would come in handy.

Once again, McPherson's detailed footnotes and bibliography are praised upon but this time by the online blogger. Even though the online blogger was not as enthusiastic about McPherson's book, he or she still commended him on his "balanced" perspectives. He also ended his review by stating that McPherson's work was "fair and extremely informative." Now, since reading all the reviews it was reassuring that McPherson's efforts to support his facts with an assumingly impressive bibliography and footnotes was dually noted by New York times book reviewer and the online blogger.

The reviews from the Amazon.com website were a completely different story. I was taken back by the accusations of false information and biased perspective, but this is a great example of why we check our sources. There were some reviews from Amazon.com that said McPherson was one-sided against the South, and dismissed important details because of this. Another reviewer actually cited the pages he

had issues with, and then followed each "inaccurate" statement from McPherson with his version, but he left out the sources for his "factual" version. Some of the Amazon.com review authors were well-written, which leads me to believe that they are well informed and educated; but others not so much. Sometimes with reviews such as these it is easy to simply dismiss the reviews because the authors are unknown, we do not know their academic authority or the sources of their knowledge; but it plants a seed of doubt for a future reader no matter their merits or lack thereof.

While reading "Battle Cry of Freedom" there are a couple things that I will look out for due to these reviews. I will be paying more attention to McPherson's point of view in order to decide for myself if he is biased, or if he really tells his story of the civil war from both angles equally. The other issue that was brought up is true motive in the South, which some Amazon.com reviewers felt was overlooked because of McPherson's love for the North. I would like to read more about the accounts from a southerner because all I have heard seems to have come from a northerner's perspective. Out of all of the reviews, I trust the one from the New York Times. I am drawn to it because of how well-written it was, and the excitement he expressed about his bibliography. But when it comes down to it, I will be making my own decisions as I read through the "Battle Cry for Freedom." If I choose to question events or facts, I will check McPherson's sources and then compare them to other accounts as needed. I believe that when we are discussing an event like the civil war: not all facts will be the same, for every perspective is different. And not every single event or account in the civil war can be proven, so perspectives and opinions have room to grow; that is why there are so many books written about this topic.

Jordan Hevern

1/9/15

McPherson Assignment

1. Can you come to an early decision about how you will be approaching this book? Just like coming into this class, I will be approaching this book with an open mind and willing to give it a chance like any other book that I would be assigned to me. Of course this book will be knowledgeable and accurate to a certain extent because we are reading this in a college class, and I feel that the books that I have previously had to work in have been informational and accurate to what is being taught in the class. I will be approaching this book also with excitement to learn whatever it may teach me, and to get more in depth information of on the civil war.

1. What issues related to historical accuracy worry you the most? The issue that I am worried about is the accuracy of the names of all the soldiers that were involved in the war. Being that the battle was in 1861 the names of everyone was probably not accounted for. I am nervous that we will not get a sense of all the men that were involved, because back in those days they did not have computers or filing cabinets to keep all records of all the fighters. I know that we will get accuracy of all the leaders, because they were noble men that were in charge and they were the talk of the war. Also many men probably didn't all die because they bleed to death or of an accurate shot, many men died of disease, starving, and other natural killers, making it hard to differ from battle kills and natural causes. For me, I would like to know how many men died from battle compared to other elements.

1. What sources/reviews do you trust the most, and why? For this topic, I don't really trust any internet sources because the internet is so much easier to alter and fill with false information. When it comes to war and known historical events, I would prefer to learn the information from book and hand written work. Books give me a sense of the truth. They go through so much to get published; it's hard to believe that a known, published book would get by with false information. I will look stuff up on the internet, but I only trust sources that were not related with wiki and the URLs that do NOT end in .com, because that's something that can be altered. Also when looking up information, if a sight doesn't have a specific author that I can look up, or isn't a respected historian it would be hard to trust.

1. What level of confidence do you have in this, our main source of historical information about the Civil War. I do have a general knowledge of the Civil War topic, but there is always more I can learn. This subject is not new to me, but it has been a while since I have done any studying or look into the civil war. I am confident that I will do well in this class because I am excited about this class and to learn more of our history. I have the legist of the parties that were involved, why they were in the war, and some of the leaders in the war. I am unfamiliar with other aspects though.

Justin Wright

1-11-15

HST 209 McPherson Assignment #1

After reading professional and Amazon customer reviews of *Battle Cry of Freedom* by James McPherson, and reading a couple chapters of the text myself, I am rather surprised that he was able to write about such a delicate and often fiercely debated subject as the Civil War with such wide-ranging approval.

I fancy myself a very cautious or critical reader. I've taken two college-level writing courses and made my most significant gains in Writing 122 under Dr. Jeff Harrison, where our assigned text was *Ways of Reading*. Combined with my own daily reading regiment, I've learned how to calculate what I would refer to as "assigned potential values" to any given statement or remark, and to do it very quickly as I move through a text and try to observe possible intentions of the writer. And then properly digest the overall motivation with the points being made.

I am very impressed with the New York Times book review. After acknowledging what an enormous task it is to write something new, enjoyable, and meaningful about the Civil War, the reviewer goes on to give it extraordinary praise. I especially enjoyed the review's negative remarks, if for no other reason than, for me, it is a mark of genuine and honest service to the book and interested readers. I have a reasonable understanding of subjective and objective work. Negative reviews on Amazon often refer to the author having an opinion. I prefer this, even if it's wrong. From the two chapters I've read, Mr. McPherson has done an excellent job of giving both sides a fair argument, and this objectivity is critical to a work as this. But, as odd as it may sound, in the end, I prefer someone that does actually make a stand, or golly-gee, a conclusion, based on, and as a result of, very honest objective investigation. And it appears that is what we have here. And I'm very excited to continue reading this text.

The issues regarding historical accuracy that worry me the most, and what I will be keeping a careful eye out for, is the evolution of President Lincoln's positions regarding slave policy in the South as the war progressed. In Chapter 8, it was briefly mentioned that Lincoln had offered a deal whereby the South could keep their slaves, along with other compromises if they'd return to the Union. Obviously, I will be watching out for more of this, because I'd simply like to know the exact truth about Lincoln's position(s) on slavery juxtaposed to keeping the Union together. I like everything I've read so far, but will not appreciate any glossing as to make characters more heroic than perhaps they were. But of course, I don't know and I have a lot to learn. And I'm quite excited to do so.

Lastly, I'll close by saying that I have a great deal of confidence in our assigned text. The wide-ranging respect it has garnered, especially given the topics' contentious nature is astonishing. Earning the Pulitzer Prize is very disarming for me and will allow me to approach the text with confidence and comfort, as it is clearly top-shelf material. But as an honest and careful reader, with much experience, I will approach this text much

like I do any other: with my guard up.

Chapters 8 and 9 appeared refreshingly honest, and I have been impressed. I hope to see much more of this as I read on and learn more about the Civil War.

I am not completely sure how I will be approaching this book. I have never been into History. I will be open minded about this book and willing to do my research. I am worried about what is being taught, because if the information is not accurate then the people learning it won't know the proper information. The younger generation will be who can pass on the history to other generations. I have not done enough research to know which reviews or sources I trust. I don't have a whole lot of confidence in this right now. I plan to continue to do my research though.

In my experience, history textbooks tend to provide a broad overview of a large period of time. They gloss over political, military and social aspects of the given time period. Because *Battle Cry of Freedom* is focused solely on the Civil War, I inclined to believe that it is a more in-depth study than most textbooks. Initially, I'm expecting that the book will be more interesting than the standard textbook. I do think that many prejudices about the Civil War are still alive and well. Before I've read any of the textbook, I think it's important to remember that the author may be biased to one side or the other. As such, my early conclusion is that *Battle Cry of Freedom* can be a valuable resource but not the ultimate of knowledge about the Civil War.

The biggest issue that I have with historical accuracy is the author's biases. In my opinion, great pieces of historical pieces treat a subject fairly- both sides are represented in a neutral light; facts, not opinions, are the basis of information provided; and, the author's biases/prejudices/opinions are not worked into the work. Essentially, it shouldn't be a piece that is written from the viewpoint of the "winner." There are always two (or, more) sides to a story. When not all sides are presented in a neutral way, the history loses its accuracy.

Before reading the reviews, I assumed that I would agree with the *New York Times* reviewer because the *New York Times* is a big deal. When an author makes the *New York Times* Bestseller's List, it's a bragging right. One would assume that their reviewers know what they're talking about. But, after reading his review, I was unimpressed. I felt that he was over zealous: "It is the best one-volume treatment of its subject I have ever come across. It may actually be the best ever published." That is a bold statement! And, it's hard for me to believe. I'm inclined to believe that it's probably not the "best ever."

On the opposite end of the spectrum, I wasn't expecting to be impressed by the Amazon reviews. I don't know anything about these anonymous reviewers. What's their educational background? What authority do they have to judge a history textbook? But, I found their reviews to have some valuable insight. A common thread in the reviews was that McPherson was biased, painting Northerners as the good guys and Southerners as the bad guys. While I'm hesitant to believe that the book is a biased piece of garbage, I was intrigued by one reviewer's comment. They wrote, "The Civil War was in the 1860's, and not the 1990's, but McPherson judges the conflict by today's standards." I think that this will be something to think about while I read. Is the history presented judged on the standards of the time? Or, today's standards? I think this will be especially interesting when reading about African Americans. What were consider facts about African Americans in 1860 will be very different from what we believe to be facts in 2015.

After reading the reviews, both positive and negative, I'm confident that *Battle Cry for Freedom* will be a well-researched text. With all the negative reviews, I'm sure that there'll be biases and prejudices present in the book. I also believe that an historian with McPherson's credentials would not publish a book that isn't accurate. In my experience, people tend to write reviews when they're incredibly pleased or incredibly angry. Often the truth lies somewhere in the middle. At the end of the day, the blogger's review is probably the most accurate- "...*Battle Cry of Freedom* is, however, fair and extremely informative... and well worth the investment of time for anyone who seeks to understand

this turning point in American history.” I think that the book will provide a valuable resource to learning about the Civil War.

Linda Hall

HST 209

Just the very name Battle Cry of Freedom suggests a very interesting story. If I just saw this book in the bookstore, I would be interested in reading it just for the name alone. After reading all the reviews that were listed for this book, I was disappointed in some of them. I felt like after reading most of the book that James McPherson did an excellent job of writing this book. To me the book was and is fascinating and is not dry, he does not bore the reader with some of the details that to be quite honest are very boring and dry. By reading this book, I found myself being back in the era, which to me is a great tribute to the author. Yes, he did leave some details out but I think that for the most part he captured the Civil War in all its' losses and wins. He gives insight into various political figures of that time, such as Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee and both the republican and democratic parties of that time. He reminds the reader that all actions have consequences and that we as a nation need to understand what went wrong and caused the war, and to learn from that and not make the same mistakes over and over again.

I was grateful that at the bottom of most pages he had footnotes and other books or articles that the reader can read to learn more about the war and all the players involved. For instance do you know how West Virginia got its' statehood? What were Robert E. Lees' political ambitions during the war and after the war?

He told of Lincoln's assassination then went from there to the next chapter, which left the reader with the question "What Now", This is probably how the nation felt after the assassination ,how do we go on, what do we do now?

I think that the issues that I would like to have seen addressed more were the reasons why some of the southern states were for succession and some were not. I know that McPherson did have many footnotes relating to this issue and listed a lot of other either books or articles, which would and did address this issue further, which I found very interesting. After reading most of this book, I feel like my confidence level in his book is high. I found the entire book interesting, would, and have recommended it to several other people who are not in a class but are interested in the Civil War I believe that he paints a very good picture of that time in history and while he might not go into great detail on some of the problems he does address at least to me most of the major ones.

I have come to an early decision that I'm going to approach this book with an open mind because everyone has their own interpretation of history. It has also been a while since I have taken a history class or picked up a history book, so my memory is a little fuzzy regarding history of the Civil War. I do remember that Abraham Lincoln was the president the United States, and that the General of the south was Robert E. Lee but, that is pretty much all I can remember about the Civil War. So for the fact that I have little to no knowledge of the Civil War or history for that matter I am going to approach this book with an open mind.

What I am worried about regarding historical accuracy however, are the reviews that I have read on Amazon. Almost all of the reviews have pointed out one thing and that is that McPherson was bias while writing this book. Instead of just writing about the facts he also included his bias opinion about how the war started, and chose to side with the north and the idea that slavery was the sole reason why the war was started. I am afraid because he was bias in writing this book that he left out important information that could have been added to give a more accurate and detailed story of the Civil War. I am also worried that because McPherson crammed so much information into one single book instead of a multi-volume like most Civil War historians do as another review pointed; some important information might be left out.

The sources/reviews that I trust more are the people that have a good understanding of the facts of the civil war and are not basing their opinion based on what they think they know on the civil war. I will listen to a person's opinion but, I am not going to take a person's opinion seriously if they don't know a lot about the subject. The reason why I trust sources or reviews that have a factual understanding on the subject of the civil war more than a source or review that has a limited amount of knowledge of the facts of the civil war is because I want to make sure that I am not getting any wrong information. If I am going to learn something I want to learn it correctly. I am pretty confident in this book as our main source of information for this class, I just wish that McPherson wasn't so bias in his writing. I look forward to start reading "Battle Cry of Freedom" and learn more about the civil war.

Matthew Wymore

HST 209

Based off of the reviews I read about the book, my approach will probably be the same that I have had with my previous history textbooks. History textbooks have and will always be a subject that can be tainted by the bias opinions of the author. When I read a textbook for a class I expect the author's bias opinion to be a slight undertone in the book. Therefore, when I read a historically based textbook, I keep my own personal bias out of the equation. If I allow myself own opinions and thoughts to influence my readings then I find myself being distracted from the true purpose of the readings, which is to learn about the events in which we are studying.

I know that history is something that is well documented and researched by professionals in the field, but one problem I have with several textbooks is how this information is relayed to students. I feel that there is an inconsistency in the way that history is taught. Depending on the author's stance on certain topics, they might choose to spend a few pages on a topic, or perhaps to them a simple paragraph is sufficient. From reading the reviews it seems that the author skipped over certain events, such as the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, perhaps to focus primarily on the war aspects of the time.

Being a student I am more inclined to trust the Amazon book reviews, since most if not all of the reviews come primarily from other students. While the New York Times review is coming from a well-respected source, I felt like the person reviewing was there to stroke his and his fellow colleagues egos. At the end of his review he states, "The notes at the bottom of the page (hooray!) will help explain to scholars why Mr. McPherson is so often able to make fresh sense of old puzzles. The bibliographical note at the end will provide the novice with an excellent guide to further reading." To me this is sort of a pompous remark towards history buffs and students who would be using this book.

For the most part the reviewers gave this book an excellent review. What I look for in a history book is one that can hold my attention, and deliver the content in a non-dry manner. Hopefully this book can deliver such an expectation and provide more than enough information on the subject.

Micah McJunkin
January 11, 2015
HST 209, Escobar
McPherson Assignment 1

After reading all three reviews, I can see there are many different opinions of the book. I will be approaching the book primarily with an open mind in order to learn more about a subject that I have little previous knowledge of, but also with a critical eye because I know opinions can differ from person to person. Upon completion of the book, I hope to have a greater knowledge and deeper understanding of a subject I have always wanted to study. One thing I will have to be cautious of throughout my progression through the book, is to keep an understanding that everything I read may not necessarily be exactly correct according to history, but instead it is of the opinion of the author.

There are not many issues that concern me about historical accuracy, especially because it seems like all three reviews showed praise for McPherson's accuracy. However, there is one issue from the second review that is of some concern for me. I thought the reviewer made a great point by calling it "primarily a book about military history". That is great for readers who would like to focus on the military movements of the civil war, and I am certainly one of them because I am fascinated by military history, but I also want to make sure I learn about an accurate perception of the political movements of the war. The other main focus I took away also came from the second review. The reviewer stated that there was little mention about the huge industrial and population advantages of the north, and the lack there of in the south. I would have thought that was a huge factor in the long term success of the union army, and therefore it would be covered accordingly. I will certainly keep that in mind throughout my reading of the book.

The reviews that I trust the most are numbers one and two. Both reviews seemed to come from sources that have a very deep knowledge of the civil war, and I find that to be reassuring when it comes to trusting an author or reviewer. In the first review, the reviewer seemed most impressed by the un-repetitive way in which the information is expressed, especially for such a widely covered and overly examined subject as the civil war. I think that statement alone shows that the reviewer has a great depth of knowledge for

the subject because they have read so many previously written works about the civil war, and that makes it easier for me to trust their opinion.

My overall confidence level in McPherson's book is pretty high. After reading reviews I think it will have a great amount of knowledge and insight, as well as a refreshingly new way of expressing it. I think there will always be negative reviews for a book, no matter what the subject is about. By nature people have different opinions and there is no way around that, but I certainly believe it is important we appreciate and respect the authors for expressing their own opinions, and how we take that is up to us as readers and critics. The three reviews highlighted in this report have certainly peaked my interest and I am excited to continue reading *Battle Cry Of Freedom* by James McPherson.

Battle Cry of Freedom has great ratings on the historical accuracy of the Civil War era. Though some complain the 800 and counting page book lacks some of the important details, many express that it does a great job of covering not only the war itself; but also the politics, and daily lifestyles of everyone in that time. One of the reviews that enjoyed the book overall commented on how they enjoyed the first two hundred some off pages were dedicated to the before aspect, and events leading up to the war. I think this could be really neat; we often get thrown right into the middle of a battle scene in textbooks. Never fully understanding what lead up to this moment. The before can hold many key points in understanding what and why this battle is happening, why this general is in the position he is in; and so on and so forth.

In many of the Amazon reviews they talk of it being extremely dry and all politics. Though it won awards and is put on a pedestal to critics many people find it hard to understand what these people see in it because they cannot find it, wondering, "What they missed." The authors writing style was said many times to be "unexciting, and lacking flow." Another key thing I keep reading is that the author focuses more on the racial issues than many of the other grave issues that were a part of this time. While many see this book spot on and covering key factors of this war, there will always be people who have a different opinion of each issue going on at the time.

I for one am on the fence of each sides, I'm sure the book is well written, and covers many of the larger issues in the civil war. I feel that it will be incredibly dry and more factual based reading, than really getting a good look at the individual lives of each big general on each side of the war. I worry most that the author will focus manly on the race issues, and not at the other large issues at hand. Many think the civil war was only about slavery in the south and how the north no longer wanted it. But there are other issues that are often left out in these situations. I hope he focuses on the political issues, and what was going on in each of the head general lives at the time. I have read many books focusing on this and it helped me find a better understanding about the civil war than others in the past. I have hope for this book, but I don't want it too be too high because of the mixed reviews.

Based on these reviews and reading chapters eight and nine, I think I will have to approach this book, knowing that author has his own opinions on the subject and takes that into account in his telling of the events. Even if I share his opinions, it's still important to me, as a lover of history, that when studying history, I get the full unbiased story.

The New York Times review and the review by Dave Thomer both say that the book is very complete and accurate, so in terms of historical accuracy, I'm not very worried about omissions. I'm more concerned about things being colored a certain way that may not be totally true so that the reader interprets events or the words or actions of historical figures in a way that fits with the individual perspective of the author.

I generally trust bad reviews the most. Anyone can write a good review; people even get paid to do just that. Quality is subjective and nothing is going to be perfect in the eyes of everyone, so usually when something has a majority of 5 stars or 10/10 reviews, it's suspicious. Reviews that say something was perfect, are usually fake or exaggerated because the person really liked it and went overboard. In the New York Times review, it's clear that the author shares the views of McPherson, for example "the story has often been perverted to teach other lessons (the wickedness of capitalists or damyankees, the righteousness of the Southern cause)" (2). Because of this, their review endlessly praises the book for its perfection and when they do touch on the issues with it, they never mention anything about bias. However, bad reviews can also have this same problem. In the case of this book, a lot of the bad reviews are from people who clearly have their own bias. For example this Amazon review, "'Battle Cry of Freedom' is revisionist history told through the prism of the Civil Rights struggle of the 1960s... If you are among the 'politically correct' you should enjoy this book (11). Or even more obvious proof, "the scholarship often gets lost in left-leaning ideological distortions (6).

I feel pretty confident in this book despite the bias of the author. The reviews say that there are a lot of sources for everything "His language and tone are measured and reasonable, and his claims are supported by extensive citations and evidence, including many quotations from the personal papers of the principals involved (Thomer). That makes me a lot more confident in the accuracy, so I'll just have to be sure to take anything that sounds like an opinion with a grain of salt and consider it objectively.

In this paper I will discuss a little about three different review sources on James McPherson's book *Battle Cry of Freedom*. 1.) New York Times book review, 2.) Not News Forum, 3.) Amazon reviews.

Starting with the New York Times review. When reading this review I had the feeling that McPherson's book was going to be knowledgeable, interesting, and maybe enjoyable to read. It points out one flaw, which is the grey on grey map. But gives the impression that the text is accurate and informative.

In the second review from the Not News Forum, it discusses how the first 275 pages McPherson "carefully establishes the political and social context of the time and his argument as the central cause of the war" than it gets into the actual war shots fired part. Which to me makes the book sound not as interesting as the first review but it also adds that it includes extensive military history, tactics and strategy of the war. Also it states "claims are supported by extensive citations and evidence, including many quotations from the personal papers of the principals involved". So from this review it makes the book sound accurate and informative.

As for the Amazon reviews, which were the lower reviews off of Amazon. They go the opposite of the other two reviews. Though I know that was the point in reading them, it seems that the main point most of them had in common was that McPherson was biased with his opinions and that it reads like a text book. Also that he left out a lot of details on other important events during, after and leading up to the war.

What issues related to historical accuracy worry me the most? I feel that after reading the reviews that this book seems like it pushes more towards the slavery being the biggest part of the war. And wonder how accurate it will be from both the south and north point of view or if it will be biased towards one. I also feel that there is probably so much other events, decisions, and agendas that were not well documented that could of led up to or helped cause or change the war one way or another or the way we look at it.

Out of the review sources that I read I'm leaning more towards the Amazon reviews. I feel that it comes from people that don't have anything to gain for speaking their mind. Also it seems most of them touch on the same points of issues.

What level of confidence do I have in this main source of historical information? I have confidence that what is written is for the most part accurate. But after reading the reviews I feel that there will be some important information left out.

I think that I will be approaching this book with hopes that it is more than what I'm expecting. A couple of the reviews spoke of how it drones on like a text book and some even said it was hard to get through. Since we are starting at chapter 8 I feel this will be less of an issue. I think that I will approach it with an open mind. Reviews are just others opinions whether they are getting paid or not for them and I will just have to see for my self to get my own opinion.

In the current information age, skepticism is more necessary than ever before. The easier content creation becomes; proper review of that content will become more difficult. It appears an age of 'Jenny McCarthyism' wherein pseudo-scientific claims rest on pseudo-scientific data. From cereal advertisements to college level textbooks, a critical and skeptical eye is required. As a reader, I hope to apply a critical eye to "Battle Cry of Freedom".

The reviews present issues of varying degrees. The New York Times offers that his choice of language is flawed. McPherson and the critic both allow that revolution occurred in 1860 but they disagree on the revolutionary party. Some Amazon reviewers note that only political fanatics and those that ascribe to a "mythology of contemporary American liberalism" would enjoy the text. At the their tamest they suggest an anti-southern bias and at their worst they claim it's propaganda.

The most negative response is clearly from the Customer Reviews from Amazon.com but that seems the least surprising. Personally, I feel that the more anonymous a speaker can be the less I trust their arguments. Writing a review without attaching a name doesn't exactly require investment of reputation. Controversy, in its own way, seems to foster debate and dialogue. This is something that should always be encouraged in any field but it in the age of the internet it is all too easy for discussion to break down into constructive-less vitriol. Bias can't be truly removed but it can and should be the intention of the scholar to present the material as candidly as possible. A sound assertion stands on its own and the most successful debaters are those that make an art of trying to break down their own arguments. If "truth" can be found it's found through criticism.

History is an especially difficult discipline to ascertain "truth". Even during periods when primary source materials appear abundant the information is often fogged by bias or subconscious assumptions. It is also enticing to view history as a series of dominoes or a simple cause and effect. The North had a larger population and industrial capacity therefor it would inevitably overcome the less populated and economically "backwards" South. Assumptions like these are easy in retrospective but they undercut a level of complexity that human activity always illustrates. It is my hope that the text presents more than just demography and production estimates. If the New York Times reviewer is any indication then this is not the case. I am excited for the literary skill they note in McPherson's work. No one wants to read a humorless recitation of dates and events.

Ultimately, a good scholar's intention is to foster a the desire for knowledge or understanding in others. A work that has value is something that provides a jumping off point for the reader. It is self critiquing and invites response. There is never a final word on any particular subject and new details emerge constantly that demand reassessment.

Sherry Althaus
HST 209

McPherson Assignment 1

In my past history classes I have found that reading a history book is a lot like having an active conversation and this is my plan on approaching my book. The authors of history books want to tell me something that they believe to be true and important. The author, James McPherson is still trying to *persuade* you that *these* facts are important and that they are related to each other in a particular way. All works of history contain arguments even the ones that appear to be nothing more than stories. Therefore, my ultimate task as a reader will be to identify what the argument of this textbook will be and read the authors evidence and come to my own conclusions on whether or not they hold water.

According to reviews by both the New York Times and NotNews.Org the book appears to be written well and mostly historically accurate. One of the issues of accuracy that may be and issue is the fact that once the shots are fired at Fort Sumter and the war officially begins the book becomes more of a military history “concerned with the tactics and strategy of the war, with a secondary but significant emphasis on the political maneuvering and events of the era” says NotNews. One of the major complaints from the Amazon reviews is that the information appears to be anti-south and biased against slavery.

As an avid reader I have always trusted the New York Times. As far as a review that is the one that I think I would trust the most. The target audience is an intelligent, general-interest adult reader. I think that I fall into this demographic that they are attempting to target. The staff tend to be well educated and have experience in the literary world. The reviews that I would trust the least are the reviewers from Amazon. These reviewers only requirement is that they have purchased the book and as you can see by reading reviews, both good and bad, they are filled with a lot of negativity directed at the authors. Some reviews are downright rude. This makes it hard for me as a reader for me to take any of them seriously.

James McPherson has impressive credentials. He is a Pulitzer prize-winning historian and Professor Emeritus of United States History at Princeton University. What does this all mean to me? Well it means that he knows a whole lot more about history then I do. I look forward to reading this book and my level of confidence is high. I believe that the information provided in this book will provide me valuable insight into the civil war and I see no reason to doubt the validity of McPherson’s research into this topic.

Expectations of a Battle Cry of Freedom

By Trenton Bieker

Being a novice Civil War observer, I have mostly been presented the Good vs Evil aspect of “it was about slavery”. I have grown since most of my studies in history and have come to a curiosity of that time once again. Here I will try to answer the question of what my approach will be to the scholarly work “Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era” by James M. McPherson. I will also cite some sources that help me make an educated approach to this work. I will explain my reasons behind my thoughts and choices as well. With that, lets dig in shall we?

A good place to start would be a little bit of where I stand on the event prior to hearing the reviews and opinions of others. I for most of my life had thought that the north had won a righteous victory and established true freedom to the country by getting rid of the slavery. To be honest this is the most I had ever really summed up the Civil War to be. Now in my late twenty's I have an urge to know more about the whole picture of what these two sides really stood for. I want to know motives and desires, the good, bad, and ugly so to speak. I hope to experience a well round depiction of the civil war. I know in my life politics is a messy place and life is not what any politician says it is, so I could see where history can be distorted or manipulated. Hopefully these reviews can shed some light on what to expect from this work.

When it comes to the negative reviews I agree with Andrea Simpson's(1) review stating “As far as I can tell, pretty much all the people who don't like the book object to its political position“. Most of the reviews that didn't like the book stated this in one way or another. Another negative is that it's “Too much,too small” stated by Christopher K(1). The view here is simply that there is too much information crammed into too small of text. Overall, it comes down to claims of bias and too much information as the brunt of the negative reviews. I don't trust any one review but come to that conclusion on the amount of consistency among negative reviews with such a small pool comparatively to the positive pool. Also, there are positive reviews that state the same thing. This makes me confident that I should keep this in mind

moving forward with this work.

For positive reviews the numbers are great. Though the quality of the reviews aren't so great. You get a lot of "Great work, Must read"(2) and no highlight to what was great or why. There are however some great reviews done that paint a positive picture. Dave Thomer(3) for example, states that "The Civil War is such a complex event that comprehensive treatments of it tend to be multi-volume affairs." saying what the negative reviews were stating, that there is so much information to cover. Thomer goes further stating "Battle Cry of Freedom nevertheless manages to cover all those themes over the course of its 900-page narrative" turning what some would say is negative into a positive. He goes further on to say that even though he is bias, he does a good job painting a balanced picture. Other positive reviews went into great detail about events I had no idea about, therefore I could not weigh the review either way due to ignorance. Overwhelmingly positive reviews stated that there was a lot of information that was beautifully narrated and was a great overall study that would be the spring board to jump head first into the Civil War era.

After all those reviews, I will simply approach this work with an open mind aware that some bias may be in play. I will also be aware that there is a lot of information in such a small amount of text. I feel confident that I have gained a well balance perspective to confidently approach this work ready to experience a little history.

1. http://www.amazon.com/Battle-Cry-Freedom-Oxford-History/product-reviews/019516895X/ref=cm_cr_pr_hist_2?ie=UTF8&filterBy=addTwoStar&showViewpoints=0&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending
2. http://www.amazon.com/Battle-Cry-Freedom-Oxford-History/product-reviews/019516895X/ref=cm_cr_pr_hist_5?ie=UTF8&filterBy=addFiveStar&showViewpoints=0&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending
3. <http://www.notnews.org/ubb/Forum4/HTML/000020.html>