

Analysis: causes of the civil war



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Causes of the Civil War The Civil War is without a doubt one of the most influential moments in United States history. Understanding the causes is extremely important and because of the widely varying interpretations of various events it is an era of our history that has many approaches. In this essay two such interpretations will be reviewed and compared. The intent is to analyze these specifically in comparison to each other. The first reference is a book titled, “ A Patriot's History of the United States: From Columbus's Great Discovery to the War on Terror,” the second is an article in the Washington Post titled “ Five myths about why the South seceded.”

Immediately apparent is the differences in political views of the authors, the book is written from an intensely conservative viewpoint and the article is written from a more liberal approach. Authors Schweikart and Allen went from Texas, Oregon and the surrounding debate in the ratification of statehood to the Civil War in a relatively quick step. While they did go over the pertinent details of the war with Mexico the overwhelming approach was based in slavery and the debate in that regards. Chapter eight of A Patriots History begins with the wire service report from Harpers Ferry regarding John Browns attack on it. (Schweikart, Allen) The approach taken was based in property rights originally in that the authors believed that to an extent the Civil War was based on a definition or misinterpretation of property rights. The article by Loewen on the other hand began with the issue of secession and avoided the issue brought up in the book regarding property rights. Both viewpoints see the commonly held belief regarding the profitability of slavery as a myth. Citing production numbers of 75 percent Loewen made it clear that slaves accounted for a higher net worth than all the railways and manufacturing companies combined. (Loewen) Schweikart and Allen clarified

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that this myth was largely a product of the lack of manufacturing industries available in the South at the time as compared to the North. Interestingly the single approach taken by both regarding the initiation of the Civil War was slavery. Loewen ending his article with an interesting line that leaves no other approach available other than slavery as the chief cause of the Civil War. (Loewen) In looking at the campaign that led to Lincolns first term in office and the start of the Civil War Schweikart and Allen made it clear that slavery was the primary reason for the wars initiation as well as one of the motivating factors behind Lincolns winning against Douglas. In comparing both approaches it is easy to see the difference in political beliefs of the authors themselves as the book concentrates on a religious approach to many of the arguments made, while the article concentrates on a presentation of pertinent facts in its approach to exposing the myths surrounding the Civil War. The length of the article is of importance as it is a short two pages while the book devotes far more space to explaining the events surrounding and leading up to the Civil War. Loewen, J. " Five myths about why the South seceded." Washington Post 11, Jan. 2011: n. pag. Web. 7 Apr 2011. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/07/AR2011010703178.html?referrer=emailarticle> Schweikart, Allen, L, M. A Patriot's History of the United States: From Columbus's Great Discovery to the War on Terror. 1. Sentinel HC, 2004. Print.