

1. Why do the Anderson sons resist fighting in the war? Do you find this scenario accurate or a theatrical liberty?
2. The film does not have a single, defined villain. Why do you think this is so?
3. Outline scenes that demonstrate the emotional hardships endured by civilians and soldiers during the war.
4. In what ways does the film promote notions of emancipation?
5. In what ways does the movie refute or embrace the loyal slave trope?
6. Is the movie a reinforcement or a resistance to the Lost Cause myth? Why?
7. How is this movie a reflection of 1960s America? Provide two examples.
8. *Shenandoah* debuted during the centennial of the Civil War. Why do you think audiences might have found this movie appealing?
9. Jimmy Stewart was a WWII veteran and general in the Air Force Reserves at this time. Why do you think he would star in this anti-war film?
10. Is it possible to be neutral in either war or politics? What does this film say on the issue?


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Accompanying primary source:

*Excerpt from*

***A Diary with Reminiscences of the War and Refugee Life in the Shenandoah Valley****, 1860-1865*

*By Mrs. Cornelia Peake McDonald. Cornelia, a resident of Winchester, Virginia, witnessed the Battle of First Winchester on May 25, 1862. She wrote the following description of how civilians reacted to the fight:*

“At different points the battle continued, and through the streets the hurrying masses still rushed. Occasionally a few would pause to fire at their pursuers, but all were making frantically for the one point of egress that was left open to them. Arms, accoutrements, clothes, everything was thrown away as they sped along, closely followed by their victorious [Confederate] foes, who never paused except to give a word or smile to the friends who were there to greet them.

 I put on my bonnet and went in town, and the scenes I there witnessed I could not describe to do them justice. Old men and women, ladies and children, high and low, rich and poor, lined the streets. Some weeping or wringing their hands over the bodies of those who had fallen before their eyes, or those who were being brought in by soldiers from the edge of the town where the battle had been thickest, and others shouting for joy at the entrance of the victorious Stonewall Brigade, and exultation at the discomfiture of the flying enemy. All were embracing the precious privilege of saying what they chose, singing or shouting what they chose.

 People in different spheres of life, who perhaps never before had exchanged a word, were shaking hands and weeping together. All seemed as if possessed by one heart and one mind. Baskets of food were brought from the houses and passed hastily among the thronging soldiers, who would snatch a mouthful and go on their way.

 I was told that as the columns were hastening by, Mrs. Barton stood at her door with baskets of food, distributing to the hungry men, and while she did so someone touched her and told her that her eldest son, Marshall, had been shot not far from her house. “Bring him to me,” she said, and went on distributing her bread to the men. Soon a squad of men came up with the body of her son. He was already dead, shot in the neck. She led the way into her house, and directed them where to lay him. “He was born in that room and there he shall lie,” she said. Then all day she sat by him, wiping the blood that oozed from his wound. He was an accomplished young man, had just a year before graduated at the University of Virginia, and married his cousin, Ellen Marshall.

 I met Judge Parker, and he asked me if I and some other lady would go and see to the proper caring for the body of an officer of a Louisiana regiment which had just been carried into Kerr’s building. I spoke to Betty, Angus’ wife, and we went. As we passed in we saw a poor corpse with the cape of his great coat thrown over where his head had been. As I glanced fearfully at it I caught a glimpse of his hands, dyed deep with blood as if they had been dipped into it. He, we were told, was a Hardy County farmer’s son, a member of one of the boy companies that had been formed and drilled at school.

 A sad sight met our eyes when we went into the room where the dead man was.

I could not at first believe he was dead—so natural were his features and so easy and restful was his posture. He was dressed in a beautiful new uniform, grey and buff; a splendid red silk scarf was around his waist, and his sword was lying by his side. He was very tall and slender with regular features and dark hair—very fine soft hair—his face was noble looking and must have been very handsome. I took one of his hands (such small white hands). It was still warm and it was difficult to believe he was not asleep. No wound could be seen, and not a drop of blood stained his clothing. The poor soldier who watched him, and who wept constantly, showed me a small gunshot wound in his chin hidden by the long jet black beard. It looked not larger than a pea, and only a drop or two of blood stained his beard. But that was his death wound. He was the major of his regiment, the man said, and was shot while leading his men in pursuit of the fugitives as they poured down that hill side in the morning. It was his regiment that I had seen charge and take the battery, and I remembered having heard my boys say that they had seen an officer of the regiment as he galloped over the crest of the hill, fall backward from his horse. They described the splendor of his equipment, the beauty of his horse which had stood still after its rider had fallen, and I doubted not it was the same.

 Betty and I wept over him tears of sincere sorrow, the more so as we thought that perhaps ours and those of the poor soldier would be all that would fall on his lonely bier. I wiped the pale forehead, and smoothed the hair and the man arranged his dress with some articles we had brought. In the afternoon I brought some white roses and laid them in his cold hand. By his side sat four or five rough looking soldiers, men of his regiment. They, his regiment, had raised money enough among them to buy an elegant metallic coffin for him, and were about to put him into it.

 That evening he was buried, and a small board placed at his head was inscribed:

ARTHUR MacARTHUR

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 We planted some violets and lilies of the valley at his head.”