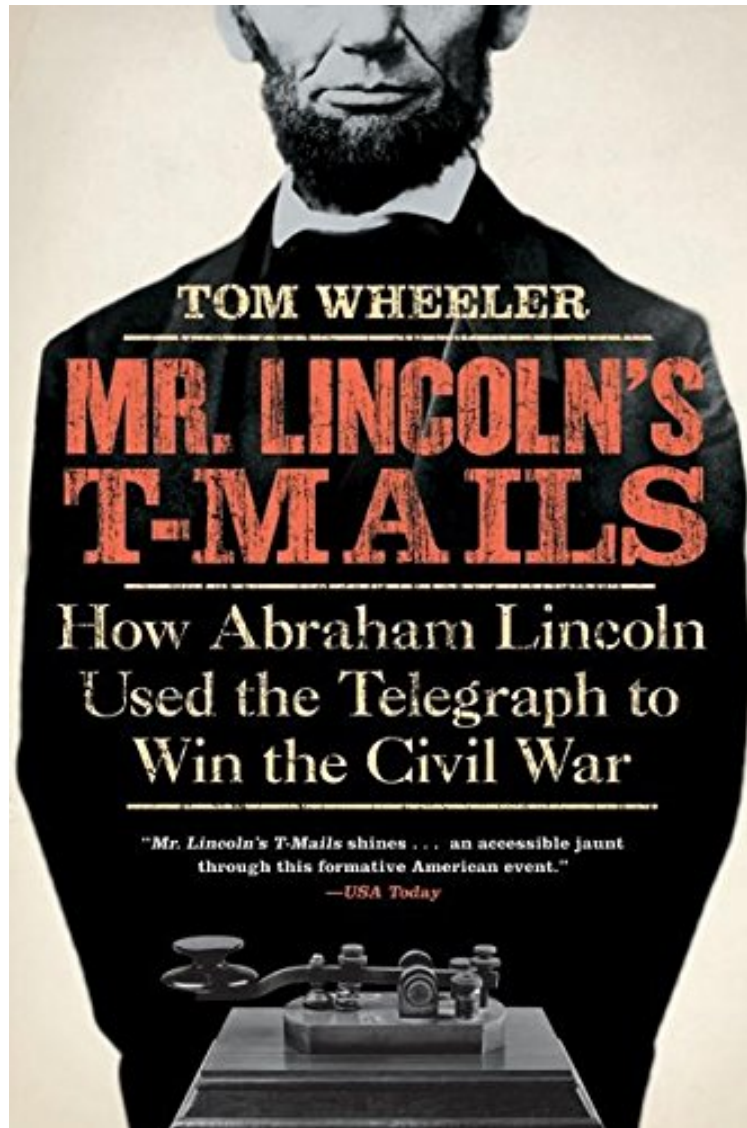


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Mr. Lincoln's T-Mails: How Abraham Lincoln Used the Telegraph to Win the Civil War

Tom Wheeler

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#472159 in Books 2008-01-22 2008-01-22 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .58 x 5.311, .45 #File Name: 0061129801256 pages | File size: 48.Mb

Tom Wheeler : Mr. Lincoln's T-Mails: How Abraham Lincoln Used the Telegraph to Win the Civil War before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mr. Lincoln's T-Mails: How Abraham Lincoln Used the Telegraph to Win the Civil War:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A boring review of the Civil War, that happens to mention telegraphs By Zachary Littrell A drab exercise in making one of the most fascinating instances in US and military

history into a unrelenting snoozefest. There is nothing more disheartening than realizing about 25% into a book that it is bad and it will probably continue to be bad. An interesting thesis and a fun intersection of technology, communication, and the Civil War is let down by a tremendously mediocre writer. It has the structure of an uninspired high school history paper, complete with unrelenting repetition -- did Wheeler need to hit some magical word count? I didn't even really bother to read the last chapter that in-depth, because it was literally a rehashing conclusion paragraph stretched out. Worst, it's really hardly about the telegraph's role in the Civil War. It reads much more as a general outline of the Civil War that just happens to shoehorn how the telegraph figures into it. Many key telegrams are either paraphrased or omitted altogether -- his notes and bibliography are quite admirably thorough, but some in-text citations and quotes would've been much more appreciated than repeating a dozen times lines like "Lincoln devoured dispatches." Wheeler also doesn't keep his opinions from shading figures in history. If your name isn't Lincoln, you probably had some critical character flaw that makes you let down your nation, while Lincoln is always doing right (even if his decisions do have some questionable outcome). I would've been ok with such heavy-handedness if it was any good. Now, how to rate this mess? Did I learn some stuff -- yes! Does it talk about the telegraph's role in the Civil War and Lincoln's presidency -- yes! Is it worth your time? No.. Go find a proper book about the Civil War if you're interested in the war in general, and look up articles and papers if you want to learn about contemporary telegrams. I managed to pick this up on sale for a dollar, and I feel like I wasted a dollar and a week of reading. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. **OUTSTANDING CIVIL WAR HISTORY!** By Carolina Bookhound Anyone who has studied the U.S. Civil War knows about the significance of the railroad and telegraph to that conflict. These two inventions truly made it the first modern war. When Abraham Lincoln entered the White House, aside from a brief stint in the Black Hawk War, he had virtually no military experience. He learned on the job! Perhaps the most significant thing that he learned was how to use the telegraph to his advantage at many levels. This fascinating book traces how his education in that respect evolved. It offers fresh insights to the character and leadership skills of this great man. It is a heretofore unexplored dimension of Civil War history. I have studied the life and career of Abraham Lincoln since I was in the third grade and I came away with some new perspectives. Tom Wheeler has created a masterpiece! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. **A Unique Perspective on Lincoln's Skill as a Communicator** By Donna L. Halper I was preparing to teach my Senior Seminar in Media Studies, and going through some books I've used in the past, when I came upon this one. I suddenly remembered how I've long meant to write a review of it-- so, better late than never! No, Tom Wheeler's book is not new-- in fact, it was written circa 2006, and didn't get much attention back then; but that's a shame, because this is a fascinating study of how President Abraham Lincoln embraced a new technology (the telegraph), and used it to his advantage. Interestingly, my being late with the review turned out okay: "Mr. Lincoln's T-Mails" is more relevant now than ever, since we are living in a world where our new president loves to Tweet. In Lincoln's day, it was about sending telegrams to the newspapers and magazines, calling attention to what the president wanted them to know (and cover). Mr. Wheeler's readable and informative book explains how no matter what age you live in, being the master of the media of your day can help you to control the messaging and thus influence the news. I learned a lot from reading "Mr. Lincoln's T-Mails," and if history and media studies interest you as much as they interest me, you'll be glad you found this book. It's well worth buying and well worth reading!

Abraham Lincoln's two great legacies to history—his extraordinary power as a writer and his leadership during the Civil War—come together in this close study of the President's use of the telegraph. Invented less than two decades before he entered office, the telegraph came into its own during the Civil War. In a jewel-box of historical writing, Wheeler captures Lincoln as he adapted his folksy rhetorical style to the telegraph, creating an intimate bond with his generals that would ultimately help win the war.

From Booklist The Internet has sparked interest in its predecessor, the telegraph (Tom Standage's *The Victorian Internet*, 1998); here is a case study in the trend. Applying "early adopter" buzzwords to Lincoln, Wheeler's inquiry into his use of the telegraph has the spirit of a management consultant appraising a client's leadership style. The author relates that Lincoln personally sent out 1,000 telegrams during the Civil War, learning along the way what was or wasn't effective. Initially an intermittent user, Lincoln at times was so reliant on rapid communication that he spent nights at the War Department's telegraph office. Every Lincoln reader is familiar with this image, and Wheeler taps into this common memory by quoting Lincoln's telegraphic words on these occasions. They group most numerous around specific battles (e.g., 1862's Second Battle of Bull Run) and Lincoln's reprieves of condemned soldiers. Expanding on this footnote to history, Wheeler shows a Lincoln groping for a best-use of new technology and learning the limitations of the "killer app." Gilbert Taylor Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved "Wheeler [reveals] our now god-like 16th President to be an astute manipulator of modern technology." (Ken Burns, Filmmaker, PBS's *The Civil War*) "A fascinating, succinct and original history of how a great President used cutting-edge technology to save his country." (Michael Beschloss, presidential historian, author of *The Conquerors*) "Just when we might think nothing new can be written about Lincoln comes Wheeler's captivating take on the Lincoln

legacy.” (Harold Holzer, co-chairman, U.S. Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, author of *Lincoln at Cooper Union*)“Mr. Lincoln’s T-Mails is an accessible jaunt through this formative American event.” (USA Today)A lively account that crackles with revealing anecdotes and insights, offering new ways to appreciate Lincoln’s genius. (Library Journal)The book thunders along, following the “messages of lightning” down the wires....The writing is focused and lean. (Bloomberg News)“. . . an original take on Lincoln’s presidency” (Washington Post Book World)About the AuthorTom Wheeler is managing director of Core Capital and the author of *Take Command: Leadership Lessons from the Civil War*. He is chairman and president of the Foundation for the National Archives, a nonprofit organization dedicated to telling the American story through its documents, and a former director of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). He lives in Washington, D.C.