

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

Communications in the Civil War

By **Dr. Thomas R. Flagel**, Columbia State Community College Tennessee

Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Wagner, Margaret E. et al, eds.	“Toward Total War: Logistics and Communication,” in <i>The Library of Congress Civil War Desk Reference</i> . New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002, 349-66.

Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year. “Title,” in <i>Journal</i> ##, no. # (Date): #.
Bernath, Michael T.	<i>Confederate Minds: The Struggle for Intellectual Independence in the Civil War South</i> . Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 2010.
Bulla, David W. and Gregory R. Borchard.	<i>Journalism in the Civil War Era</i> . New York: Peter Lang, 2011.
Cutler, Andrew, J.	“The Southern Telegraph Company, 1861-1865: A Chapter in the History of Wartime Communication,” in <i>Journal of Southern History</i> 30, no.3 (August, 1964).
Faust, Drew Gilpin.	<i>Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South</i> . Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995.

Flagel, Thomas R.	“Top Ten Modes of Communication,” and “Top Ten Newspapers,” in <i>The History Buff’s Guide to the Civil War</i> . Nashville, TN: Cumberland House Publishing, 2010, 123-36 and 168-79.
Kvach, John F.	<i>DeBow’s Review: The Antebellum Vision of a New South</i> . Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013.
Madden, David, ed.	<i>Beyond the Battlefield: The Ordinary Life and Extraordinary Times of the Civil War Soldier</i> . New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.
Sachsman, David B.	<i>A Press Divided: Press Coverage of the Civil War</i> . New York: Routledge, 2017.
_____, S. Kittrell Rushing, and Roy Morris, eds.	<i>Words at War: The Civil War and American Journalism</i> . West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2008.
Smith, Mark M.	“Of Bells, Booms, Sounds, and Silences: Listening to the Civil War South,” in Joan E. Cashin, ed., <i>The War was You and Me: Civilians in the Civil War</i> . Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002.
van Tuyll, Debra Reddin, Nancy Mackenzie DuPont, and Joseph R. Hayden	<i>Journalism in the Fallen Confederacy</i> . New York: Palgrave, 2015.
Wheeler, Tom	<i>Mr. Lincoln’s T-Mails: How Abraham Lincoln Used the Telegraph to Win the Civil War</i> . New York: HarperCollins, 2006.
Woodworth, Steven E., ed.	<i>Art of Command in the Civil War</i> . Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.

Organizations

Organization Name	Description, contact information including address, email
The National Cryptology Museum, Civil War Exhibit	The mission of the museum is to: Educate both professionals, students, and the general public regarding the techniques employed by cryptologic activities and their value to the nation. Stimulate the imagination of all those who participate in museum programs in order to enhance our future cryptologic capability in ways that we cannot predict. Commemorate the capabilities and contributions of both

	<p>individuals and organizations that have created the nation's cryptologic capability to date. The museum has a separate section devoted to the Civil War.</p> <p>The museum is located at 8290 Colony Seven Rd, Fort Meade, MD 20701. Their website is: https://cryptologicfoundation.org/visit/museum/national_cryptologic_museum.html</p>
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Web Resources

URL	Name and description
https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/civil-war-technology	Civil War Technology. This posting on History.com discusses some of the new technologies introduced or fostered by the Civil War.
https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers/	The Library of Congress Historical Newspapers Online contains digitized copies of various newspapers sorted by state.

Other Sources

Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
https://www.utc.edu/west-chair-communication/symposium/index.php	<p>Symposium on the 19th Century Press, the Civil War, and Free Expression.</p> <p>This symposium on the 19th Century press will be held remotely in November 2020. Papers from the symposium will be available on the website after its completion.</p>

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Topic Précis

A communication revolution saw the movement of messages across the continent in ten days by Wagon train in 1850 reduced to ten minutes by telegraph in 1860. This revolution directly impacted the course of the Civil War, both through its enormous capability and its newborn fragility. Telegraph lines, for example, could send detailed information nearly in real time, yet they could be silenced with axes and wire cutters. Over 2,500 newspaper companies were in operation at the start of the war, but shortages soon left many printers without paper and ink. As the conflict progressed, residents in Union-held areas generally experienced increases in available intelligence, while those within the Confederacy experienced considerable declines. By 1864 this imbalance had become decisive, enabling the Lincoln government to unify a final push to military success, while supporters of the Davis administration increasingly felt isolated within shrinking pockets of resistance. The most common forms of wartime communication were the spoken word, newspapers, mail, written reports and dispatches, and telegraphy. On the battlefield communication was achieved by the signal corps use of wigwag flags or torches, battle flags, drums and bugles. The new art of photography produced images of loved ones, military installations, landscapes, cityscapes and gruesomely, the dead on the battlefield. Sound was also an important form of communication used to inform, control and intimidate. Arguably every facet of the war involved communicating a message, from newspapers' accounts of casualties, battle flags directing the regiments. The war continued to communicate long after the fighting, through cemeteries and monuments for instance. But during the war itself, especially by late 1862, the Union's greater collection of skilled labor, capital, technology and trade manifested near dominance in communications. By late 1864, the disparity was such that residents in New York learned about the Federal victory at the Battle of Nashville in less than 24 hours, whereas Southern whites in communities less than a hundred miles away received sparse information of their defeat two weeks after the fact. The communications advantages enjoyed by the Union contributed to its ultimate victory.
