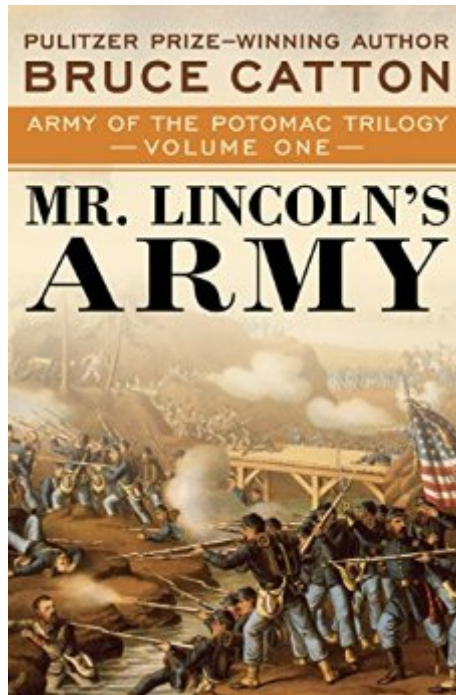


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Mr. Lincoln's Army (Army Of The Potomac Trilogy Book 1)



Synopsis

A magnificent history of the opening years of the Civil War by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Bruce Catton. The first book in Bruce Catton's Pulitzer Prize-winning Army of the Potomac Trilogy, *Mr. Lincoln's Army* is a riveting history of the early years of the Civil War, when a fledgling Union Army took its stumbling first steps under the command of the controversial general George McClellan. Following the secession of the Southern states, a beleaguered President Abraham Lincoln entrusted the dashing, charismatic McClellan with the creation of the Union's Army of the Potomac and the responsibility of leading it to a swift and decisive victory against Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Although a brilliant tactician who was beloved by his troops and embraced by the hero-hungry North, McClellan's ego and ambition ultimately put him at loggerheads with his commander in chief—a man McClellan considered unworthy of the presidency. McClellan's weaknesses were exposed during the Battle of Antietam, the bloodiest day in American military history, which ended in a stalemate even though the Confederate troops were greatly outnumbered. After Antietam, Lincoln ordered McClellan's removal from command, and the Union entered the war's next chapter having suffered thousands of casualties and with great uncertainty ahead. America's premier chronicler of the nation's brutal internecine conflict, Bruce Catton is renowned for his unparalleled ability to bring a detailed and vivid immediacy to Civil War battlefields and military strategy sessions. With tremendous depth and insight, he presents legendary commanders and common soldiers in all their complex and heartbreaking humanity.

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Customer Reviews

It would be an almost impossible task for anyone to figure out just how many books have been written dealing with the American Civil War. It would also be difficult to determine which Civil War historians are most often cited by their peers but there is no doubt that Bruce Catton would be near or more likely at the top of any such list. The reason for this is quite simply that Catton was one of the great historical writers of all time. Very few people can take their readers into the heart of an army, both those of its soldiers and leaders like Catton and even fewer convey their story in the very clear and easy to read style that this author has mastered. To read this book of pure history is in many ways like reading a historical novel and even the reader who already has a firm grasp on the historical facts of this story will sometimes find themselves wondering what happens next. This is the story of the last campaign of the Army of the Potomac, that ill-fated army that had so often been humiliated by Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia. This campaign was to be different however because there was a new man calling the shots and having a man like U. S. Grant at the helm made all of the difference in the world. It took Grant a while though to convince this often badly led army that he was any different than his predecessors. Different he was however and once he locked horns with Lee he wasn't going to let up until one army or the other was destroyed. In other words Grant understood what had to be done and he was determined to do it. Catton's main field of study was this man Grant but one of the author's most endearing qualities is that he makes no effort to whitewash or hide his subject's faults.

Bruce Catton's "A Stillness at Appomatox" was the first adult Civil War book I attempted after, many years ago, I was captivated by a series of Civil War stories geared to pre-teens. Since that time, I have continued to read about the Civil War and recently have recaptured something of my boyish fascination with the subject -- I hope at a more thoughtful level. I was reluctant to struggle with this particular book again because of the memory of my struggle with the book as a child. But I needed at last to go back to it to round out my reading of other works by Catton. Catton's book tells the story

of the Civil War in the East beginning in the winter of 1863 following the Battle of Gettysburg. The first thing to notice about the book is the clear, lyrical quality of the prose which somehow frustrated me as a child. Catton writes in a propulsive forward-moving style. He tends to like long sentences joined with series of "ands". This makes his account move quickly although sometimes a bit stringily. Also Catton has a gift for lyrical metaphors to drive home his points -- whether in describing the fields or in describing the emotions of the men. His writing at its best has a poetical, moving quality. Most importantly, Catton writes lucidly. His descriptions of the battles and of troop movements are relatively easy to follow. Many of the accounts I have read since I first tried this book are detailed and ponderous. This is never the case with Catton. He gives a good, basic picture of the battles he describes which will stand the reader looking for more detailed accounts in good stead. Besides the quality of the writing, *A Stillness at Appomattox* is notable for the story it has to tell.

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