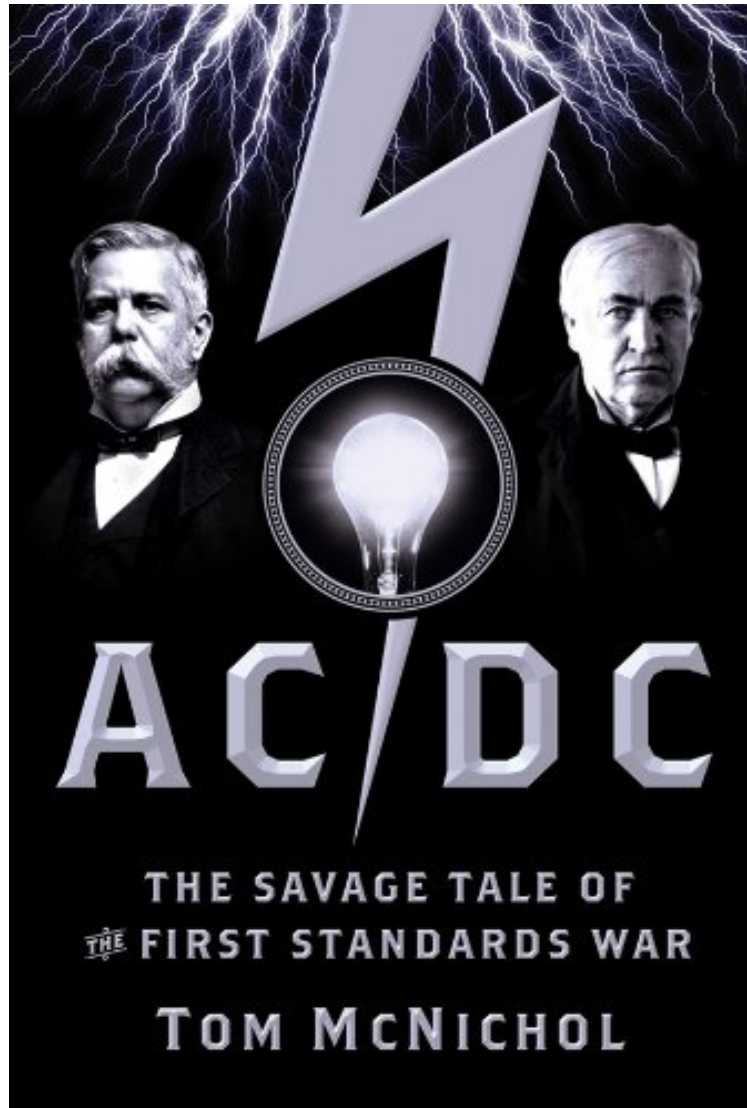


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## AC/DC: The Savage Tale of the First Standards War

*Tom McNichol*

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**Tom McNichol : AC/DC: The Savage Tale of the First Standards War** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised AC/DC: The Savage Tale of the First Standards War:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Jarring inconsistencyBy BlikoorI have not yet finished reading this, but permit me to jot some thoughts as I progress.I had this book in my wishlist for a long time now. With the gift of my Kindle Fire, I downloaded this as my inaugural Kindle book.The pre-history of electricity is long and torturous. I don't think it adds much to the overall discussion of the AC/DC "war".Then I encountered a jagged note, that smacks of poor proof-reading. Towards the end of chapter 4, when Edison had completed the invention of his electric lamp, we read the following: "In the week following Christmas 1889, hundreds of visitors made a pilgrimage to Menlo Park

[New Jersey] to see the marvel for themselves." Then turn the page to Chapter 5 (titled: Electrifying the Big Apple) and read this: "In February 1881, Edison moved from Menlo Park to New York City to fulfill his next mission: bringing electric power to the Big Apple." I guess since the author was writing about electricity, he did not feel the need to mention that Edison also invented time travel. Anyway, I am at about chapter 5 of the book and only Chapter 4 started making it interesting. No mention about the standards dispute though. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The book was well written and gave some good specifics about Tesla and Edison I felt that it ... By Wallace Fred Hammond The book was well written and gave some good specifics about Tesla and Edison I felt that it lacked a bit in expressing how bitter the rivalry was between the two. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A good short book on the Battle of the Currents -- Edison and Tesla By J.C., Lyons COA short book, but with many interesting anecdotes about Edison and Tesla. I give a presentation on the Battle of the Currents, and as I read books about it, I place small sticky notes on the pages that contain good facts. By the time I was done, there were many such sticky notes in the book. There is only one illustration, interestingly called "Fig. 4". The author is one of the experts interviewed in the recent National Geographic TV series on American Geniuses.

AC/DC tells the little-known story of how Thomas Edison wrongly bet in the fierce war between supporters of alternating current and direct current. The savagery of this electrical battle can hardly be imagined today. The showdown between AC and DC began as a rather straightforward conflict between technical standards, a battle of competing methods to deliver essentially the same product, electricity. But the skirmish soon metastasized into something bigger and darker. In the AC/DC battle, the worst aspects of human nature somehow got caught up in the wires; a silent, deadly flow of arrogance, vanity, and cruelty. Following the path of least resistance, the war of currents soon settled around that most primal of human emotions: fear. AC/DC serves as an object lesson in bad business strategy and poor decision making. Edison's inability to see his mistake was a key factor in his loss of control over the operating system for his future inventions; not to mention the company he founded, General Electric.

From Publishers Weekly A little more than 100 years ago, two titans of industry faced off in one of the most vicious battles the marketplace had ever seen. On one side, Thomas Edison, inventor extraordinaire, the creator of the phonograph and the electric light; on the other, George Westinghouse, tycoon and titan, backing the mysterious eastern European inventor Nikola Tesla. They fought over the very nature of the electrical system in America: would it be built on alternating current (as Westinghouse proposed), or direct current a grave; la Edison? Though a battle over electrical standards sounds dry, this tale is anything but. McNichol's solid if brief survey of this relatively unknown moment in the history of technology ranges from macabre electrocutions of hapless animals (and eventually prison inmates) as demonstrations of the "Death Current" to the gleaming "electrical wonderland" of the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. Though the author focuses on when it's wise to fight a standards battle and when to give in, some might wish that he had another 200 pages in which to flesh out the story. His book tantalizingly scratches the surface of Edison's ingenuity and force of will, Westinghouse's shrewd business sense, and most of all the sheer eccentricity of Nikola Tesla. (Sept.) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Though a battle over electrical standards sounds dry, this tale is anything but . . . [The] book tantalizingly scratches the surface of Edison's ingenuity and force of will, Westinghouse's shrewd business sense, and most of all the sheer eccentricity of Nikola Tesla." --Publishers Weekly "A tale of astonishing genius and greed, a perfect reflection of the competing forces that built corporate America. McNichol offers us a ringside seat at the birth of a superpower, and it's a bloody, messy, and altogether fascinating spectacle." --Brooke Gladstone, cohost, NPR's On the Media "From the twisted copper wires of electricity's early years McNichol spins a story buzzing with genius and fraud, ambition and infamy, hilarity and humiliation. It's a joy to read: a comic operetta of American industrial history, full of great men, small minds and an alarming number of dead dogs." --Craig Stoltz, health editor, Washington Post "You'll never look at your wall socket the same again." mdash;Evan Ratliff, coauthor, Safe: The Race to Protect Ourselves in a Newly Dangerous World "From the twisted copper wires of electricity's early years McNichol spins a story buzzing with genius and fraud, ambition and infamy, hilarity and humiliation. It's a joy to read: a comic operetta of American industrial history, full of great men, small minds and an alarming number of dead dogs." mdash;Craig Stoltz, health editor, Washington Post "Few writers explain technology as well as Tom McNichol. No one's as good at finding the humor in it." mdash;Jeffrey O'Brien, senior editor, Wired magazine "A fascinating history of the battle that decided what comes through the wires when we flick a switch. A great story of how far people will go to prove they're 'right' ndash; and make a buck." mdash;J. J. Yore, executive producer, public radio's Marketplace "A tale of astonishing genius and greed, a perfect reflection of the competing forces that built corporate America. McNichol offers us a ringside seat at the birth of a superpower, and it's a bloody, messy, and altogether fascinating spectacle." mdash;Brooke Gladstone, cohost, NPR's On the Media