



Joshua L. Chamberlain: The Life in Letters of a Great Leader of the American Civil War (General Military)

By Thomas Desjardin, The National Civil War Museum

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Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain has been a central character in two feature films (Gettysburg and Gods & Generals), a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel (The Killer Angels), and an inspiration for Ken Burns's production of the highly acclaimed PBS series The Civil War. Chamberlain won national fame at the Battle of Gettysburg for his key role in fending off the Confederates at Little Round Top on day two of the battle.

This new volume brings to public light 300 never-before-seen letters from Chamberlain's personal correspondence, which comprises letters sent by or to Chamberlain from his college years in 1852 to his death in 1914. The first 100 letters shed light on Chamberlain's formative years and his courtship with Fannie Adams, which has been the source of much speculation by scholars. The final 200 letters reveal insights into Chamberlain the Union commander and the aftermath of the war.

Chamberlain's image can be found on everything from historical art to sculpture, from t-shirts to clocks, from bobble-head dolls to snow globes. Despite all this attention, there is still a lot about Chamberlain that most people do not know. His life is a remarkable story of perseverance, tragedy, and triumph. From an insecure young man with a considerable stuttering problem who grew up in a small town in eastern Maine, Joshua Chamberlain rose to become a major general, recipient of the Medal of Honor, Governor of Maine, and President of Bowdoin College. His writings are among the most oft-quoted of all Civil War memoirs, and he has become a legendary, even mythical historical figure.

Historian and acclaimed author, Thomas Desjardin, puts Chamberlain's words in contemporary and historical context and uses this extraordinary collection of letters to reveal--for the first time--the full and remarkable life of Joshua Chamberlain. Readers will find this unique portrait of Chamberlain to be entertaining, moving, and inspiring.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Numerous books have been written about this American hero, but few have revealed his more human qualities than this collection of letters from his personal correspondence.” *Bill Bushnell, New Maine Times (January 30, 2013)*

“Joshua Chamberlain (1828-1914) may be Maine's most recognized historical figure and for good reason -- he was a selfless man of honor, loyalty, courage and compassion. And his personal correspondence clearly reflects those laudable qualities in this revealing book sponsored by the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, PA.” *Bill Bushnell, Kennebec Journal (January 17, 2013)*

“Tom Desjardin has accomplished something remarkable, excavating afresh treasures from the heavily mined Chamberlain archive. Scholars, fans, aficionados--indeed, anyone interested in the Civil War--will learn much about one of Maine's favorite sons and a hero to many Americans. The Chamberlain uncovered in these pages is no stereotype, but a complex man, whose virtues and failings vastly enrich our portrait of him. With sensitivity and wit, Desjardin offers us a new Chamberlain--perhaps less heroic than the one we know, but ultimately far more human. In the process, he adds much to our understanding not just of the Civil War, but of American life in the Victorian era.” *Patrick Rael, Professor of History, Bowdoin College*

“The bayonet brought Joshua Chamberlain lasting fame, but his pen is why he should be remembered. His beautifully crafted letters convey a deep and resilient love for Union that sustained him in the ranks. While soldiers on both sides succumbed to the brutal indifference of military life, ideas shielded Chamberlain's soul, preventing him from becoming a cold and callous veteran. The exceptional correspondence contained in Joshua L. Chamberlain: A Life in Letters brings us down from the hero-worshipping altar of Little Round Top to the ground level of war where the Civil War's most famous Union colonel managed to find higher meaning in the daily struggles of trying to survive a bloody Civil War.” *Peter S. Carmichael, Robert C. Fluhler Professor of Civil War Studies and Director, Civil War Institute*

“Many know Colonel Joshua Chamberlain, the 'hero of Little Round Top' and icon of Gettysburg, well, but relatively little about the life of the real Joshua Chamberlain. This marvelous collection of letters reveals to us the person concealed behind the myth and legend. They do not diminish his stature; rather they enhance it. Chamberlain was a remarkable man and lived an eventful, fascinating life. Enjoy the letters and meet the man.” *D. Scott Hartwig, Historian, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania*

“Given that the past twenty-five years have seen Joshua L. Chamberlain rise in popularity to almost mythic proportions, this wonderful collection of his previously unknown and unpublished personal letters will be essential reading for his fans. They reveal more of the inner man than anything to come to print to date, and his letters immediately after the battles at Fredericksburg and Gettysburg will be pored over by scholars. A first-rate contribution to the literature of the war.” *William C. Davis, Professor of History, Virginia Tech University, and author of Battle of Bull Run and Lone Star Rising*

“This compilation of letters may just be the most important book published on Chamberlain in recent memory.” *Robert Grandchamp, Blue & Gray Magazine*

“A valuable volume, primarily for those who wish to know more about Joshua Chamberlain than just his

iconic performance at Gettysburg.” ?*Judkin Browning, Civil War Book Review*

“...[a] timely addition to the literature of the Civil War, appearing as it does on the 150th anniversary of Joshua Chamberlain's entry into the Union Army.” ?*Michael Burlingame, author of Abraham Lincoln: A Life, in a review for The Wall Street Journal (July 22, 2012)*

About the Author

Tom Desjardin holds a Ph.D. in U.S. History and has written several books on the Civil War with an emphasis on Gettysburg. During the 1990s he served as the archivist and historian at Gettysburg National Military Park. He later taught Civil War history at Bowdoin College in Maine where Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote Uncle Tom's Cabin and Gettysburg hero Joshua Chamberlain was a student, professor and president. His biography of Chamberlain is due out in 2013. Experienced in both television and film, Desjardin served as the historical advisor to Jeff Daniels for his role as Chamberlain in the films Gettysburg and Gods and Generals. He and his work have been featured on the History Channel, A&E, Discovery, PBS and C-SPAN.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Florence Lentz:

Have you spare time for any day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity to get spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to typically the Mall. How about open or maybe read a book entitled Joshua L. Chamberlain: The Life in Letters of a Great Leader of the American Civil War (General Military)? Maybe it is to be best activity for you. You know beside you can spend your time using your favorite's book, you can better than before. Do you agree with its opinion or you have other opinion?

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Often the book Joshua L. Chamberlain: The Life in Letters of a Great Leader of the American Civil War (General Military) will bring someone to the new experience of reading some sort of book. The author style to clarify the idea is very unique. In the event you try to find new book to read, this book very suited to you. The book Joshua L. Chamberlain: The Life in Letters of a Great Leader of the American Civil War (General Military) is much recommended to you to read. You can also get the e-book through the official web site, so you can more readily to read the book.

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