

# ★ COLONEL JOSHUA LAWRENCE CHAMBERLAIN ★

*As Portrayed by David Starleiper*

Joshua Chamberlain was born in Brewer, Maine, and the oldest of five children. He entered Bowdoin College in Brunswick, ME, in 1848, after teaching himself to read Ancient Greek in order to pass the entrance exam. He married Frances Caroline Adams, adopted daughter of a local clergyman, in 1855. Joshua and Fannie had five children. Two children lived past infancy, Grace Dupee, born in 1856, and Harold Wyllys, born in 1858. Unfortunately, they also lost an unnamed infant son just a few days after birth in October 1857, as well as a daughter, Emily Steele, who died only a few months old in 1860. Emily's death deeply affected Chamberlain who said, "She faded away like spring flowers." The couple had another infant daughter, Gertrude Loraine, who was born and died in 1865.

Chamberlain studied for three additional years at Bangor Theological Seminary in Bangor, Maine, returned to Bowdoin, and began a career in education as a professor of rhetoric. In 1861, he was appointed Professor of Modern Languages. Chamberlain was fluent in nine languages other than English: Greek, Latin, Spanish, German, French, Italian, Arabic, Hebrew, and Syriac.

In 1862, Chamberlain obtained an officer's commission from the governor. Offered the colonelcy of a regiment, he declined, preferring to "start a little lower and learn the business first." Accordingly, Chamberlain was made lieutenant colonel of the of the 20th ME Volunteer regiment on August 8, 1862.

The 20th Maine marched to the Battle of Antietam, but did not participate in the fighting. The regiment fought at the subsequent Battle of Fredericksburg, suffering relatively small numbers of casualties in the assaults on Marye's Heights, but were forced to spend a miserable night on the freezing battlefield among the many wounded from other regiments. The 20th missed May 1863 Battle of Chancellorsville due to an outbreak of smallpox in their ranks.

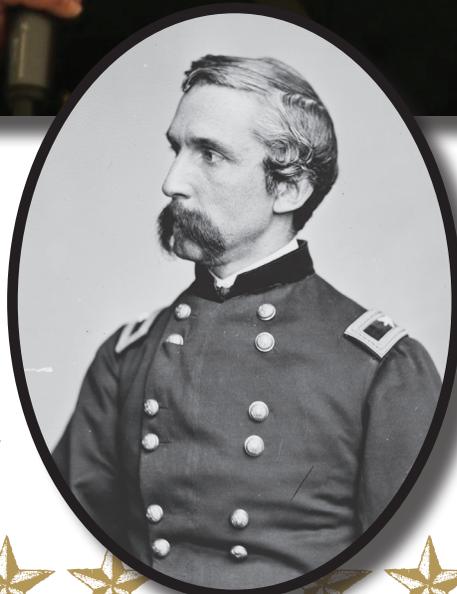
Chamberlain was promoted to colonel of the regiment in June 1863. One of his younger brothers, Thomas, was also an officer of the 20th Maine. At the Battle of Gettysburg, the 20th Maine, now commanded by J.L. Chamberlain, held the extreme left flank on Little Round Top on July 2, 1863 against two Alabama regiments.

With casualties mounting and ammunition running low, Chamberlain ordered the regiment to charge down the hill and caught the Confederates by surprise. Many rebel prisoners were taken and the 20th Maine held the Union's extreme left flank.

Suffering from Malaria, Chamberlain was relieved from field service in November 1863 and was sent to Washington to recuperate. In May 1864, Chamberlain resumed command of his regiment, which he led in the Battle of Cold Harbor. Assigned to brigade command the following June, Chamberlain fell wounded twelve days later in the assault on Petersburg WV, he was promoted to brigadier general on the field of battle by General Grant. Chamberlain was carried to the rear, where a surgeon declared that he would certainly die from the wound. Rejoining the army in November 1864, Chamberlain was forced by his wound to return to Maine, but returned again during the Petersburg siege. At Petersburg, Chamberlain was wounded again. But he was able to take part in the Appomattox Campaign in 1865. Chamberlain was brevetted major general, USV as of March 29, 1865.

When Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865, Chamberlain was given the honor of commanding the troops that formally accepted the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia. Chamberlain left the army soon after the war ended, going back to his home state of Maine. Due to his immense popularity, he was elected Governor of Maine for four one-year terms. Chamberlain was then appointed president of Bowdoin College and remained in that position until 1883, when he was forced to resign due to ill health from his war wounds.

Chamberlain was active in the Grand Army of the Republic and made many return visits to Gettysburg, giving speeches at soldiers' reunions, and writing his memoirs. In 1893, thirty years after the battle that made the 20th Maine famous, Chamberlain was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions at Gettysburg. He died of his lingering wartime wounds in 1914 at Portland, Maine, age 85, and is buried in Pine Grove Cemetery in Brunswick, Maine.



Colonel Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain is portrayed by David Starleiper.