Chamberlain: A Hero for the Ages
John J. Pullen '35 examines a hero he helped resurrect 40 years ago

By Harold B. Raymond, emeritus professor of History

Pullen, who retired from an advertising career in 1965 and never considered himself a professional historian, laid the foundation for Chamberlain's revived status when he published his first book, *The Tenth Maine*, in 1957. In his new book, Pullen deals largely with Chamberlain's postwar years and explains why his status as a hero revived in the 20th century, after Chamberlain had been subjected to repeated disappointment and the gradual fading of his wartime glory. In one sense, Chamberlain's life reached its peak at Little Round Top, where his leadership of the Tenth Maine quite possibly saved the Army of the Potomac. He went on to orchestrate one of the most moving gestures in military history when he insisted on saluting surrendering Confederate soldiers at Appomattox Court House—a decision that may well have cost him the illustrious future that had seemed inevitable.

The Civil War, like other major American wars, produced a group of young men who found fulfillment and glory in military leadership. However, the qualities that made some men outstanding on the battlefield frequently were not useful in politics and business.

In a clear narrative, Pullen follows Chamberlain's career through four frustrating one-year terms as governor of Maine. To his credit, Chamberlain was far-sighted, supporting increased tourism and other Maine-based industries that reduced the state's dependence on selling raw materials. He stressed education as a way to train Maine youth for more varied careers in the state.

Chamberlain was as dedicated to public service as he was to the Union army, but his principles frequently got in his way.

What Chamberlain failed to learn was subtlety. After serving as governor he became embroiled in a near civil war over a voting list dispute that ended in a siege on the state capitol. His insistence on pushing that dispute brought a bloodthirsty mob to his door and, more important, alienated him from politicians across the spectrum.

Pullen describes Chamberlain's long decline—from 1880 until his death in 1914—he suffered from poor health, the rise of a new generation, and diminished prestige. But he remained devoted to public duty, the pursuit of personal integrity and patriotism.

He was a patriot with deep emotional commitment to the Union he helped save, but he was never an active abolitionist and was decidedly critical of radical reconstruction. Despite his own wounds, he was a firm believer in military virtues and the heroic side of wartime service. Though these views have been criticized by some historians, the U.S. Army field manual on leadership designates Chamberlain as a model military leader. His courage, calm devotion to duty and genuine compassion are virtues that endure both in war and civilian life.

One might ask why Chamberlain has reemerged as a genuine American hero while many other once-famous soldiers have been forgotten. The answer lies in the appeal of his career to ordinary citizens. He was a civilian—a professor—who met the grim test of wartime command and emerged as a hero at a crucial moment. The relatively small size of the unit he commanded (400 men) makes his skill, courage and calm maneuvering at Little Round Top easily understood and fits into a long American tradition of the soldier rising to heroic achievement in war.

The struggle he maintained against an unfamiliar and an often hostile world, old age and physical decline is one old soldiers must face. The heroism of "doing the right thing no matter what the consequences," dramatized at Gettysburg, continued long after the glory of the war faded. Pullen's account of Chamberlain's postwar career and the revival of his reputation is an essential part of the story of an enduring American hero.
The Mother He Never Knew

Don J. Snyder '73's 19-year-old mother died days after giving birth to him and his twin brother. Of Time and Memory, the non-fiction story of Snyder's search for her in the memories of her friends, family and husband, brings to life the mother he never knew—the girl of 13 jiggling in the back of a pickup truck, the young bride on her honeymoon kissing her husband as they ride all the way down 11 floors on an elevator, the woman whose desires and fears Snyder needs to know—"the one without whose touch our own worthiness would forever be in doubt."

Abandonment and loneliness pervade this deeply moving story. Snyder gathers all the time that other people had with her and makes the sum of their moments his own. Along the way he "finds" his father, too, the person his mother had known and fallen in love with, the man who had never been the same after his young wife of 10 months died.

Getting at the heart of this woman means going for the heart. Snyder's lyrical prose reaches peak after sad, beautiful peak: In the sweeps of time and space that overpower mother and father and Snyder himself, his own wife and four children prove understandably precious.

fresh prints

Writer on the Rocks: Moving the Impossible
Linda Tatelbaum
About Time Press, 1999

Since publishing Carrying Water As a Way of Life in 1997, essayist Linda Tatelbaum (English) has carved a niche writing about homesteading, gardening and living without benefit of the electrical grid. In Writer on the Rocks she goes to the well again—literally, in the first section, where she's down the hole digging to get water flowing during a drought. The dry well is a metaphor for the blocked writer, and the ghost of the late Edwin Kenney (English) as a mentor will be familiar to alumni readers.

Warp Speed: America in the Age of Mixed Media
Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel
The Century Foundation Press, 1999

Bill Kovach (chair of Colby's Lovejoy Award Selection Committee) and Tom Rosenstiel use the Lewinsky scandal and Clinton impeachment to examine how the rapidly proliferating news media function in the new non-stop news cycle, which is emerging in an era of changing mores about what is "fit to print." Analyzing what was reported when, by whom and with what sources, the authors "have been particularly vigilant in trying to articulate the enduring values so much under assault," writes 1997 Lovejoy Fellow David Halberstam in the introduction.

Heresy and Orthodoxy in Sixteenth-Century Paris: Françoise Le Picart and the Beginnings of the Catholic Reformation
Larissa Juliet Taylor
Brill, 1999

Larissa Taylor (history), whose 1992 book Soldiers of Christ was named the best first book in medieval studies, follows up with an analysis of published sermons by Le Picart, a popular preacher in the mid-1500s who is credited with keeping Paris Catholic. The book is a window on the religious and intellectual climate of Paris at the time, and it challenges earlier works that suggested France was then in the grip of eschatological ("the-end-is-near") anguish.

Emotional Rescue: The Theory and Practice of a Feminist Father
Isaac D. Balbus '64
Routledge, 1998

Isaac Balbus '64, professor of political science at the University of Illinois at Chicago, weaves three narratives: how his struggle to mother his daughter caused him to evaluate his relationship with his own mother; how theories of feminist mothering and of narcissism relate; and how historical changes in mourning practices explain the popularity of Dr. Benjamin Spock's principles. Emotional Rescue "is feminist theory, psychoanalytic theory, and 'men's studies' at their very best," said one reviewer.

The Complete Encyclopedia of Skiing (third edition)
Robert C. Barnes '83
The Snowline Press, 1999

The third edition of career ski instructor Robert C. Barnes '83's The Complete Encyclopedia of Skiing is touted as "the indispensable reference for instructors and all serious skiers." Barnes, of Keystone, Colo., writes that with innovations like deep-sidecut skis, "never has the reward for clear understanding and effective education been greater."

other media

School of Velocity (CD)
Arthur Levering '75, composer
Composers Recordings Inc. (CRI) CD812 (1999)

This collection of compositions, performed by the Dinosaur Anxys Music Ensemble and various other musicians, has been called "exciting, lyrical, powerful" by the Boston Globe and "the best debut album by an American composer I've heard this year" by reviewer Robert Carl in Fanfare magazine. Though not easy to classify, Levering's new music is praised for its clarity, rhythmic interest, imaginative orchestration and wit.