



Conceived in Liberty: Joshua Chamberlin, William Oates, and the American Civil War

Mark Perry

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In this compelling dual biography, Mark Perry narrates the parallel lives of Union Colonel Joshua Chamberlain and Confederate Colonel William Oates. Chamberlain's and Oates's troops clashed at Little Round Top in a legendary contest that decided the Battle of Gettysburg, opening the door to Northern victory in the Civil War. It also set each man on a path to national prominence and a lifetime of political service. Drawing on a vast mine of documents, including letters, wartime journals, and political speeches, Mark Perry brings these men and their times vividly to life. Tracking Oates, the maverick Alabama frontiersman, and the scholarly Chamberlain of Maine, *Conceived in Liberty* explores the inexorable drive toward war amidst the forces of Western expansion, the failing cotton economy, religious revivalism, abolitionism, and the growing differences between North and South. In the postwar years, their hard-won battle glory unexpectedly brought Oates and Chamberlain the moral authority and political influence to shape America's destiny: Reconstruction policy, the party system, and, not least of all, race relations. It is this story--of two ordinary men given an extraordinary chance to act on their beliefs at a crucial moment in the life of our country--that makes *Conceived in Liberty* not just a Civil War book, but a portrait of American possibility in a tumultuous century.

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