

History 225

Re: Notes with High Drama of Appomatox

Source: Joshua Chamberlain, The Passing of the Armies

Chamberlain was chosen by Grant to handle the surrender ceremonies. (Lee and Grant after settling on the terms at the McLean House went off to write their memoirs).

Chamberlain asked for permission to command the Union's First Division's Third Brigade. (The Third Brigade was the unit that the 20th Maine was attached to at Gettysburg. Chamberlain and the 20 Maine who saved the day at Little Round Top during the 2nd Day of Gettysburg).

Chamberlain and the Third Brigade worn the battle flags for Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Petersburg, Quaker Road, Gravelly Run, and Five Forks.

Spirit of Appomatox was to prevail. Grant wanted a simple ceremony that would not "humiliate the manhood" of their officers and men of the vanquished CSA.

April 12 Chamberlain and the Third Brigade(w/ the First and Second in attendance to bear witness) lined up his men at the Appomatox courthouse. The Third lined up along along the Richmond-Lynchburg Road and waited for the remainder of Lee's Army to approach.

The thin and dispirited(and somewhat distracted veterans of the Army of No. Virginia must have been anxiety ridden about the reception they would receive from the victorious Federals. Would the Yankees jeer and make fun, humiliating them with words and gestures. The thousands (38,000) of Confederates were the fighting infantry of Lee's Army and were led by Major General John B. Gordon, the very epitome of a fine-looking officer(and still in one piece).

As the Grays approach the line of Union troops a bugle sounded and the whole Union rank snapped to attention., as the Blue ranks came to "carry arms"--to show respect for the bravery of the Confedate soldiery.

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When Gordon heard the sounds of the drill, he instantly recognized their significance and wheeled on his horse to face Chamberlain, his horse reared, and Gordon dropped his sword point to the tip of his boot toe in a graceful salute to the man he would call "one of the knightliest soldiers of the Federal army."

Down the full line the Rebels marches; then as each division halted in turn, they faced the Federals at a distance of about 12 feet and carefully dressed their lines. They fixed their bayonets and stacked arms, placing cartridge boxes beside them. The color-bearers then folded their battle flags, nearly all torn and some with splotches with blood still visible--the flags were the tattered tokens of a lost cause and the symbols of their valor. They gave them up slowly, painfully. . . Their were tears shed by the men in both ranks.

Many of the Rebel battle flags were instantly recognized by the Federals--there was the Stonewall Brigade; Georgia's battle flags that were at the stone wall at Fredericksburg and those of Colonel Laws's Alabamians the 20th Maine met and defeated at Little Round Top and later at Petersburg.

After the formal ceremonies both armies mingled and socialized for a time.

*Johnston were fardled.*

That evening in the midst of the Feds celebration and in the midst of the triumph news came of Lincoln's assassination.

*(Howell  
Cobb's)*