

## Joseph Thornburg

By George Holdren

A recent query concerned a Civil War veteran, Joseph Thornburg, who had been interred at Laurel Hill Cemetery, Orangeville. The information on his monument indicated he had served with Company D, 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of the Ohio Heavy Artillery. The date on the stone was 1864. So, who was Joseph Thornburg, who research indicated had no connection to Columbia County? A revisit to “The Fishing Creek Confederacy” authored by Richard A. Sauers and Peter Tomasek provided a likely clue. “The last of the Veterans Reserve Corps leaving here in early December.”

The Veterans Reserve Corps was created within the Union Army during the Civil War to allow partially disabled or otherwise infirm soldiers (or former soldiers) to perform light duty, freeing able-bodied soldiers to serve on the front lines (Wikipedia). The Veterans Reserve Corps was a renaming of the Invalid Corps which was organized April, 1863. The new name more aptly described the brave and noble actions of these gallant soldiers (Daily Evening Express Lancaster, PA 24 March 1864).

The Columbian (Bloomsburg), April 9, 1869, had an article containing the following: A force consisting of Captain Lambert’s Independent Company of Mounted Men, one section of the Keystone Command of Lieut. Roberts and a battalion of infantry under Lt. Col. Stewart. Subsequently they were reinforced by a battalion of the Veterans Reserve Corps completing the army of the occupation.

While perusing the content of “Card Records of Headstones Provided for Union Civil War Veterans 1879-1903” which is available on-line through the generosity of “Genealogy Trails,” we find the record of Joseph Thornburg of Ohio being buried at Orangeville. The record gives the following statistics: Name, Rank, Regt., Cemetery, City, County, State, Stone Supplier, contract date, and transcriber notes. For Joseph Thornburg it showed the headstone was supplied by Gross Brothers of Lee, Massachusetts, contract date Sept. 5, 1891. There are three Thornburg veterans with the same supplier and contract date. They are our Joseph, died 1864; John W., died 1891; and John, died 1884. It is probable they are from the same family.

Now we come to the finale. Rachel Shaffer, secretary of our society, indicated she had research on the so-called confederacy. Within a few minutes Rachel plugged in her laptop and produced the following article, dated Thursday, December 29, 1892.

### ***The Republican, Thursday, Dec. 29, 1892***

*At the time of the invasion of Fishing Creek during the War in 1864, a soldier was taken sick and died in Orangeville. Capt. H. J. Conner made several efforts which proved futile to ascertain his name and where he belonged. Subsequently the work was taken up by J. A. J. Hamilton, a student in the Orangeville Academy. After much advertising he finally succeeded in his search. The soldier’s name was Joseph Thornburg, a member of Co. D 2<sup>nd</sup> Ohio Heavy Artillery who had been transferred to the Invalid Corps. Capt. Conner has procured from the government a headstone to mark his grave.*

My thanks to Rachel and also to Steve Smith for their knowledge and support.