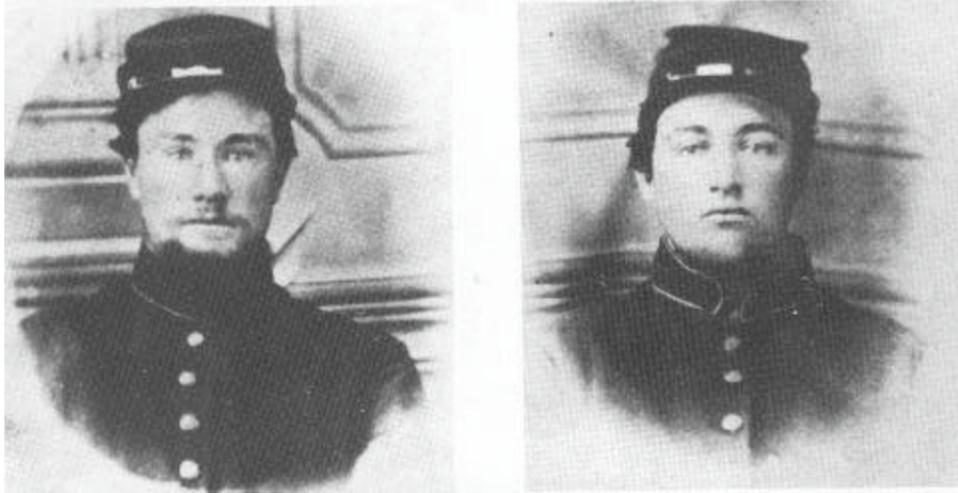


# A Double Sacrifice

Vignette by Timothy Brookes



*Benjamin F. Orr (left) and Joseph F. Orr  
76<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry.*

On occasion, it is still possible to uncover a story of unusual interest from apparently nondescript images. Early in 1987, a friend presented me with two unidentified soldier CDVs. With no names and not even a backmark, there was little hope of finding the story behind the images.

On Inquiry, however, the donor advised that he found them in the attic of an abandoned house, where they were part of an album. The other photos in the album, when inspected closely, were mostly unidentified, but several had period inscriptions showing presentation to a Mrs. Martha Glenn.

With this thin lead, using city directories, obituaries and census records, I was able to establish that the Glenn family had resided in the brick house from the 1890s until about 1930. While no records were found suggesting any Civil War veterans from the Glenn side of the family, Mrs. Glenn's maiden name of Orr provided a number of possibilities.

Again delving into census records, it was not long before I

found the proper family. The 1860 census for Columbiana County, Ohio revealed that Martha Orr was then nine years old and had two older brothers, Benjamin F and Joseph F., who could have been of military age when hostilities began.

This dovetailed nicely with a county history which listed both Benjamin and Joseph Orr in Company F of the 76<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Company F was recruited in the rural portions of Columbiana County, around New Lisbon. The twelve-volume *Roster of Ohio Soldiers* indicated that the two brothers had been drafted in October, 1862 for nine months service and that both were mustered out on August 4, 1863. While checking grave records of county veterans, I found that one brother had died in August, 1863, the other a month later. No suggestions of death had been found in either county histories or the Ohio rosters. Similarly, military records from the National Archives did little other than confirm the dates of service and discharge.

A quick trip to the abandoned cemetery mentioned in the graves registration file led to the discovery of the brothers' wartime-vintage tombstones, which stand side by side on the now heavily wooded site as they have for 125 years.

The mystery was finally resolved upon receipt of pension records from the Archives. In 1883, their mother, Nancy Orr, applied for a pension based on the service of her sons. In addition to the usual affidavits alleging poverty, the file included a statement by one James Todd which read as follows:

*I was a member of the same Co. F and Regiment 76<sup>th</sup> O.V.I. We were coming home after being discharged, traveling on the Cars between Cairo, Illinois, and Cincinnati, Ohio.*

*Three of us were together; myself, the subscriber, Ben F. Orr and Joseph F. Orr. The Car was so crowded we had to lie down in the Passageway of the Car to sleep.*

*When I awoke and Joseph awoke we found the Brother, Benjamin F. Orr was Dead. We came to Cincinnati where we got a coffin, put*

*him in the coffin and Brod him to Salem, Coumbiana County, Ohio, and from that place brot him to his Mother's home near New Lisbon. I know his death occurred on the Cars on the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> Day of August, 1863. There was no physician with us and the (remaining) Brother died soon after we came home. So I learned, for I was too sick and I could not attend the funeral and he was buried in a County graveyard and no Permits were required in such cases.*

*They died of Chronic Diarroea and had been suffering with this Disease for a length of time.*

*James M. Todd  
formerly of Co. F, 76<sup>th</sup> Regt. O.V.I..*

This long forgotten tragedy clearly made the pair of photos more interesting, but did nothing to prove conclusively that the photos were, in fact, the Orr brothers. The final breakthrough occurred after the story was printed in a local newspaper as a Memorial Day feature. Within days I was contacted by collateral descendents from this area and across the country. One relative even had a duplicate set of the same CDVs, with the happy addition of an ink identification on each. What otherwise might have remained an

interesting bit of speculation was thus confirmed, giving substance to one Ohio family's painful contribution toward the preservation of the Union.

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*When he's not collecting and researching images of Civil War soldiers, Tim Brookes works as an attorney in East Liverpool, Ohio.*