

Book Notice: *The Buckeye Vanguard: The Forty-Ninth Ohio Veteran Volunteer Infantry, 1861-1865.* Richard F. Mann, author. Mark Holbrook, editor. Milford OH: Little Miami Publishing Company, 2010. 322 pages. \$29.50. <littlemiamibooks.com>. Review by Dan Reigle, originally published in *Ohio Civil War Genealogy Journal* (*OCWGJ*, back issues available for Ohio Genealogical Society members at www.ogs.org).

There are few authors who can legitimately claim to have been researching their book for over 40 years, but Richard Mann did exactly that, starting his research in 1964 when he saw a photo of two soldiers from the 49th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. His research developed into a major collection of documents and photographs, as well as working relationships with other major collectors, with researchers from the 15th OVI, 32nd and 39th Indiana, and 89th Illinois with whom the 49th was brigaded, and with a group of descendants from the 49th that grew to 125 people. As a result, this book includes a large number of 49th photographs from a variety of collections, and draws upon sixty collections of personal letters, diaries, newspapers, and archival collections. A quick glance through the endnotes illustrates the breadth and depth of research. It is a sad note that Richard Mann passed away before he was able to see the book published. However, he would have been very pleased with the book as finished by Editor Mark Holbrook and Little Miami Publishing Company, and the Civil War community will be very grateful to Mr. Holbrook and to Little Miami for seeing the book to completion.

The 49th OVI participated in many major engagements: Shiloh, Stones River, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, Knoxville, Pickett's Mill, Franklin, and Nashville. *OCWGJ* readers have had contact with the 49th through Ken Striker's article on the Keller brothers and other 49th men from Crawford County at Stones River and with three newspaper articles from Diane Gagel on the shooting of three 49th OVI members in Bucyrus during their re-enlistment leave in early 1864 (2008, #3,) and in an Ask-the-Experts question on Stephen **Butler**, an aide to General August **Willich**, who commanded the brigade in which the 49th served (2010, #2.)

Mann does not spend a lot of space reviewing these major engagements, which can readily be found in other sources, but uses his research to fill in the major events. An example is the two-page account by Daniel **Sowers** of Company G in which he describes how he became separated from the company while getting water with his Lieutenant's permission during the hot and dry 1862 pursuit of Bragg, was then captured, and was later charged by his company commander with desertion. His description adds to our understanding that the word "desertion" does not have a simple meaning, and his anger at his treatment was still evident when he wrote five years later in 1867: "Captain Luther M. **Strong** was a man with a haughty overbearing disposition with very little regard or feelings of sympathy for his men, regardless of what the conditions might be and he reported us deserters not just absent without leave, but deserters other Captains reported their men absent & probably taken prisoners and I am quite confident that but very few if any except those in my company, were never court marshaled of [sic--or] anything done with them when they returned which was just as soon as we could get there after being duly exchanged." Private **Sowers**, age 21, was court-martialed, found guilty of the lesser charge of absence without leave, and sentenced to forfeiture of three months' pay. He returned to duty, was wounded and captured at Chickamauga in September 1863, but returned to the regiment in January 1865 to complete his term of service.

The strength of this book is that many more such accounts of the daily life of the 49th are included, such as: a diary account of the travel and disposition of the men taken POW at Stones River; a brief account of the Bucyrus shooting incident; Ordnance reports for the regiment at various dates during their service (e.g., 243 Model 1861 and seven Enfield muskets issued as of 30 Jun 1864;) a diary account of the soldiers' absentee voting in 1864 (167 votes for Lincoln, 20 for McClellan;) a letter written from a Nashville hospital with an account of the death of David **Houseman**, Company D, that contains graphic details; disinterment of the body of Sgt. John **Yates** for return to Ohio; a baseball game in April 1865 between the 89th IL and the 49th OVI, won by the 89th by the score of 50-23; their unpopular duty in Texas during the summer and fall of 1865; a detailed list of the dates and locations of post-war reunions, including several held jointly with the 15th OVI; and their refusal to attend a reunion in Bucyrus organized in 1880 due to lingering anger over the 1864 shootings, although reunions were later held there in 1890 and 1900.

An expanded regimental roster includes more than one hundred pages of information, with the unit's Roll of Honor and a list of men charged with desertion. The unit's casualty losses are a stark reminder of its service: 202 killed or mortally wounded, 161 died of disease or accidents; 363 total deaths during service. The unit was primarily drawn from Hancock, Seneca, Crawford, Wyandot, Sandusky, Medina, Wood, and Putnam Counties.

