

THE CANISTER

Monthly Newsletter of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table



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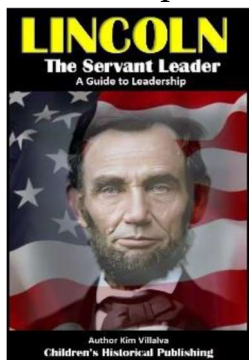
January 15, 2026

Lincoln: The Servant Leader

Presented by

Kim Villalva

Please join us in welcoming Ms. Kim Villalva when she speaks to the Round Table on



January 15 about Abraham Lincoln. She sees Lincoln as a model of servant leadership. In addition, Ms. Villalva applies Lincoln's historical actions to today's challenges. In her book *Lincoln the Servant Leader*, she combines historical research with an accessible,

inspirational tone, making Lincoln's leadership style a guide for upper elementary and middle school levels. The book teaches lessons on ethics, humility, and empowering others through Lincoln's example.

Ms. Villalva is a leadership trainer, author, speaker, and active volunteer in the community. She is a member of the American Veterans Heritage Center (AVHC) and has served on the Board of Directors since 2022 and Chairwoman of the Education Committee.

Kim loves to find ways to connect the timeless lessons of history to a training workshop or story.

Kim has worked with a variety of clients including corporate, non-profit, the U.S. Army, and educational institutions at all levels. During her time as the Training Coordinator at Fisher-Rosemount Systems, she designed a new career development program, and she was a certified trainer in Oz Accountability Training and Development Dimensions International.

Kim has a Master of Arts Degree in Organizational Communication with an emphasis in Training and Development from Southwest Texas State University and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Rhetoric & Communication with an emphasis in Organization Development from Kent State University. She lives in Centerville, Ohio.



*Submitted by Dan Bauer,
Program Chair*

President's Letter

We are approximately at the halfway point of our 2025-26 season, and Dan Bauer, our Program Chair, has arranged for some interesting speakers in the coming months.

Please join us on January 15th when our speaker will be Ms. Kim Villalva. Since 2022, she has served on the Board of Directors of the American Veterans Heritage Center in Dayton, Ohio and is Chairwoman of its Education Committee. In addition to being an author, frequent speaker, and active volunteer in her community, Ms. Villalva has extensive experience as a designer of career development programs and as a leadership trainer. She is a prominent figure in the field of leadership and education, particularly in the context of Abraham Lincoln's leadership principles. That will be her topic at our round table and is also the subject of one of her books. Given the many challenges faced by him during the Civil War, it should be interesting to hear Ms. Villalva discuss how he was guided by his leadership model. A great many books have been written about Lincoln, but Ms. Villalva's topic promises to provide a fresh perspective on his direction of the U.S. government and Union military operations during the war.

Last month I related some current news relating to the Civil War – the reinstallation of a statue of a former Confederate general in Washington, D.C. In other recent news relating to a Civil War event, archaeologists, using ground-penetrating radar, have identified two potential mass graves of Union soldiers killed in the closing months of the war, and the site is not very far from Cincinnati. In late January 1865 approximately 80 troopers from Company E of the 5th U.S. Colored Cavalry Regiment were driving a large herd of cattle to Louisville to supply that city with beef. They were attacked by Confederate guerillas near Simpsonville, Kentucky, about 25 miles east of Louisville. The troopers were carrying muzzle-loading muskets and were unable to reload and defend themselves effectively while

horseback. 22 were killed, some while trying to surrender. They were buried in mass graves. Although a highway marker was placed to commemorate this event some years ago, the

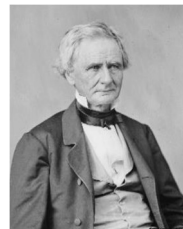


identities of the fallen were lost and the exact location of the graves were unknown until recently. The grave site is privately owned, and future actions are still to be determined. One possibility is to rebury them with military honors

at the Camp Nelson Military Cemetery in Jessamine County, Kentucky, where others from their regiment are interred.

Notable Civil War events in January:

- January 11, 1862. President Lincoln accepted the resignation of Secretary of War Simon Cameron. By late 1861, there had been considerable pressure on the president to fire Cameron because of inefficiency and corruption in the War Department. Although it had not been shown that



Cameron benefited personally from the fraud in his department, he was viewed as a poor administrator who allowed the graft to happen. For example, during Cameron's

tenure his department kept very poor records, or sometimes no records at all, which enabled corruption. Lincoln eventually realized that he had appointed Cameron to a position to which he was not suited. Although Cameron wanted to stay, he agreed to leave and accept a face-saving appointment as minister to Russia. The next day Lincoln nominated Edwin Stanton as War Department Secretary. Stanton was confirmed by the Senate two days later.

- January 20-22, 1863. The Army of the Potomac “Mud March.” After the Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862, Union Major General Ambrose Burnside was

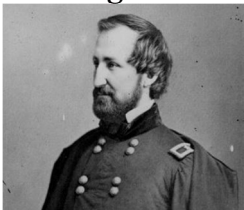


anxious to restore his reputation and improve his army’s morale. Instead of crossing the Rappahannock River at Fredericksburg as he had done previously, he decided to move to the west and cross the river at U.S.

Ford for the purpose of trying to attack the Confederate army from the flank.

Unfortunately for Burnside, the mild weather changed to rain and then to snow, and dirt roads became impassible quagmires. The federal army became stuck in the mud on its way upstream, and Burnside became resigned to his fate. He ordered the army to return to its camps. President Lincoln replaced him with Major General Joseph Hooker on Jan 26, 1863.

- January 22, 1864. Major General William Rosecrans was given command of the Department of Missouri. He had been awaiting further orders since October 1863

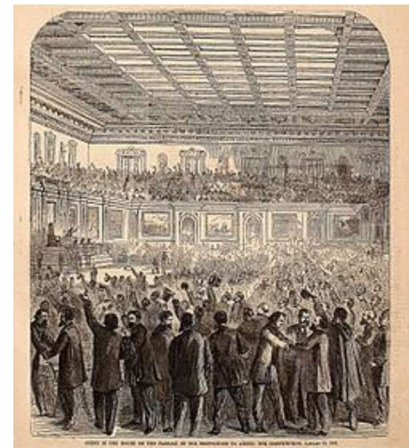


after having been relieved of command of the Army of the Cumberland following the Battle of Chickamauga the

previous month. Although he did not participate personally in any major fighting as the departmental commander, he was active in coordinating Union forces to oppose Confederate Major General Sterling Price’s Missouri Raid from September – December 1864.

- January 31, 1865. The proposed 13th Amendment (prohibiting slavery and involuntary servitude) passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 119 to 56. (The illustration shows House members celebrating after the vote.) The Senate had previously approved it on April 8, 1864. The proposed amendment needed to be ratified by 75% of the states to become a part of the

constitution. On December 6, 1865, Georgia became the 27th state (of 36) to ratify, and on December 18th of that year Secretary of State Seward certified that the 13th Amendment had become part of the constitution. Of possible local interest, Kentucky finally ratified this amendment on March 18, 1896 – its legislature had previously rejected it on February 24, 1864. Of the states eligible to ratify, however, Kentucky was not the last. Mississippi became the 36th state to do so on March 16, 1895, but this action was not certified until February 7, 1901. Apparently, Mississippi neglected to notify formally the federal government of its ratification in 1895, and this was corrected in 1901.



Please join us on January 15th. Hope to see you there.

Submitted by Tom Robisch, President



Cincinnati CWRT Meeting Details

Location	Raffel's Evendale Banquet Center, 10160 Reading Rd., Evendale, OH 45241
Date	Thursday, January 15, 2026
Time	5:30 Sign-in and Social 6:30 Buffet Dinner 7:15 Business Meeting 7:30 Speaker
Time Reservations	You MUST make a reservation if you would like Dinner . Please Email reservations to: CinCWRTreservations@ gmail.com Or Call, or text Jeff Mikutis, Vice President: 937-623-4879 Reservation Deadline Sunday, January 11, 2026
Cost	Dinner, meeting and speaker – \$28.00 Meeting and speaker only – \$7.00 . No reservations are required.
Cancellations	We are charged for the number of dinners called in to Raffel's after the deadline. You will be charged if you do not cancel by the reservation deadline, unless a late- comer can be substituted.

Future Speakers for Cincinnati Civil War Round Table

February 19, 2026 **Conducting Slaves to Freedom: The Underground Railroad**, Eric Gutttag, CCWRT

March 19, 2026 **German Heritage in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky**, Don Heinrich Tolzman

April 16, 2026 **Discovering Ormsby Mitchel**, Phil Shoemaker

May 21, 2026 **Union and Confederate Calvary Operations in the Gettysburg Campaign**, Dr. Peter Mansoon

November Meeting

Twenty-four members attended the November meeting, chaired by President Tom Robisch. The meeting comprised our regular meeting and a special meeting, as announced in the November *Canister*, to consider an Amendment to Article VIII of the constitution to increase the annual dues.

Treasurer Dave Stockdale explained that what we pay Raffel's for our monthly dinner meetings generally breaks even with what we charge for the dinners and the walk-ins. The



other costs are paid for by yearly dues and contributions, including book sales and raffles. These receipts have not kept up with rising costs and expenses. The trustees have cut the yearly costs by more than \$1900 by terminating our contract with Neon One and closing the post office box. And we reluctantly have been draining funds from the Preservation Account to close the gap between

our revenue and our remaining expenses. The trustees therefore recommended an increase of \$5.00 for each dues level.

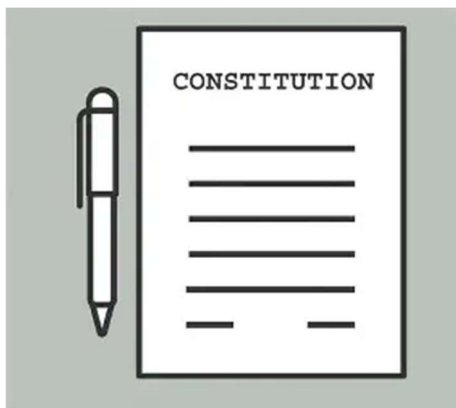
Member John McHugh suggested that the proposed increase is not enough if we want to expand the universe of available speakers. After much discussion in favor of a larger increase, including a desire to avoid having to consider multiple small increases in the future, John moved that dues be raised by \$15.00 for each level. His motion was duly seconded and the members present voted unanimously to so amend the constitution.

Article VIII, Dues, as amended, now reads as follows:

“(A) All dues are due annually starting on January 1st of each year. The annual dues for a single membership shall be \$50. The annual dues for couples shall have combined dues rate of \$65. Sustaining membership shall be \$65 for single and \$100 for couples with the difference over the standard membership level being a tax-deductible contribution to the Preservation fund.

“(B) Full time student membership dues shall be \$35.

“(C) For new members joining between April 1 and August 31, dues shall be prorated to \$35 for single membership and \$45 for couples. For those joining between September 1 and December 31, the new dues payment shall be at the annual dues level and continue and cover the next calendar year.”



Quiz

1. According to our October speaker, Greg Biggs, the largest American military amphibious operation did not occur during World War II but during the Civil War. What was it?
2. Why was Island No. 10 so named?
3. On 21 November 1863, two days after his Gettysburg Address, President Lincoln remarked “At last I have something I can give everybody.” To what was he referring?
4. Two members of Lincoln’s cabinet had previously served as Governor of Ohio. Who were they?



5. By early 1865, only two members of Lincoln’s original cabinet were still on the job. Who were they?
6. What former Confederate colonel joined the Republican Party, supported Grant for President, and was appointed Consul to Hong Kong by President Rutherford B. Hayes?
7. This Major General, the IV Corps commander at the Battle of Franklin, was awarded the Medal of Honor for leading the 3rd Brigade of BG George Wagner’s division in a successful counterattack on 30 November 1864, thus saving Wagner’s other two brigades which had been posted a half mile forward of the main line and had been overwhelmed by the initial Confederate assault. Wounded during the action, he returned to corps command after the Battle of Nashville.
8. He was Lincoln’s first appointment to the Supreme Court. A close friend of Associate Justice and fellow Ohioan John McLean, Lincoln appointed him to the vacancy created by McLean’s death in April 1861. Born and educated in Virginia, and

admitted to the Virginia Bar, his abolitionist views compelled him to move to Ohio in 1824. He was a devout Quaker and, to date, is the only Quaker to have served on the Court. Although Quakers are known for their pacifism, he nevertheless strongly supported those of Lincoln's war measures that came before the Court, including the presidential prerogative to declare martial law. His son, Wager, perhaps not as devout a Quaker as his father, was colonel of the 43rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry and was awarded the Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry in the Second Battle of Corinth. What was his name?

November Presentation

Our November speaker was Brian Smith, Executive Director of the Butler County Historical Society. Brian set up a series of display panels to illustrate his talk about the 35th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. At the top of the first panel was a photograph of the regiment's 7 ft. X 7½ ft. National Colors, a flag manufactured in Cincinnati and gifted to the regiment by the ladies of Lebanon. Before talking about the regiment, Brian shared the story of the flag's \$33,000 restoration over a three-year period by a Cleveland art conservation company. The flag is framed and on display at the Butler County Historical Society and Museum in Hamilton.



General Ferdinand Van Derveer, of Hamilton, Dies Unexpectedly.
HAMILTON, O., November 5.—General Ferdinand Van Derveer died very suddenly at his home in this city this evening shortly after six o'clock, surrounded by his family. General Van Derveer was a brave and fearless officer from the opening of the war. He was born in Butler County on the 17th of February, 1823, and was educated at Farmers' College, O. In May, 1846, he volunteered as a private in the company of the First Ohio, raised in Butler County for the Mexican War. His company was at the head of one of the assaulting columns in the storming of Monterey. His bravery on this occasion was conspicuous. Returning to Hamilton, he was elected Sheriff of his native county. He subsequently entered upon the practice of law. After the outbreak of the rebellion he was appointed Colonel of the Thirty-fifth Ohio. He recruited his regiment in six weeks, and was the first to take the field on the Central Kentucky line. General Van Derveer at the time of his death was one of the Democratic Common Pleas Judges in this district. For the past few months he has been unable to occupy the Bench. His health has been failing for the past two years. His death, however, was a surprise to his family and friends. Yesterday he was out driving, and while not enjoying good health was not feeling worse than usual.

composed of men and boys from Butler, Warren, Montgomery, and Preble counties. It was organized in July of 1861 under Col. Ferdinand Van Derveer, a Hamilton lawyer and veteran of the Mexican War. Throughout 1861 and 1862, the 35th OVI moved through Kentucky and Tennessee, participating in a few skirmishes but generally being held in reserve just beyond the major engagements. At the Battle of Stones River, it was employed operating a nearby grist mill and baking bread for Rosecrans's army.

Until the Battle of Chickamauga, just two members of the regiment had been killed and a handful wounded in action. It was there on September 19, 1863, "when the storm broke upon us," said one 35th OVI veteran. By the end of the first day's fighting, nine members had been killed, 97 wounded, and four were missing. At the end of the second day the toll was 43 killed, 124 wounded, and 28 missing.

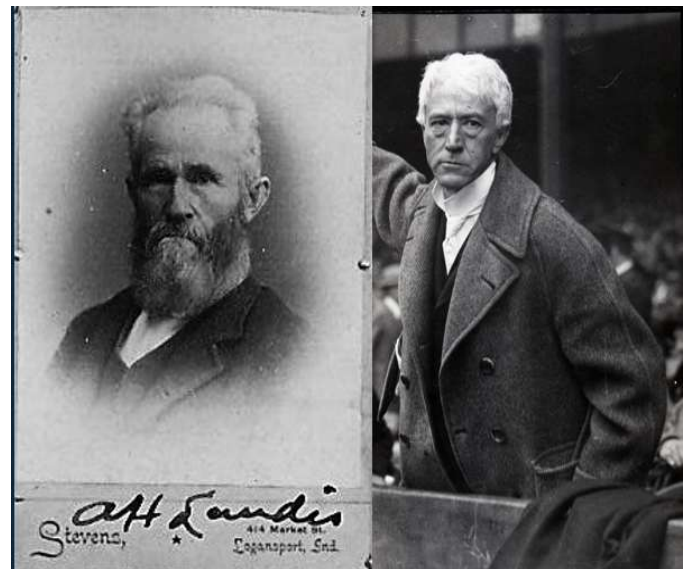
Of the men eligible for service in Butler County, 66 percent, or nearly 4,500, served in the Union forces. Of that number, some 1600 were casualties. No county in Ohio exceeded its enlistment quota by a higher margin than Butler. The 35th OVI was

The 35th fought valiantly, holding the line on Snodgrass Hill. Assigned to cover the withdrawal of Thomas's forces, they were among the last to leave Snodgrass Hill.

Among the casualties was Stephen Elkins who was shot four times: once in his hand, resulting in the loss of three fingers; once through his mouth, causing the loss of part of his jaw; once in his left thigh, the bullet exiting his knee; and once behind his left ear, the bullet exiting his left eye. Stripped and left for dead on the field, a Confederate burial detail discovered him alive two days later. Transported to a hospital and then to a POW camp, he was paroled in October 1864. He passed away in Hamilton at the home of his daughter in 1927 at the age of 84.

The commander of the 35th OVI during the Chickamauga and Chattanooga campaign was Col. Henry Boynton, Colonel Van Derveer having been promoted to brigade command in February 1863. On November 25, 1863, the Regiment was engaged in the Battle of Missionary Ridge as part of Van Deveer's third brigade, in the third division of Thomas's XIV Corps. When the attempt by Sherman and Hooker to envelop the flanks of the Confederate forces on the ridge stalled, Grant ordered Thomas to mount a demonstration in the center. Thomas's troops overran the rifle pits at the base of the ridge but failed to stop and regroup as ordered. Instead, they continued the assault up the face of the ridge, taking the second line of rifle pits and finally cresting the top. The 35th OVI was one of the first units to reach the crest. Colonel Boynton, who was severely wounded while leading the regiment up the steep face, was awarded the Medal of Honor.

Abraham Landis was a physician from Millville who had three young sons. He joined the 35th as an Assistant Surgeon. He was with the regiment at the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain where he was struck by a cannonball that shattered his knee. A fourth son, born after the war, was named Kenesaw Mountain, and grew up to become the first commissioner of major league baseball.



Abraham Landis

*Kenesaw Mountain
Landis*

Our speaker found one member of the 35th OVI particularly interesting. Joseph O'Neil initially joined the 54th OVI. After being wounded at Shiloh, it was discovered that he was only 15 and he was discharged. Lying again about his age, he joined the 35th. Wounded and captured at Chickamauga, he was hospitalized at Castle Pemberton Prison in Richmond. After he attempted to escape by tunneling out, he was transferred to a Danville, Virginia POW camp. There he escaped through a drain pipe with five other prisoners but was recaptured three days later less than 100 yards from Union lines and freedom. After being punished by starvation and being hung by his thumbs, he was transferred to Andersonville. There he made five unsuccessful attempts to escape. After being punished by having his food withheld for ten days, he was transferred to a Charleston, South Carolina POW camp, where he escaped and made his way to freedom at Savannah. He was said to be unrecognizable when he reached home in Warren County, weighing only 84 pounds. Illiterate when he enlisted, he learned to read and write, became a teacher, passed the bar, practiced law, and was eventually elected Judge of the Warren County Probate Court. He died in 1923.

The 35th OVI was mustered out at the end of their three-year enlistment, but some rejoined the fight. Arthur Barklow and William

Overholtz joined the First Veteran Volunteer Infantry. Both were part of the security detail at the execution of the Lincoln conspirators, and Overholtz was part of the guard detail when Lincoln laid-in state. James Lawder transferred to the Signal Corps in Georgetown, D.C., and was in the audience at Ford's Theater April 14, 1865, when Lincoln was assassinated.

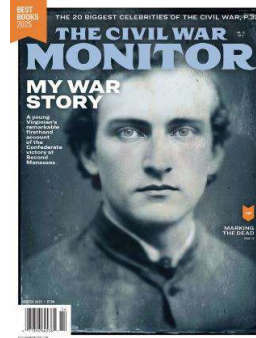
Quiz Answers

1. Grant's forces crossing the Mississippi from Louisiana to Bruinsburg, MS, in the Vicksburg Campaign.
2. It was the tenth island south of the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers.
3. The mild case of smallpox he had contracted.
4. Salmon P. Chase and William Dennison.
5. William Seward and Gideon Welles.
6. John Singleton Mosby.
7. David S. Stanley.
8. Noah Swayne.

*The Quiz, Quiz Answers, the
November Meeting, and
November Presentation were all
written by Dave Stockdale,
Treasurer*

"Civil War Monitor" Opportunity

The Civil War Monitor provides interesting information and articles concerning the Civil



War. In addition to its print publication, subscribers also receive the *Civil War Monitor Gazette*, an online newsletter that comes out several times per month. Also, subscribers obtain access to the member

portion of Monitor's website (www.civilwarmonitor.com). It includes numerous posts on various Civil War topics, frequent columnists, book reviews, access to podcasts, profiles of Civil War figures, pictures and images, and travel information concerning Civil War sites.

CCWRT members have an opportunity to receive this collection of information and, at the same time, benefit our round table. We receive \$3.00 from the Monitor whenever one of our members subscribes. To do so, visit www.civilwarmonitor.com/subscribe and use the code **CINCWRT**. Several of our members have already done so. While this is not a huge income flow for us, everything helps. Please consider this opportunity.



An All-German New York Battery and Its Leader: Michael Wiedrich

November 28, 2025

by Edward A. "Andy" Altemos

www.blueandgrayeducation.org

Born in Alsace, France, in 1820, Michael Wiedrich immigrated to the United States in 1837. At the start of the Civil War, he was working as a shipping clerk in Buffalo and serving as a captain in the 65th Regiment, New York State Militia. Under authority from the War Department, Wiedrich organized Battery I, 1st New York Artillery—soon known informally as Wiedrich's Battery—composed of 140 officers and men exclusively of German descent.



Brevet Col. Michael Wiedrich/
New York State Military Museum

During the 1862 eastern campaigns, Wiedrich participated in several major engagements, including Second Bull Run, where his battery was nearly overrun by swarms of Confederate Maj. Gen. James Longstreet's infantry. Battery I held out to the last possible moment to cover

the hard-pressed Federal infantry, and only through desperate exertion, were the artilleryists able to withdraw their guns from the field.

In May 1863, amid a rising chorus of anti-German nativist rhetoric following the disaster that befell the largely German XI Corps at Chancellorsville, Battery I marched with the corps toward Gettysburg—where Wiedrich and his men would again be called upon to prove their mettle. On the evening of July 2, 1863, Battery I occupied the east slope of Cemetery Hill across the Baltimore Pike from the cemetery gatehouse, directly in the path of the Confederate assault. When Hays's "Louisiana Tigers" charged the position, Wiedrich's gunners "rallied with the infantry, and, seizing upon any weapons they could reach, threw themselves upon the enemy, and assisted to drive them back." According to a persistent story, a Confederate officer straddled one of the battery's guns, shouting: "I take command of this gun!" A Union cannoneer retorted, "*Du sollst sie haben!*" and, yanking the lanyard, blew him to pieces. A monument now marks the position of Battery I and commemorates its desperate stand.



Dedication of Wiedrich's Battery Monument at
Gettysburg in 1889. Wiedrich is seated at center, in
front of monument / The Buffalo History Museum

In November 1863, Battery I again distinguished itself—this time in Chattanooga—supporting the Federal attack up the western slopes of Lookout Mountain in the famous "battle above the clouds." Of Wiedrich's batteries, the XI Corps Chief of Artillery later

recalled: “In the attack on the mountain they are reported to have done good service. Generals Hooker, Butterfield and Osterhaus have spoken of their practice as excellent.” Wiedrich mustered out of Battery I at Lookout Valley, Tennessee, on February 29, 1864, to accept promotion to lieutenant colonel of the newly organized, predominantly German 15th New York Heavy Artillery.



*Bronze bas-relief from the Gettysburg monument to Battery I /
Courtesy of Edward A. "Andy" Altemos*

Serving as infantry, Wiedrich and the 15th Heavy fought with the distinction in the V Corps throughout the Overland and Petersburg campaigns of 1864–65. After being wounded at Five Forks, he left the regiment as it continued to fight on—ultimately witnessing Gen. Robert E. Lee’s surrender at Appomattox. On August 22, 1865, Wiedrich was brevetted colonel for “gallant and meritorious service” during the August 1864 Battle of Weldon Railroad, where he had been wounded.

After the war, Wiedrich returned to Buffalo, where he worked as a fire-insurance agent and

later as Collector of Internal Revenue. He died on March 21, 1899, and is buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo.



*Michael Wiedrich's Grave Marker,
Forest Lawn Cemetery, Buffalo, New York /
Courtesy of author, Edward A. "Andy" Altemos*

For more on Michael Wiedrich’s wartime experiences, see the author’s book: [*From the Wilderness to Appomattox: The Fifteenth New York Heavy Artillery in the Civil War*](#) (Kent State University Press, 2023).

This article comes courtesy of the Blue and Gray Education Society, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. You can visit them at www.blueandgrayeducation.org.

Cincinnati Civil War Round Table

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*The **CANISTER** is regularly published eight times per year, in January, February, March, April, May, September, October, and November; sometimes more often, if we have a lot to say to our members.*