

Leander Barger (1838-1901) Civil War Veteran

Born in Clear Spring, MD, on 16 Apr 1838, Leander Barger was the 5th of 8 children born to Obediah and Rachael Barger. His father was a laborer at the time, although he eventually became a boatman, and later a cooper. As recorded in the censuses of 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880, Rachael and Obediah remained in Clear Spring until their deaths in 1878 and 1881, respectively, and they were buried there.

In 1860, Leander and 5 of his siblings were still living at home. Leander, now 21 years old, was working as a day laborer.

Involvement in the Civil War. When President Lincoln called for army volunteers in 1861, Leander was working as a boatman [on the C&O Canal]. On Aug 21, 1861, he enlisted in Company F of the 1st Regiment of the Potomac Home Brigade in Washington County, and mustered in shortly thereafter in Frederick. This was just 4 months after the war broke out at Ft. Sumter, SC. He served until the end of the war, 3 ½ years later.

After some initial training at Camp Worman just north of Frederick during the winter of 1861-62, the PHB's initial assignment was to march to Winchester to guard the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Subsequently, they were marched to Harpers Ferry, and on May 27, 1862, they saw their first action in a skirmish with Mosby's Rangers at Loudoun Heights.

Members of the Potomac Home Brigade were part of the Union forces defending Harpers Ferry when it was surrendered to Stonewall Jackson on Sept 15, 1862, and were marched off to Camp Parole in Annapolis for the winter. *Had they not been taken prisoner and been placed on parole at that time, they would have marched to Antietam to participate in that slaughter just two days later.*

Leander's service record indicates that he was AWOL from this parole camp during the months of November, January, and February.

After spending the winter at Camp Parole, a prisoner exchange was arranged in the spring of 1863, at which time they returned to their original assignment, which was "for the protection of the canal and the property and persons of loyal citizens of the neighborhood, and to be stationed in the vicinity whilst in the service."

However, as the war progressed, they were called on to participate in some significant battles, most notably the Battle of Gettysburg (July 3-5, 1863), and the Battle of Monocacy (July 9, 1864).

Two months after the Battle of Monocacy, Leander suffered an accidental gunshot wound, which was described by the regimental surgeon as follows: "I certify that I have carefully examined this soldier, and find that he is suffering from a gunshot wound of both thighs, occasioned by the accidental discharge of a musket in the hands of another soldier, September 4th, 1864 in consequences whereof he is in my opinion unfit for duty." He spent some time recuperating in the regimental hospital in Weverton.

2 ½ months after his injury, on November 23, 1864, Leander married Elizabeth Reed in Allegany County, MD. Elizabeth, born in WV in Oct 1845, was 19 years old. Leander was 26.

They would eventually have 10 children. (See list below.) Apparently, Leander remained on the regiment's rolls, and on April 8, 1865, along with other members of the 1st PHB, he was transferred to the 13th Maryland Infantry Regiment (MIR). The 13th MIR was disbanded on May 29, 1865, several weeks after Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, ending the war.

The 1870 census found Leander (32) and Elizabeth (24) living in Washington Co., MD, (with a Harpers Ferry, WV, address). They had two children: Otho J. (5) and Ida May (3). Living in the same house were John H. Reed (a 58-year old retail merchant; possibly Elizabeth's father) with 3 of his sons.

Documentation of Leander's "occupational life" after the Civil War is as follows:

- 1870 census: Ret. (Retail) D.G. (Dry Goods) Merchant, probably with his father-in-law.
- 1874 directory of Maryland by Post Office: Farmer, with a Barry (Berlin) P.O. address.
- 1875 Maryland business directory: Merchant of dry goods in Sandy Hook.
- 1880 census: Canal boatman.
- 1901 obituary (*Hagerstown Daily Mail*): "He boated on the canal for many years and of late had been farming."

So, in summary, it appears that he had a dry goods store in Sandy Hook, then was a boatman on the canal, and retired from that to be a farmer (which is interesting, in view of his war disability).

In 1873, a house on lot #71 was transferred from the Walton executors to Elizabeth K. Barger. This was located just across the tracks from today's railroad station.

In 1880, Leander (38) and Elizabeth (33) were living in Berlin with 6 children. As mentioned above, he was working as a canal boatman at that time.

Although the 1890 federal census was destroyed in a fire, a special census of veterans was taken in June 1890 -- the Veterans Schedule of U.S. census. Leander Barger of Brunswick, MD, was listed with 10 other veterans in the Petersville district (Petersville, Knoxville, and Brunswick). His war injury (see above) was described as: "Wounded leg. Very lame. Scarce can walk."

Two of Leander and Elizabeth's sons died about the same time: **Arthur Barger**, age 11, died in 1894, and **John C. Barger**, age 22, died the following year. We have no record of what took the life of Arthur. However, the *Brunswick Herald* gave a brief graphic description of John's "horrible death." While working as brakeman in the Brunswick yard, he fell under the train and was found "lying under the wheels of the train, a crushed, dying mass." Among his other achievements, "Pet" (as he was known) was a member of the Brunswick Council. [Of note, John's brother **Otho J. Barger** suffered a very similar death in the Martinsburg car yard 21 years later. Refer to his history for details.]

Arthur and John were the first to be buried in what was to become the family plot in the north end of the cemetery, where 6 other family members would eventually be buried.

Leander died suddenly on 11 Nov 1901 at the age of 63 years. The *Brunswick Herald* described the details of his death as follows: "Mr. Leander Barger, known as 'Captain Barger,' dropped dead on Monday evening about 6 o'clock, on the old ferry boat, which was lying in the canal at the mill firms' warehouse, at the foot of Second St. [today's Maryland Ave.]. He, with a

small son of Mr. Luther Wiggington, had been hauling fodder all day Monday off the bottom across the canal. It was while reaching for a bundle of fodder in the boat to pitch it on the wagon, that he suddenly fell over and expired almost instantly. Friends picked up the body and carried it to his home on 1st St in Wenner's Addition." He was buried in the family plot with his sons Arthur and John who had died just a few years earlier.

Elizabeth K. Barger died a year later on 24 Oct 1902. She was buried beside her husband and two sons. The inscription in her tombstone reads: "Her busy hands are folded/ Her work on earth is done/ Her trials now are ended/ And a heavenly crown she's won."

Descendants:

Leander and Elizabeth had 10 children total. We have record of 7 of them (5 had died by 1900). Those in **bold letters** are also buried in the family plot:

- **Otho J. Barger** (1866-1916), married **Laura V. Sigafoose**. [See separate write-up on this couple.]
- Ida Mary Barger (1868-1952, buried PHC), married Thomas Albert "Abe" Sigafoose.
- **John C. (or James P.) Barger** (1872-1895; died age 22, OBC)
- William F. Barger (1876-1961, buried PHC). Married Lottie Kane Stewart.
- Charles Edward Barger (1877-1953, buried St. Marks cem.). Married Laura Edna Butz.
- Harry Barger (1881-1952, buried Hayward, CA). Married Helen N.
- **Arthur Barger** (1883-1894; died age 11, OBC)
- *According to the 1900 census, Elizabeth had a total of 10 children, 5 of whom were living at that time. So, we know that there were 3 other children of whom we have no record, who must have died very young.*

Bargers' house on Maple Avenue:



Leander and Elizabeth Barger:

