

Mary E. Barger (1833-1862)

Wife of Civil War casualty Pvt. George Henry Barger
(orphan stone)

Among the 30+ “orphan” stones in the Old Berlin Cemetery was one that had earlier marked the grave of Mary E. Barger. Initially, we could find no relation to those buried in the Barger family plot, and we were about ready to write her off as “unknown,” when we stumbled across a clue that opened up a very interesting story about Mary and her husband George Henry Barger.

Mary Elizabeth Grove married George Henry Barger in Frederick County on 15 May 1855. George was born in 1832, the son of Abraham and Ann Mahala (Bennett) Barger. It turns out that he was a cousin of Civil War Veteran **Leander Barger**, whose history is detailed elsewhere. But what about Mary’s childhood family?

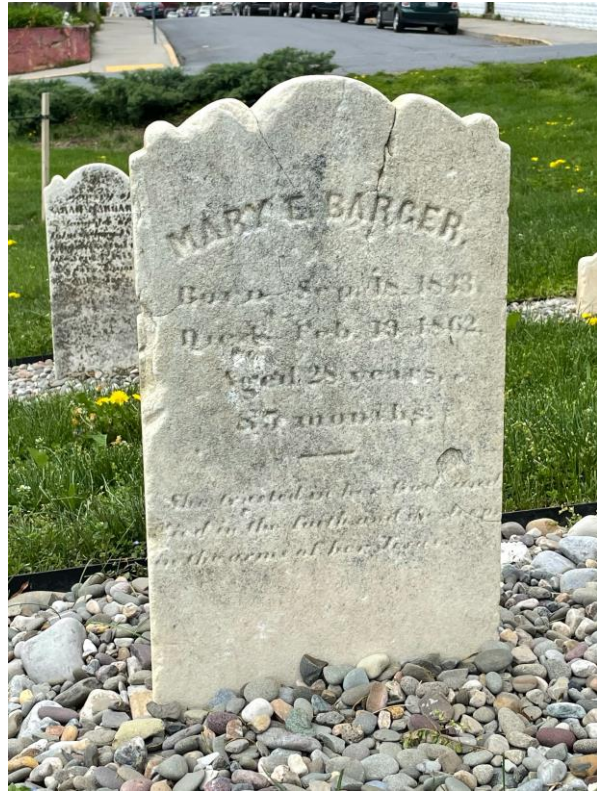
The only Mary Grove listed in the 1850 census was 16 years old at the time and living with Peter Grove (22) and William H. Grove (9 months old), in the Petersville district of Frederick County. One might speculate that this was her first marriage, and both Peter and William died, as they are not to be found in subsequent census records. If this is the case, Grove was not her childhood name. When she married George, she used her married name rather than her childhood name.

So much for speculation. The remainder of this narrative is based on actual records.

In 1860, G.W. [sic] (30) and Mary (25) Barber [sic] were living in the Petersville district with a Burkittsville P.O. address. They had three children: Ellen (8), Charles (5), and Theophilus (2). George was working as a laborer.

Sadly, Mary died on 19 February 1862 at the age of 28, leaving her widowed husband with three young children. She was one of the earlier burials in the Old Berlin Cemetery. In fact, we have records of only 4 burials there before her death, although there were certainly many more of which we have no record. The inscription on her tombstone reads: “She trusted in her God/ and died in the faith/ and she sleeps in the arms of her Jesus.”

Six months after Mary died, on Aug 17, 1862, George enlisted in the Potomac Home Brigade, leaving 7-year old Charles and 4-year old Theophilus with his widowed mother Mahala Barger, who was living in the Burkittsville area. We do not know what became of their daughter Ellen. It should be noted that George’s younger brother Columbus Barger had joined Co. D of the Potomac Home Brigade the previous year, on Oct 1, 1861.



Two weeks after enlisting, George was among the 10,000 Union troops captured by Stonewall Jackson at Harpers Ferry and sent to a Camp Parole (near Annapolis) for the winter until a prisoner exchange was arranged the following spring.

That summer, the Potomac Home Brigade was sent to Gettysburg, and George was one of 23 members of that unit who was killed defending Culps Hill there on July 3, 1863. He was shot in the chest and transported to the George Bushman farmhouse field hospital where he died the next day. His brother Columbus was injured in the same battle, but survived. George is buried in the Gettysburg National Cemetery.

This left George's mother Mahala Barger, (approx. 48 years old; she died in 1894) to raise the two orphaned boys Charles and Theophilus. In 1870, they were living with her in the Petersville/Knoxville area. Charles was 13; Theophilus was 11. They both got married about the same time ten years later.

Descendants of George and Mary Barger:

- Charles married Emma Jane Woods in 1880. In the late 1800's, he was a canal boatman. By 1900, they were living in Baltimore county where he was working in the "picking house" of a cotton mill. At that time, they had 8 children (+ 2 who had died). Ten years later (1910), they were back in Sandy Hook, MD, where Charles was a merchant with his own general store. Emma had had three more children, one of whom died. Two of their adult daughters were working in a cotton mill. In 1920, they were still living in the same place on the Brownsville-Weverton Road, and Charles was now working as a quarryman for the railroad. 15-year old Martha was still at home. By 1930, Charles had retired, and he and his wife were living in the same area with their daughter Grace and her husband Clagett Thompson, a car inspector on the railroad, and their two children. Charles died at Weverton in 1932 and is buried in the Knoxville Reformed Cemetery there.
- Theophilus married Mary Ellen Harrison on 2 July 1879 in Washington County, MD. In 1880, they were living in Baltimore, MD, near Inner Harbor. The census taker recorded two young boys in the family: Henry (4) and John (1). Theophilus was a laborer. By 1900, they had moved back to the Sandy Hook area of Washington County, MD, where he was still employed as a day laborer. By then, Mary had borne 11 children, 6 of whom were still at home. Two had died, and the other three had moved on. In 1910, they were living in Cumberland, MD, where Theophilus was still working as a laborer, doing odd jobs. Two more children had been born, one of whom had died. 5 children were still living at home. By 1920, they had moved to Hagerstown, MD. 3 children were at home and Theophilus was still working as a laborer. Ten years later, Theophilus and Mary were living by themselves, still in Hagerstown, and he was the caretaker of the city dump. Theophilus died in 1933 and is buried in Hagerstown.
- A third child, Ellen, was listed in the 1860 census, but there was no subsequent mention of her.

Note 1: Spelling of names and dates of birth varied from source to source. I have tried to use my best judgement in assigning dates of birth based on this information.

Note 2: Further information about George and Mary's descendents can be found on FindaGrave.com, FamilySearch.org, and other websites.

George Bushman farmhouse in Gettysburg, where George Henry Barger died:



George's military tombstone in Gettysburg National Cemetery:

