

Hardbarger Road

By Jackie Layne Partin

Today (2014) Hardbarger Road runs between North Bluff Drive and Nick-a-Jack Trail Road, partly in Monteagle and partly in Summerfield. Have you ever wondered how a German name like “Hardbarger” came to be on a rural road in this particular vicinity of the plateau? Thinking logically, we will look for a family with said name who lived somewhere in the Monteagle/Summerfield area many years ago. The original Hardbarger Rd. is believed to have extended from the Wonder Cave area, up near the horseshoe bend curve near the Susan “Sukey” (Layne) Levan home, up to the north of the MSSA, and on to Summerfield, continuing even in front of the entrance to the Summerfield Cemetery and on toward Tracy City. Rarely did an old road stand on its own merits from beginning to end, but it often incorporated parts of other roads, pikes, trails, etc. Because of the rareness in the area of the name ‘Hardbarger’ back in those days, one can probably assume that the road was named after the first Hardbarger who came to and lingered a while in that section of Grundy County, TN.

We can pick up on our Hardbarger family in Roane County, TN. Daniel and Sarah (Treadway) Hardbarger had maybe as many as ten children with **Samuel** being one. On Jan. 2, **1845** Roane County, **Samuel** (b. ca. 1830-d. aft. 1880) married **Margaret Jane “Peggy” Treadway**, and they quickly started their family. The mail came to them through the Eagle Furnace Post Office. By **1850**, there were three little ones running about the house—Rufus, Susan Rachel and Sarah Catherine. Samuel followed his father’s lead by supporting his family as a potter. His parents lived in the same area. Three more little girls, Martha Jane, Barbara and Mary where added to Samuel’s responsibilities.

However, on Aug. 10, **1860**, he was on his own with the six children between the ages of three and sixteen. His wife Peggy had died a year before in July **1859** after a three month battle with consumption, a disease of the lungs, possibly even tuberculosis. She was buried in the Eagle Furnace Cemetery in Roane Co., TN. It was around this time that some descendants of Samuel Hardbarger believe that he walked off and left his family leaving fourteen-year-old Susan to be the caregiver to her younger siblings. She married in 1863 at a young age. Of course, older brother Rufus helped when he could.



**Samuel Hardbarger's father's burial stone
in Eagle Furnace Cemetery, Roane
County, TN**



**Barbara (Hardbarger) Fitzgerald,
daughter of Samuel and Peggy
(Treadway) Hardbarger**

Factoring in the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, it would make sense that Samuel took off to fight for the cause on one side or the other. However, I can find no proof that he did that. So then, one wonders if he disappeared to hide from his whole past—loss of his wife, a house full of motherless children, and a war in which he did not want to fight. Samuel Hardbarger showed up in the Summerfield area of Grundy Co., TN. There was no Monteagle at that time, and the plateau in that area had only the rare one-room log cabin. Tracy City was in existence during the Civil War with the railroad being finished to it around 1857. What Samuel Hardbarger did or where he went between leaving home around 1860/61 and 1865, one can only guess.

However, around 1865, he married, or began a life, with **Mary A. "Molly" Sanders**; I found no record of a marriage license. Mary was called "Polly" on a Census record, but she was more lovingly known by her siblings as "Molly." Molly was the daughter of Silas Thomas and Senia (Lowry) Sanders. Her whole-siblings were James Silas, Mitchell, Tennessee Ellen, and Palestine.



L to R: Mary A. "Molly" (Sanders) Hardberger Meyer Price; her brother Mitchell's wife Amanda "Mandy" and her sister, Palestine (Sanders) Bennett Landenburger

The couple lived in the Summerfield, TN area, and their mail came to the Tracy City Post Office. This put Samuel in the right place to have a road named for him. Did he instigate the clearing of the road given his name? Was he the first settler to have lived on the road? Was the road formally given the 'Hardbarger' name years later when some old timer remembered that "that's what it has always been called?" Remember that when one used the word 'road' in those days, it was merely a rutted wagon path at best, and at worse, it was what we sometimes today call a pig path.

Just about the same time that John Moffat discovered a great spot to establish the little village of Moffat Station, (later Monteagle), Samuel and Molly Hardbarger were listed in the 1870 Census with two children, William M. and Seanie (Frank Garrett Martin), probably named after her maternal grandmother, Senia Sanders. However by 1880, the family was living in South Pittsburgh, TN, but the list of children had grown by two: Emma G. (Joseph Calvin Martin) and **Samuel Elliott** (Cora Presley). Young William was listed as a thirteen-year-old laborer, but he also was listed to fit in one of the following categories—*maimed, crippled, bed-ridden, or otherwise disabled*. This is the last time I have been able to follow up on him. In this Census year, Samuel could then tell where he (TN), his father, (Germany) and his mother (Ireland) were born, which could use some more research. The move off the plateau could have been for work

opportunities or schooling for his children. The plateau offered very little in the line of work for pay. One could work on the railroad, dig coal, log or make moonshine. Samuel was a potter by trade, but in South Pittsburgh, he was listed as a laborer.

After 1880, I could find nothing on Samuel Hardberger. Some researchers believe that when he died, his body was taken back to Roane County and buried beside his first wife, Peggy. I can't accept that at this time. I find no stone, or reasonable death date, for this Samuel Hardbarger. What I do know is that his son, Samuel Elliott married Cora Presley, and they were living in Orme, TN on Friday morning at 2:00 a. m. of April 30, 1909. It was at this day and hour that Sam Elliott and Cora, and possibly a baby, were killed in a devastating tornado that came off the plateau hitting all up and down the valley from Orme, Kimball, Cedar Mtn., Mullen's Cove, Glover Hill, Battle Creek, Ketchall, Farrier Switch, and numerous other areas. The devastation was tremendous according to the newspaper clippings in Eulene Harris' *Murder, Mayhem and More, Vol. One*. Mae Wilhelm, a researcher, also recorded in her family notes on Molly (Sanders) Hardbarger about the tornado and the deaths. The Hardbargers were not named in the newspaper clippings, but they are named in Mrs. Wilhelm's notes mainly because Molly and her third husband, George Price, took the Hardbargers' two young sons, Lawrence M. (7) and Samuel Elliott (6), to rear after they were found alive in a ditch when daylight came. (Molly's second husband was Charles "Charlie" Meyer.) The little boys were Mollie's grandsons, and she was a sister to James Silas Sanders, the great-grandfather of Mae Wilhelm.

Strangely enough, the small stones below can be found in the Orme Mountain Cemetery. There are no other Hardbarger stones in the cemetery. Why did Molly bury her son Samuel Elliott Hardbarger, Sr. in this particular cemetery? Could she have buried him there because his father was also buried there in an unmarked grave? The cemetery seems to be a relatively new one, so could this mean that this spot is where the Hardbargers died and the neighborhood buried them on the land where they were killed. The year 1909 pre-dates all other death years that are on **marked** stones. History is fascinating; I liken it to an old mule with a carrot constantly dangling a foot away from its mouth!



Probably Sam Elliott, Sr. and Cora (Presley) Harbarger in the Orme Mountain Cemetery



Probably a baby sibling to Lawrence and Sam Elliott, Jr. These three burials are the only Harbargers in the Cemetery



Lawrence and Sam Elliott, Jr. Hardbarger after the tornado killed their parents.

Molly stayed in Grundy County near her Sanders family until she became ill. She was especially close to her brother, Mitchell Sanders, and sister, Palestine (Sanders) Bennett Landenburger. Then according to a letter from Molly's grandson, Lawrence Hardberger (*his signature*) written on Feb. 18, 1977 to his cousin Mae Wilhelm, "...We heard that grandma was sick and went back to get her. We left all her belongings with Aunt Palestine, and we never got a chance to go back there anymore, and grandma died in 1938 and

was buried in Henryetta, Oklahoma. Samuel and Molly's daughter Seanie (Hardbarger) Martin and other relatives are buried in the same cemetery in Oklahoma.



Seanie (Hardbarger) Martin, daughter of Sam and Mary "Mollie" (Sanders) Hardbarger

Frank Garrett Martin, husband of Seanie Martin; burials in West Lawn Cemetery in Henryetta, Okmulgee Co., OK

Lawrence grew up and married Emma Martin, on Nov. 14, 1920 in Grundy County. He became a member of the Press working in Nashville, TN and in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In 1977, he and Emma were living in Dallas, TX where he died in 1983, and she in 1986.

Sam chose Louella "Ella" Schoenmann as his wife; they were married on Apr. 2, 1922, also in Grundy County. Their children were Sam, Cora, Phoeba Jane and Varnell. The couple's marriage ended in a divorce in 1948 in Idaho. Ella remarried to a Mr. Gebou in Texas, and later she moved to Petaluma, Sonoma, California where she died and was buried in 1973.

There is always more to the name of a road than just the sign.

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