



Carl Kirsch of Louisville, Kentucky, shares this photo of his great-grandparents, Sue and Henry Butler Bonta, taken ca. 1930, possibly in Washington County, Kentucky. See "I Remember" below.

my life, and I'm not going to start now," she declared. Whereupon Melinda walked all the way back home, got the 3¢, walked back to the store, and paid for the merchandise.

Malinda was my grandmother and a real pioneer woman. I'm proud that she was a part of my Appalachian roots.

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## Henry And Susan Bonta

Henry Bonta was a retired Washington County, Kentucky, farmer. He died at his home in Mt. Zion when he was 80 years old on May 3, 1934, and is buried in the Bethel Cemetery. Mr. Bonta, born near the Perryville Battlefield, carried water for the officers and wounded men and assisted in burying the hundreds of soldiers slain in the historic battle there.

Henry Bonta married Miss Susan Semones of Bethel, Mercer County, on June 11, 1871. He was the last member of a family of seven children.

During the 63 years of the Bonta's married life, there had not been a death in the immediate family, his death being the first break in the bloodline. Of the 6 daughters, 16 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren, all were born living, a record believed to be without parallel in Kentucky.

Henry Bonta was a member of the

Cumberland Presbyterian Church at Bethel, Mercer County. He had been engaged in farming all his life, having lived at the same home for the past 34 years.

Mrs. Susan Bonta passed away on June 3, 1934, at the family home in Mt. Zion. Her condition had been critical for several months, and her passing was not unexpected. She was the daughter of William and Avarilla Semones, deceased, and was born March 31, 1847, at the old Semones homestead near Bethel, Mercer County, Kentucky. Mr. and Mrs. Bonta's six daughters were Mrs. S. H. Bishop and Mrs. J. S. Moran, Springfield, Kentucky; Mrs. William Hatfield, Louisville; Mrs. Harvey Glascock, Shelbyville; and Mrs. George Tewmeyer and Mrs. Vallas Pinkston, Mt. Zion.

Mrs. Susan Bonta had one brother, Garrett Semones, living. He is in his 19th year and is the last of a family of 12 children, all of whom lived to an old age. Mrs. Susan Bonta was a member of the Bethel Presbyterian Church.

Her ancestral home was within a short distance of the famous Battle of Perryville, and during and following the battle was occupied by officers and soldiers wounded during the notable conflict. Many are the interesting stories she related concerning the war, the depredations of guerilla gangs in and near Perryville, and the losses sustained during the War Between the

States. She was personally acquainted with a number of men said to have been leaders in or members of the notorious "one-arm" Berry gang, which operated for years in central Kentucky, robbing citizens and pillaging homes in and near Perryville. She and her family had been living at her late home during the past 34 years, few women being better known or better liked in that community. The Bontas were my great-grandparents.

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## Childhood Memories

*This was written by my late sister, Jean Bellamy Hundley.*

"Most of my childhood memories are focused around the old homeplace where I grew up in the hills of Breathitt County, Kentucky.

"Time has eroded the physical properties of my childhood home, and all that remains is the old stone chimney and a few rose bushes that refuse to die. Taking my children to see the place of my childhood had special meaning, but only for me. They see only the shambled remains of a house nestled in trees and overgrown weeds at the foot of a mountain. They could not see the peaceful beauty or the gloom the old house had once evoked.

"My ancestors built the house in the isolation of a hollow, which could only be reached on foot or by horseback. The house was bordered by a creek in the front, open fields to the rear, and to the side loomed a huge mountain which housed the family cemetery. I was sure the ancestors buried there could see me as I played in the sandy yard.

"The summer air was filled with the sweet fragrance of wildflowers and apples. A large apple tree hooded the old well in the corner of the yard, from which we drew our water supply.

"My mother, Mary Turner Bellamy, spent hours peeling and slicing apples, spreading them to dry on clean cloths in the sun and covering them with cheesecloth to keep off the insects. Bees buzzed around the apples, birds sang from the treetops, chickens scratched and clucked about the yard, and occasionally a cow would protest the summer heat from a far off pasture; and yet the lonely stillness could not be disrupted.