

5. RICHARD SENTELL (1797-1883)

Richard Sentell, according to his own statement in a military service pension claim, was born in Edgefield, South Carolina, and we have the testimony of Alva Sentell that his grandfather was born on 14 February 1797.

"Richard Sentell was a son of William Sentell, the soldier of the Revolutionary War," Alva writes, "and it was he who gave me most of the information I have written as to William Sentell in the preceding pages of this little sketch. . . . I regret very much that I did not get more information when I knew my grandfather, for I knew him when he was in the prime of his life."¹

Move to the Mountains

Richard Sentell probably had little recollection of his early days in the flatlands. He was three or four years old at the turn of the century when his family made the long journey on foot from the Savannah River country into the mountains of western North Carolina.

He may have remembered the mountain wall rising abruptly from the coastal plain as it does today for the traveler on the interstate highway from Greenville to Asheville. And he may have remembered riding part of the way on the shoulders of father and elder brothers as they followed the Estatoe trading path from "ancient father Douthat's in Greenville" and up the Winding Stairs into the mountains near Caesar's Head.

We have no reason to believe that our pioneer family enjoyed anything beyond the most modest of circumstances. They were probably like most of the settlers on the western frontier of the state, ". . . impoverished small farmers, mostly descended from squatter immigrants who had failed to make good in either Virginia or South Carolina . . . [They] were not to be compared with the Virginian squires or the South Carolinian cotton-planters."² In the Federal Census for 1810, we find William Sentill listed as a head-of-family in Buncombe County, which included the Jeter Mountain area at that time. There were nine souls in the home then. Apparently John Edward, who does not appear in any subsequent records, had already gone to Alabama. In addition to William, the family group included two free white males 10 to 16 years of age (James and Richard), and two free white males 16 to 26 years old (Samuel and Guilford). The four free

¹ Alva Sentell, "A Sketch of the Sentell Family." Among unpublished papers of R. Nicholas Sentelle.

² Arnold J. Toynbee, **A Study of History**, Vol. I, Abridgement of Vols. I-IV by D. C. Somervell (New York: Dell, 1974), p. 365.

white females included one under 10 (Parmelia), one 16 to 26 (Patsy), one 26 to 45 (Nancy), and one over 45 (Elizabeth).

The War of 1812

In the War of 1812, Richard Sentell served 27 days of active duty as a private in the Regiment of North Carolina Detached Militia commanded by Col. H. Ewing. He was a drummer in Capt. George C. Neill's Company from Buncombe County. He enrolled at Rock Spring in Buncombe on 10 June 1814 when he was 17 years old.

If there is a propitious time to go to war, Richard was fortunate to begin his tour of active duty in such a period. Unknown to him when he mustered with his unit at Wadesboro on 13 February 1815, peace negotiations had already concluded more than seven weeks earlier.³ Even as men were moving toward the mustering ground in Wadesboro, news came of Jackson's victory at New Orleans followed shortly by word of the signing of the Treaty of Ghent. We are told that a regiment destined for New Orleans, possibly Ewing's, was halted in its tracks and returned home.⁴ Nearly 40 years later, Capt. Neill gave a statement that "Sentle was one of my company & entered the service at the organization & continued in it until the company was discharged . . ." ⁵ Richard Sentell was honorably discharged at Smith's on Mud Creek in Buncombe County on 11 March 1815.

In later years, he received bounty land and a pension for this military service. But Richard apparently encountered some difficulty in satisfying a minimum requirement of 30-days active duty until the government allowed for travel time to the place of muster. And he was unable to produce a discharge in pressing his claims for veteran's benefits. "[If] he ever had one [a discharge] it is lossed or mislain[;] he did not suppose a discharge would be of any service to him & was car[e]less in that respect," a court clerk recorded in 1852.

Like his father before him, Richard lost his military discharge. But he succeeded where the older generation had failed. His claims were recognized on only 27 days of service, while his mother failed in her claims for more than 30 months that William had served in the Revolution.

³ News of the peace was received in Washington on 14 February.

⁴ Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, **Frustrated Patriots, North Carolina and the War of 1812** (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 94, 118.

⁵ Richard Sentell, Military Pension Records 25,627.

Twice Married

Richard Sentell probably married Sarah Robinson in 1815 or earlier as their first child was born 27 May 1816. The young father would have been about 18 years old at the time.

Nearly all we know of her for certain is that she was "a full blooded Irish woman,"⁶ and therefore possibly an immigrant or the daughter of immigrant parents. Catherine Robinson who married Richard's older brother Guilford may have been a relation, and we suspect the family lived close by the Sentell holding on Jeter Mountain.

Robinsons were among the very first settlers on Crab Creek, and remained many years. None of the name are there now. One of the family, a boy in his teens, was guilty of the only homicide ever committed in this peaceful little valley, so far as known. He was tried at Asheville, the county then being Buncombe. On account of extreme youth, the death penalty was not inflicted. He was sentenced to have the letter "M" branded in his palm, the red-hot iron to be held till the smoke reached the ceiling. The sentence was executed. Murdering people did not make one a celebrity in the minds of these county dwellers. The Robinsons were given the cold hand. They soon sold their property to the Merrills and left the country. Tradition has it that the family finally settled in the Sand Mountain country of Alabama. This same boy, then a man of middle age, became an outlaw in the Civil War and killed twenty-seven men from ambush.⁷

Sarah Robinson was eleven times a mother of children by Richard, with Gideon the youngest born 22 March 1840. We believe her grave is situated beside that of Richard in the family cemetery on Big Willow. The spot is marked by a slate tablet which seems to bear the date of December 1840.

Richard Sentell married Elizabeth McCall on 11 July 1841. She was six years younger than him (born June 1803), and they married when she was 38 and he was 44 years old. Elizabeth probably died before her husband as she never made application to our knowledge for widow's pension benefits. We are told that she had lived in Little River community. Her mother was probably Mary H. McCall (born 1769-70) who was making her home with the Sentell family in 1860.

His Appearance and Manner

⁶ W. Clark Medford, **R. A. Sentelle** (1958), p. 5.

⁷ Luther Anderson, "Echoes," **The Western Carolina Tribune**, date unknown but ca. May 31, 1935. Transcription provided by June Capps Lovell.

At the time he enlisted in a militia company in 1814, Richard Sentell described himself as five feet eight inches in height, with a fair complexion, blue eyes, and light hair. "He was less than six feet high," Alva writes, "but he had a broad square set of shoulders and never became stooped in the least. He had hair rather dark and his beard was of a sandy color."



This only known portrait of **Richard Sentell** has been provided by his great-grandson R. Nicholas Sentelle.

He was never a fat man, but he was supplied with a good set of muscles. He had gray eyes and a heavy brow with wrinkles in his forehead.

He was never sick much, and when he passed away he did not suffer much; just passed off without any pain or struggle.

He was used to outdoor exercises, and spent a good deal of time when he was young in hunting, as many others did in his day; for the mountains were well supplied at that time on Willow Creek with deer, turkeys, raccoons, and the creek was fairly teeming with speckled trout. It is no wonder he loved

to hunt.⁸

His education. In spite of limited opportunities for learning, Richard Sentell learned to read, and he could write after a fashion. His signature on a pension application in 1872 appears labored and barely legible, and he sealed a pension claim nearly four years later with a mark.

"By almost constant application," says grandson Alva, "he became well versed in the **Bible**. I have never met anyone who had read more **Bible** than he did to his chance. He believed it with all his heart."⁹ Although there were no free schools in the area, there were several tutors among the settlers from Edgefield. And we have reliable testimony that most of the people in the Crab Creek

⁸ Alva Sentell, *loc. cit.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

community, and the children reared there, had advantages of education far beyond the average for those early days.¹⁰

Richard's mother, we are told, taught his father how to read the Bible. And she probably gave lessons to the children as well during the long winter evenings in the lonely cabin on Jeter Mountain.

His religious life. Richard Sentell, his biographer grandson writes, "was a very religious man, but was always quiet and lived his religion in his everyday life."

He was the first person to join Crab Creek church after its organization, and for almost all his time in his church he was a deacon of his church. No one filled it better. He made it a rule never to miss his church services, and if he was not there the brethren and sisters would say that something was wrong with him.¹¹

The records of Crab Creek Baptist Church show its organization on 11 October 1834, and among the 20 members of its congregation on that date were Richard Sentell (deacon), Catherine Sentell, and Elizabeth Sentell.¹² The women were probably his sister-in-law and niece, the wife and daughter respectively of his brother Guilford.

In April 1835, the record notes that Richard Sentell was restored to fellowship in the church after he made acknowledgment for getting angry. On 11 July of that same year, Elizabeth Sentell joined the Crab Creek congregation by letter. This may be Richard's mother. Her husband had died two months earlier, and she probably transferred her membership from Beulah Church at this time.

A third Elizabeth Sentell joined the church by letter on 9 April 1842, and this may be Richard's wife whom he had married the previous summer.

Members of the congregation at Crab Creek on 8 July 1848 included Richard, Gilford, Catherine, Elizabeth, and Polly Sentell. This Elizabeth is Richard's wife. Elizabeth, his mother, had already died (1847), and Elizabeth his niece probably had married the Rev. Joe Blythe by this time. Gilford (Guilford)

¹⁰ Sadie Smathers Patton, **The Story of Henderson County** (Asheville: The Miller Printing Company, 1947), p. 44.

¹¹ Alva Sentell, *loc. cit.*

¹² Crab Creek Baptist Church Records. Transcription provided by June Capps Lovell.

and Polly Sentell would be Richard's son and his wife who later moved to Henson Cove in Haywood County.

We find a notice that Elizabeth Sentell died on 7 July 1891. This may be Richard's widow, although we question why she never applied for a military pension if he died before her.

In any event, the Crab Creek records amply support Alva's testimony that his grandfather was highly active in the life of the church there. Over a period of several years, he appears frequently as a delegate to other churches and general meetings. He was named to represent Crab Creek at meetings of the Baptist Association in 1835 and 1836. And he was sent as a messenger to Beulah in 1837, and as a delegate to Little River in 1847, probably for meetings of the Association at those places.

A Union man and a strong Republican. The early settlers in the North Carolina mountains were a breed apart, "not to be compared with the Virginian squires or the South Carolinian cotton-planters," and we suspect that Richard Sentell would have applauded this observation as rigorously as any of his neighbors. Perhaps the same influences which compelled his family to leave the flatlands at the turn of the century also set them against slavery and the plantation system.

In politics he [Richard] was a Republican of the strongest type. In the war he was a Union man, and never had any sympathy with the Confederacy. He looked on slavery as one of the worst evils in all the world.¹³

In the family cemetery on Big Willow, there were so many graves of men who had fought for the Union that the spot was known in the area as the "Yankee burying ground."¹⁴

At least four of the nine sons of Richard Sentell were in the Federal service at some time during the Civil War. James and Jesse were in F Company for the 2nd North Carolina Mounted Infantry Regiment, a unit raised from the Crab Creek area in the fall of 1863. This group of about 75 men secretly crossed the mountains and joined the Union forces in Knoxville.¹⁵ Gideon, who had gone

¹³ Alva Sentell, *loc. cit.*

¹⁴ Frank L. FitzSimons, **From the Banks of the Oklawaha** (Golden Glow Publishing Company, 1976), p. 38.

¹⁵ Others in the company included Cpl. Luke Osteen, a nephew who married Richard's daughter Priscilla, and Capt. Joseph Hamilton who married one of Richard's Osteen nieces. Luke Osteen is buried at Big Willow.

to East Tennessee before the war, enrolled in a Federal unit in Greene County. John Edward (Alva's father) and his cousin Lewis Sentell were captured on Pisgah Mountain by a Confederate patrol and murdered (18 May 1864).

But at least four Sentell men from Henderson County were in the Confederate 7th Battalion, North Carolina Cavalry. These included Francis Marion (Richard's grandson), William R. (Richard's son), David Jasper (another son), and William M. Sentell (probably Richard's nephew, the son of Guilford).¹⁶

Murder on Pisgah Mountain. Among the Crab Creek men of F Company, 2nd NC Mounted Infantry, who joined Federal forces in Knoxville were John Edward Sentell, Richard's son who had become a Baptist preacher, and his cousin James Lewis Sentell (enlisted 1 October 1863).

While the regiment was stationed at Cumberland Gap on 4 May 1864, John E. and Lewis were detailed to make boards to cover the shanties in quarters. E. F. Case, a private in the same company, said they told him before leaving camp that day that they were going home. Lewis' wife was expecting a baby, and he wanted to be with her for the arrival of their sixth child. With them went Daniel Gilbert from H Company.¹⁷

At a point on the Buncombe side of Pisgah Mountain, where the trail led up a cove and across the mountain into Transylvania and Henderson Counties, they stopped when they saw some men above them on the trail. One of the men, Burnette by name, beckoned for them to come on up and they did so. The men were taken into custody and held for a while in an old shack nearby. A man claiming to have been an eyewitness told Alva five years later that his father was robbed of \$60 he was carrying.¹⁸

¹⁶ Louis H. Manarin, **North Carolina Troops 1861-1865 A Roster, II** (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1966), pp. 474, 481, 542, 550. William R. was reported absent without leave 25 January 1863; William M. deserted at High Point February 1864; Francis was captured at Monticello, Kentucky, 9 June 1863, confined at Johnson's Island, transferred to Point Lookout, Maryland 30 October 1863, and paroled at Coxes Landing in Virginia 14-15 February 1865. Jasper was captured at Jacksboro, Tennessee 26-27 August 1863, paroled at Coxes Landing the same time as Francis, and died in a Richmond hospital the following day 16 February 1865.

¹⁷ Henderson County Genealogical and Historical Society, photocopies of pension file of Malinda Sentell, widow of James L. Sentell, 2nd NC Mtd Inf, Certificate 162,740. The date on John Edward's stone (17 May 1863) seems to be in error as the Crab Creek men were not mustered into service until the fall of 1863. Alva wrote that his mother had been expecting (William C. was born 14 June 1863); actually, the expectant mother was Lewis' wife. (Minerva E. Sentell was born ten days after the murders on 28 May 1864.) Charges of desertion against these and other soldiers in the regiment were removed by act of Congress, 26 March 1869.

¹⁸ Medford, pp. 24-25.

Nicholas Sentelle writes that the captors were part of a Rebel detail watching the mountain trails. The Union men were captured near a spring. A captain ordered some of the men in the patrol to take the prisoners to a Confederate prison in Asheville, "and report back in fifteen minutes."

The prisoners were marched further along the mountain trail, and just over a steep ledge they were told that they would be killed. John Edward was on his knees in prayer when the fatal shots were fired. He was 35 years old.

Word arrived on Big Willow early in June of the discovery of bodies badly decomposed in the Pisgah Cove. Samuel Sentell (John Edward's brother) and Josiah Huggins removed the bodies from temporary graves where they had been wrapped in tree bark and buried, and returned them home. John Edward was buried in the family cemetery, the "Yankee burying ground," on Big Willow. Lewis was buried at Crab Creek. Mr. Gilbert was left in a cemetery near the scene of the tragedy.

Alva Sentell said in his old age that the greatest ordeal of his life was being taken to view the remains of his father.¹⁹

Nicholas Sentelle places the site of the murder, "just over on the Haywood side of the Pisgah ledge." Alva Sentell noted in his diary (2 October 1891), "Left East Fork for Hominy. Went through the gap near Pisgah. In this gap on the Hominy side my father was murdered in time of the war. How sad now!"²⁰

Liberal and honest. In common with his father, Richard Sentell seems to have had little desire to accumulate property beyond the immediate needs of his family. He was liberal with his children and neighbors, perhaps to a fault. "When I was a boy," Alva tells us, "my grandfather's home was almost like a hotel."

In his dealings, he was honest and was never known not to pay all he owed anyone. He was industrious, but because of his freeheartedness he never accumulated much property. Twice in his life he was broken up by going men's security for debts. But he never sought any advantage to keep from paying the debts. Then he was a liberal man among his children and neighbors, and what he had they all had; and so then he had plenty to live on, but he did not become rich.²¹

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25. His geography may be a bit off the mark here. John Edward probably was murdered near Elk Pasture Gap where now State Rt. 151 intersects with the Blue Ridge Parkway. Alva probably was at Brooks Gap, about three miles due west of Elk Pasture Gap.

²¹ Alva Sentell, *loc. cit.*

The miller of Big Willow. Richard appears in the census returns for 1850 and 1860 as a farmer, but he had become a miller by 1870. In the years following the close of the Civil War, he owned a small overshot mill where he ground rye and corn meal for the community. On the Sentell Branch of the South Fork of Big Willow, just off Evans Road, the Meadowbrook Fishing Lakes mark the location in former years of the old mill shoal. Richard's mill once stood here at the place where the stream plunges down from an outcrop of limestone. The home was below the falls on the south side and across the road. And on a hilltop across the creek, immediately north of the mill shoal, the family cemetery -- the "Yankee burying ground" -- remains today as the only visible sign of our generations who once called this spot their home.

Richard was known affectionately in the English style as Grandsire Dick to the many members of his huge extended family. "Their love for him was beyond words," family historian Nicholas Sentelle writes.

Often when the Grandsire ground meal for the families of his grandchildren, he would take no toll for the grinding. And he was known sometimes in those difficult years after the war to dip meal out of his toll barrel, to be sure some child never went hungry.²²

His death. Richard Sentell died 27 June 1883 at age 86. "He was never sick," writes Alva, "and when he passed away he did not suffer much. Just passed off without any pain or struggle."

Grandsire Dick was buried on the hilltop overlooking the home and the old mill shoal on Big Willow. A government stone marks the spot with the legend: "Richard Sentle, Drummer, Ewing's Regt, N C Militia, War of 1812."

Life on Big Willow

We have, to our knowledge, only one authentic eyewitness account of our family life on Big Willow during the difficult years after the Civil War. This unique record comes from the hand of Alva Sentell (1846-1934) who grew up on Jeter Mountain and Willow Creek, and we include portions of it at this point in our narrative as it has been preserved and passed along to us through the care of Rev. Francis Marion Huggins and Richard Nicholas Sentelle.

A sketch of the family.

²² R. Nicholas Sentelle, Box # 68, Etowah, NC 28729. Unpublished papers. There was little hard cash in circulation, and the miller was usually paid by a toll on the meal produced. We have seen an old toll dish once used to measure out the miller's due at the rate of a half-gallon of meal for each half-bushel of corn ground.

I have had it on my mind for several years to write a short sketch of the Sentell family [Alva tells us] . . . My reason for doing this is that I know a great many things about the family that will be forgotten when I pass away if I do not make a record of them for any of my children who may wish to know something of the history of the family hereafter. In writing this sketch I must rely for my information on the records found in the old family Bibles and on what I have heard from the old people in my boyhood days and what I know of the family myself. . . . In writing this sketch, I am not writing the story of people whom the world would call great. None of the family so far as I know has ever been distinguished for wealth or renown. "The short and simple annals of the poor" is the story I leave. But I am glad to record that while none have ever achieved greatness for wealth or renown, not one thus far has ever been a criminal. They have always been law-abiding people and have been loyal and patriotic. They have always been industrious people, and the reason why they have never gained more than they have is because they have been too free-hearted. . . .

Just here I might also mention some traits of character peculiar to my family.

Cheerfulness is one. I do not remember of seeing one who was of sad or gloomy disposition. They were all full of innocent fun and were naturally a very witty people. That then led them to be very fond of music. The old set, as we might call them, were a set of fiddlers. For I never saw a set of men who were fonder of music made by the violin than the Sentell family. But they were also fond of sacred music. My father was not a fiddler, but he was one of the sweetest singers of his day.

High temper is another trait. This may or may not be a good trait, but the family has it nevertheless. But a high temper, if it is controlled, is not a bad thing to have. None of my people have been quarrelsome or fussy, but it has always been understood that no one could impose on a Sentell without getting into serious trouble.

Devotional spirit was another trait. As I have already said, the family was nearly all religious. No unbelievers were among them that I have ever heard of at any time. My fathers were tenderhearted and kind to everybody.

. . .

So taking it all and in all, I am not ashamed of my ancestors. On the other hand, I am greatly indebted to them for what I am now. I am now an old man, but I am in good health and my mind is as good as it ever was so far as I can tell. And I know the habits of my forefathers and mothers are the cause in a large measure for this condition of my strong manhood now. Surely I am under great obligations to my parents for their good behavior in their days. I am glad they did so well.

Another trait of the family is their independence. I have known some of them to be in need and destitute in many ways, but I never knew one to be

"a deadbeat" at any time. I am sure none I have ever known would have made beggars. It may be that this trait is too strong, for I fear that it has often hindered them from entering into some of the good things that passed them by had they not been too much afraid of appearing to stoop to get the things that others would work for in business affairs. But one thing is sure: They are too independent to make good servants. No one could drive or order them around. In getting an education, I fear that spirit has hindered them from humbling themselves enough to get the benefits of those who could have instructed them in a great many things they ought to have known. But after all it is a good quality if it is not carried too far.

The family, so far as I have learned, are all sensible people. I have never known an idiot among the whole set. No people can learn faster than they can. But not many have ever attained to any distinction in education because their opportunities have been very poor and partly because a great many of them thought they knew as much as the other fellow without studying it out. Perhaps that is where their independent spirit has done them a great harm. Some of the younger generation are making a great mark in the world now, and when they have been tried by the side of others no one has ever out-stripped them in the race for honors in school or college. . . .

Some of the family have lived to be quite old. I had an uncle Sam who lived to be past ninety-two years old, and my grandfather lived to be eighty-six past. And I knew one of my grandfather's brothers -- Uncle Jim, as he was called -- and he was a very old man when he died. I knew two of my grandfather's sisters, old Mrs. Osteen and Mrs. Barnett, both of whom were very old when I saw them in my boyhood. Old Mrs. Barnett told me when I saw her last that she had an uncle who lived to be over a hundred years old. My father was killed in time of the late war, and several of his brothers, and so we cannot tell how long my father might have lived if he had not been killed. I attribute it to their habits in life that made them live so long. At any rate, living the simple life tends to long living. And for that reason I can claim that a great many of my people have been long-lived people. . . .

Observations on home life. "His habits were of the simplest kind," Alva writes of his grandfather. "He made on his farm almost all his eatables, and the few things he bought, he bought with what he could spare from his farm."

At his age of the world, the people did not raise much wheat in his section, and so the bread was for the most part corn and rye.

The rye and wheat had to be cut with reaphooks and threshed with a flail, and two men would take each end of a sheet and fan the chaff and dust out of the grain.

Folks would regard that as a hard way to make a living now.

His clothing was all homemade.

Out at the edge of the yard was a big trough in which he had his hides in tanning for shoes. The rule then was for every family who could afford it to kill one or more cattle every year for beef and take the hides for leather. The hides were first soaked in lime to take the hair off, and then they were soaked in water again to get all the lime out of the hides; and then they were placed in troughs with alternate layers of chestnut oak bark and hide and let remain there till the hides were thoroughly tanned. The leather was then taken and the thin part was used as upper leather, and the thick part was used for sole leather; and most men made their own shoes for themselves and their families. We can imagine what kind of shoes they had in those days.

And the clothing was all homespun, and was made up by hand at home. A sewing machine had not been invented then. The farmers all had sheep, and they would shear their sheep; and then they would almost all raise a patch of flax, and they would spin the wool and flax into thread for filling, as the women called it. For a long time, the women spun what they called the chain for their cloth, but in process of time they got to buying bunches of thread made by factories for the chain.

The people used for dyestuff various things, but the best dye they could get was indigo; and they made some very fine cloth. In almost every kitchen could be found the "blue-pot", and one only had to go to the door to realize by the smell that there was such an article there. However, the smell was not so disagreeable, and it was an evidence that there was something doing at that home. Walnut hulls and the bark from the walnut trees were used for dyeing brown, and some most excellent cloth was made in that way, and then they would get many kinds of herbs for dyeing; and in some cases they would use some kinds of minerals for dyes.

Some old souvenirs in the way of clothing have been seen that show that the women of those old times were very skillful in the making of clothing for their families. Just think of a woman now who had to dye her wool or cotton, card and spin it into thread, weave it into cloth, cut and make it all with her hands: How did she ever get it done?

We might look on them as living a miserable life, but they were a contented people.

Going to church was their greatest joy. The old people went to worship the Lord while the younger ones, in addition to serving the Lord, would make it an occasion for making love to each other; and many of the best matches made in those good old times were started at church.

In addition to the meetings at the church, they had logrollings, corn-shuckings, quiltings, and the like, which gave the young people a chance to get together.

The people of those old times had some things which we would love to have. The country was fresh, and the land was cheap. The stock got fat in

the woods, and they had wild game, fish, and honey, so plentiful they hardly appreciated it. So instead of pity, we can almost envy them of so many good things we do not have.

Other remembrances. Perhaps a couple of final stories of Grandsire Dick and the family on Big Willow would be appropriate to close this section. These come to us from Rev. John E. Sentell (1859-1935), Alva's brother, who related them to his son Nicholas.

Richard Sentell satisfied most of the needs of his family from his own farm, and this included the supply of bee honey for the table. At odd times bees will leave an old hive to form a new colony, and in this process they congregate for a few hours in a fairly inactive mass which clings to any convenient fence post or tree limb. A beekeeper has to take advantage of the moment to collect his swarm and place it in a new hive.

One time the bees settled in the top of an old apple tree, and Grandsire Dick had Johnny to climb the tree and hold the limb to which the swarm was clinging while he sawed it off. But when the limb parted, Johnny turned it loose. He bounded out of the tree and ran away leaving his grandfather to get stung by the disturbed bees.

Later reports have it that Johnny got stung also -- at least when Grandsire caught up with him.

The family on Big Willow was known to pay its debts. "I have known some of them to be in need and destitute in many ways," says Alva, "but I never knew one to be 'a deadbeat' at any time."

Nicholas Sentelle tells us that his father's first wife was sickly, and one time he had to neglect his crops to care for her. Shortly after she died, he went to the country store nearby to obtain supplies for his family.

The merchant was Mr. Luther Talley, I believe. When he entered the store, the merchant, very thoughtfully, expressed his sympathies to him, and said a man came to the store yesterday and said, "John Sentelle's wife had died and he had lost his crop and had a doctor bill and a funeral bill to pay, and he, the merchant, had better not sell him anything on a credit because he would never pay up." But the merchant turned and pointed to the shelves in the store and said, here is clothing, shoes, and to the grocery department there is flour, lard, coffee, sugar, and whatever the family has a need for. You get what you need for your family. I am not afraid to trust you.²³

²³ Nicholas Sentelle, *loc. cit.*