

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

I don't suppose that many of you remember Longfellow's "The Courtship of Miles Standish" which was almost mandatory reading when "Papa" went to school. Did he really go to school? Well, I hope so anyway! Actually that has nothing to do with what we have going here today, because authentic reports indicate that this all began quite differently.

One day near Ashley, North Dakota, a neighboring youth asked "Honey" whether she would like to go along with his mother, sister, and him on the following Sunday to visit relatives in Linton. Having nothing more important to do, she thought it might be Okah to get farther afield than the immediate neighborhood and she said, "Yes" and went along.

It turned out that the relatives at Linton included a young man, lately out of college, and after the mothers went visiting other acquaintances, the rug was rolled back, the portable phonograph was brought out and the dancing began. A tour of the hills near Linton (a contrast to the fairly flat land at Ashley) completed the day -- but not quite everything.

The following Year, "Papa" brought his mother to visit the relatives at Ashley. Well, he hadn't quite forgotten the little "wide-eyed" girl he had met the year before and asked about her. He was told that "Honey" was now working in Bismarck and, as "Papa" was also working in Bismarck, he just HAD to have her address. Trying to get this was not easy because uncle Johnny was the only one home that day and he couldn't find it. However, the cousins were very cooperative and later obtained it and sent it to him. The rest is history -- or are you nosey enough to want more details.

Yes, "Papa" called and dated "Honey" a few times but she was called home to help with the harvest much as she may have wanted to avoid this. However, "Papa" was not to be outmaneuvered and made his move. You couldn't possibly be interested in the fact that THE question was not asked in the accepted fashion; you know, on bended knee and such! It was during a sedate drive in the Bismarck area that "Papa" popped the question!

During the ensuing months, visits to Ashley to meet the family and other details were attended to. Things didn't run smoothly all the time, At "Papa's" invitation, "Honey" came to Bismarck for a visit. Because of slow mail, (and who had telephones in those days), "Papa" did not meet the arrival train -- he was off having a good time somewhere else. However, he was surely made aware the next morning that "Honey" was in town, and thus a few more days together.

The "Engagement Party" for fellow Highway department workers and boarding-house friends was held on New Year's Eve at the Dome, a dance hall between Bismarck and Mandan. One owner of the Dome was a fellow employee of the highway department and "Papa" had been able to reserve the balcony for the party where libations included several gallons of fine wines bootlegged from California a short time before Prohibition was repealed.

Wedding Plans had to wait. "Papa" went on active duty with the Army in the Civilian Conservation Corps, a New Deal innovation to give the unemployed youth of our nation some work and "on-the-job" training. From his camp in forested Minnesota, where he had already rented a cabin in the woods, "Papa" came to Ashley in his first self-owned (but financed) car, a good ole 1932 Plymouth. They were married as you know, on 14 July; Bastille Day, start of the French Revolution -- in case you didn't know. How could "Papa" know that "Honey's" ancestry went back to Alsace -- no harm, that ancestry was Swiss. That "honeymoon" in the Minnesota woods is still waiting, a week after the wedding, an order transferred "Papa" to North Dakota and then Fargo -- no respect for our "Papa" and "Honey."