

The Mishaps of Courtship

My Mamaw Phyllis loves to tell all of her grand-kids old family stories, but one of her stories in particular is my favorite. It is the story of the time my Papaw Jerry came a courtin' my Mamaw and got the surprise of his life.

My Papaw Jerry was a young man of about twenty and decided that he wanted to, as they said back then, go a courtin'. The only problem was my Papaw did not own a vehicle, so he had to walk, ride his horse, or get somebody to take him wherever it was that he wanted to go. Luckily, my Mamaw was one of his neighbors, so he figured that it would be easy enough for him to just walk up the holler' and visit with her awhile.

My Papaw began to walk up the long, steep hill better known as 'Katy Keen Hill' to all the neighbors in hopes of seeing his sweetheart. He walked along the road with a spring in his step and love on his mind. I think my Papaw was so excited about getting to see his girlfriend that he did not pay attention to how dark it was getting outside. My Mamaw told me that it was so dark that the moon and the stars were nowhere to be seen. She said if he had stuck his hand in front of his face that he would not have been able to have seen his hand out in front of him. Wow! Can you imagine that? It must have been pitch dark out that night. Oh, but here is where the story gets interesting.

He was walking by his Aunt Marie's and Uncle Clayton's house when all of a sudden he fell over something in the middle of the road. He did not know what in the world that he hit until he heard the *ding a ling* of the cowbell. He said it like to have scared him to death. Ol' Pied was the milk cow's name and it belonged to his Dad's sister, June Hurt. The cow had gotten out of its fence and decided to take a load off and laid down in the middle of the road. As he fell over the cow it jumped up sending him sailing through the air landing on nothing, but the ol' dirt road

beneath his feet. He picked himself up and brushed himself off trying to not show the cow how much it had hurt his pride, but he knew that he had just gotten pretty bruised and skinned up. Still he continued up the hill. He was determined to visit the woman who is now my grandmother. He claims that when he saw her after going away for awhile that it was love at first sight.

He rounded the curve and there was the home of the ol' miser Roscoe. Roscoe was the type of a person who prided himself on being mean to all of the other people in the holler. He would cuss a while, swarp a while, and then the next minute he would burst into tears. He had the meanest, cruelest, ugliest looking dogs around. Roscoe had this light by the road and every time his awful dogs would cut a shine about someone coming up the holler he would run and flip the light on to see who he could taunt and tease. Sometimes Roscoe was ornery enough to try shooting at the unsuspecting traveler always taking aim above their heads, thank the Lord. My Papaw was worried every time he visited my Mamaw that those dogs would literally eat him alive, so he was grateful to have made it by Roscoe's without any trouble out of Roscoe or his trained killers. Still Papaw had about a half a mile to go until he finally be at my Mamaw's house.

He walked past Roscoe's house and came to Ollie Mae Stiltner's house. From Ollie Mae's house to what is now Circle J road was a sled trail. So that tells you how awful the road must have been to my Mamaw's. No wonder it took him half the night to get there. The sled trail was used to transport supplies up the holler to the people that lived there.

When Papaw finally reached Mamaw's house he was just about ashamed to tell her all that he had been through that night. He had nearly been killed by a cow and was worried to death that he was going to be dog food. Mamaw says she cannot remember Papaw even mentioning

one thing about his crazy night. Even out of all this chaos, my grandparents still got their happy ending. Not long after this escapade my Papaw proposed to my Mamaw. He waited until he was twenty-one years old to purchase her the trailer he promised her because he wanted to get it in his name. That is not the funny part though. Guess who married my Papaw and Mamaw. The DOG CATCHER married them. Is that not the weirdest thing you have ever heard? I was a little confused about why he married them, so I asked her about it and she told me that it was because he was also the Justice of the Peace. It gets better though. He married them in a little convenient store up Slate Creek. They were so happy to be getting married that they didn't care their only guests were people shopping at the store. After the little ceremony was over they moved into their new trailer on 'Katy Keen Hill.' Not long after that they found out that they were expecting their first child also known as my Dad. My Dad did not have to wait long for a sibling because approximately two years later they found out they were expecting again. My Mamaw was hoping that this time she would have a girl, but that did not pan out for her. She got my Uncle Wes instead. I don't think that it bothered her though because both of her children are her pride and joy.

My grandparent's today can be found sitting on their front porch holding hands watching that same road my Papaw used and while they do, they just look over at each other and smile watching all their wonderful years play in each other's eyes.