

In the 1940-1941 and 1943, Me and my family were picking cotton. I was not good at it. I was way behind on my row. Dad came back there and I knew he was going to eat me out good. He told me I was not doing very good and to finish my row in a hurry and I could get my horse and go see about the cows. This I like really well. I finished it quick. This is the starting of a Love Story that has lasted forever.

Our cattle were in the mountains about 10 miles from where we lived. It was all outside range. Back then, we brought them home in winter. My dad told me of some cows we did not see the last time and to be sure I saw them this time before I came home. My mother heard this. She said, "Bill you come home before dark even if you don't see a cow." Her word was over his.

I found all of the cows. Did not take long. I also found a grape vine with big blue grapes, big as your thumb. When I left there, I came out of the mountain on a different side than when I went in. I came down this road that led to the one that went home. I saw a girl standing at the mail box. She was about my age, and the prettiest one I had ever seen. I had heard of the pretty Lawrence girls of Rosedale. I talked to her about 45 minutes, maybe an hour. She (Colleen) finally told me she had to go to the house. They would be calling her. She left and I never could get her out of my mind. Every time I went to look after the cows, I went by her house. But she was never at the mail box, and I was too bashful to go ask for some water. I never saw her the rest of the summer.

That fall, about first of December, the school of Rosedale was having a pie supper for Christmas. I heard when it was, I told my mother I was going to it. She asked me if I had any money. I told her I didn't and she didn't either. She told me to get some from my dad. This was like getting some out of the government.

This was Depression and Dust Bowl time and nobody had money. I told dad where I was going. He asked about money I didn't have any. He fumbled around in his pockets and finally found a quarter. He gave it to me. When I got there I asked some of the girls there which was her pie. Most of the pies were selling for ten cents or 15 cents. Her pie came up and I had to give that whole quarter for it. Best quarter I ever spent in my whole life.

When the time came we had to eat the pie with her and her friends. It was chocolate. Best pie I ever ate. When it was over, all the country girls walked home. I got my horse and I rode up beside her and stepped off of him just like I was going to tie a calf. I got her by the hand and she never jerked loose. And I had her 73 years.

We went to McCurtain High School together. Everyone knew she was my girl! We did our courting in the kitchen around the wood stove. I found out I lacked one credit to get my diploma in 12th grade. I could go to school in the summer, but I had gotten my call to the Army. When school was out, last of July, I was in the Army. Sixty- seven years later, I went back to McCurtain School and got my diploma.

Most of the kids in our country that had to go the Army at 18 were getting married. I told Colleen it would not be right for her if I didn't come back, for her to be a widow. We would get married as soon as I got back.

I got my training at Camp Wolters, Texas. We all knew we were training for the invasion of France. I came home for 7 days in December before Christmas. Colleen came home from Tulsa where she was working for Douglas Air Craft, too.

I caught the troop train in McAlester and Colleen caught the Greyhound Bus for Tulsa. For the next two years, we told each other how much we loved each other through the mail. She wrote me nearly every week. I wrote when I could. I came home the last of October 1945. We married December 12, 1945. No two people ever had a better life. We saw most of the U.S. We went to Canada, worked in California as a carpenter. I worked in Kansas and lost a baby girl in Kansas – she lived two days. We were not satisfied in Kansas after she died. We went to Oregon, we came back to live in Oklahoma City, Poteau, Tulsa. We had a son in 1952, William Keith Parker. Keith and I are calf ropers and train roping horses, along with my grandson, William Jake Parker. My wife, Fairy Colleen Parker was born March 17, 1925 and died March 10, 2018. I will love her forever.