



By The Way, Do You Love Me?: Letters From The Beginning Of A Life Long Love

Jerry Alexander

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About a year ago, while going through some old boxes of my mother's, I came across a bundle of letters, tied with a dilapidated and faded blue ribbon. Looking at them, it became obvious that they were letters from my Dad to my Mother, but I was really shocked when I saw that the first postmark was dated "May 20th, 1932".

I thumbed through the thick stack of letters and discovered that they were ALL dated 1932, and numbered on the front in pencil with what I recognized as my mother's handwriting. I read the first few and realized that these were the letters that my Dad had sent my Mother the very first year he had known her, starting a few days after they had met at a dance. They were numbered from 1 to 111, and had all been written during a seven month period! That is more than one letter every other day.

I read them through, deciphering my Dad's scrawl on those that weren't typewritten. Slowly, some of the pieces of history of my family, and indeed those times in Texas and American history came to light.

It was during the Great Depression when my parents met. My Father had just turned 24 years old. My Mother was 20, just a little over a month shy of turning 21.

I never really knew much about my parents as I was growing up. Probably most of us don't.

These letters are now over 80 years old, and I am going to share them with you. Also included are some photographs of my Mother and Dad and drawings that he drew for her from that period. There are some scans of the actual letters and postcards, but all are transcribed to make for easier reading.

I think you will find that courtship, jealousy, family values, work ethic, gender roles, proper etiquette, entertainment, racism, anti-Semitism and the effect of the Great Depression of the early 1930's in the United States and deep South Texas will be as surprising to you as they were to me.

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