Through the Eyes of Bunny

Eight of their ten grandchildren are running loose inside of my grandparent's house. It is our weekly Sunday lunch with my mom's side of the family, but this week it was a special lunch. We celebrated three birthdays and Easter all in one swipe. Man, can she cook some good southern food! Broccoli casserole, macaroni and cheese, ham, and chicken were a just few things among this special Sunday feast and that was before the cake and ice cream. Twenty people crowded in a small house eating all together, but I can assure you that my grandparents wouldn't have it any other way. With their daughters living in different places, it is a rare occurrence for most of the family to get together. My grandparents' eyes are lit up with excitement to see their daughters and grandchildren, much like that of a little child.

With all of the commotion around the house with the younger grandchildren, it was rather difficult to conduct this interview with my grandmother. My cousins and I do not call her grandmother, grandma, or any variation of that sort. Despite being close to three quarters of a century old, those names sound too old for her taste. Bunny is her name, and Bunny is what we call her. She is much like me: stubborn, hard headed and very opinionated. She is one of the strongest women I know, and for that reason I choose to interview her.

The interview started with me asking questions about her childhood. She lit up a cigarette, letting out a small laugh and asking, "What childhood?" Bunny was born on September 17, 1933 right in the middle of the Great Depression in a small town: Glasgow, Virginia. With this economically hard time, both of her parents were employed: her father as a dump truck driver and her mother as a factory worker. Bunny's siblings did

what they had to do to get by. She grew up rather fast during this time taking on chores such as cleaning and cooking for her parents, three sisters, and two brothers. "When I wasn't doing that, I tried my hardest to stay out of trouble," she said. That didn't happen too often from what I can tell hearing some of her stories. Bunny seemed to somehow stay in trouble through grade school. "It was hard to stay out of trouble, though seein' that my sister Emily was such a scaredy cat."

I laughed as she told me several stories of picking on her younger sister. She did pranks like tying a rope to the rocking chair in their bedroom, and making it look like there was a ghost. "I was always pullin' pranks like that to her." Bunny reminisces. She didn't only just pick on her youngest sister; she picked on the whole family. One of the most memorable times happened when her oldest sister Ileta was babysitting. Bunny had covered Emily's face with baby powder and pretended to choke her nearly scaring Ileta do death. "Ileta tattled on me, and I got in a good amount of trouble for that one," she says laughing again.

We moved on to talking about her life after she graduated high school. There wasn't enough money in the family to send anyone to college. So, almost immediately after graduating, Bunny got a job working at the Carpet Mill in Glasgow doing factory work. She says, "Women worked more for less money," referring to the pay difference between men and women in that time. "I never did complain though. I made a living for what I worked for and that's all that mattered then," she sighs.

In high school, she met her husband of fifty four years. They eloped and later had five daughters. They always joked that if either one of them leaves for good, they had to take the children with them. Needless to say, after fifty four years they are still together

and they still have the same love for each other. I can see this with the way they look at each other. My grandfather will openly admit that she is the "boss" of the house any day, and that's how it has always been.

I asked Bunny if she raised her girls differently than she was raised. She responds with a pondering look on her face, "In some ways… yes. I was involved more with my girls' schoolwork than my mother was with my brothers, my sisters and I." As she gazes through the porch window which overlooks into the kitchen at her husband who is washing the dishes, she tells me how he spoiled their girls awful. Bunny was the one to put her foot down most of the time. "The corrections that had to be done, I did it," she laughs. "You definitely did not want to cross Mama [Bunny] the wrong way," chimes in my mom from across the room, sending all three of us into a burst of laughter.

She then points to my laptop computer and says with both disgust and astonishment as she lights another cigarette, "Those things first came out when I was working at the factory." Of course, they weren't exactly this technologically advanced, but they were supposed to make the work easier and less strenuous. Bunny makes it obvious in her expression that she did not like using them at the factory, but she is amazed at computers today as she watches me type. "I just can't figure out how those things work!" I then ask her about the technology in her generation. Television, washers, and dryers were the big thing. "Laundry could be done easier and faster with the washer and dryer. Things can be done much easier today with technology, rather than when I was your age," Bunny says.

Bunny grew up in a difficult time for everyone. Women were treated lower than men, but at that time equal rights weren't the biggest issue. What was a big issue,

however, was working together as a family to make ends meet during this time. Into married life, their oldest children ran the house doing chores similar to what Bunny did as a young girl. They were in the marriage equally and everything was 50/50 the only major difference was the pay difference. That didn't matter at all to these two.

This woman through example has shown me to always mean what I say and say what I mean. We share the same wit and sarcasm, and in a heartbeat we will say what's on our mind. She is the definition of a grandmother: spoiling us grandkids, pumping sugar through our blood, and sending us home. She has taught me that family is one of the most important things in life. My grandparents are supportive in everything we do. When asking her for one last piece of advice before I had to leave, she responds with, "Just follow your dreams and you can do anything you set your mind to."