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The Yellow Bowl

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Gena Vee Broderick
Orem, Utah
November 2018

"The Yellow Bowl"
Material Culture

Informant:

Gena Vee Broderick is my grandmother. She was born during the Great Depression in Orem, Utah. She was nine years old during the attack on Pearl Harbor and she cites that and her awareness of WWII as the root of her intense patriotism. She loved attending school and was extremely bright. After graduating from high school when she was only in 10th grade, she worked in a potato chip factory to save money for BYU tuition. She met and married my grandfather and raised 9 children in Orem, Utah. She worked as an elementary school teacher and decorated wedding cakes to help support the family. She and my grandfather lived in England for a few years before moving back to Utah. Her subtle and exceedingly witty sense of humor never ceases. She finds happiness in spending time with her grandchildren, gardening, and caring for others.

Context:

My grandmother told me this story while I was at her house on the day after Thanksgiving. We were still satiated from the feast, but the aroma from the leftovers were enticing us to go back for a second time. We have a large family due to my grandma having 9 children and each in turn contributing their own. When we sat down in the off-limits living room (no children allowed), we could barely hear over the noise of my family members in the other rooms. Previously, I told her about folklore and asked if she would attempt to think of some stories or experiences to tell me. I have seen the yellow bowl almost every time my grandmother creates a delicious treat. I knew it was special, but I had never known all the details. My mother has told me about the fights which have already begun over who will receive when grandma passes on. While she was telling the story of the bowl, some of my aunts must have overheard from the other room, because they came in and began listening.

Text:

So, I got it for my wedding, and it has been in the family for 66 years [laughter] and every special thing we make we use that special yellow bowl, especially for chocolate chip cookies and our recipes always say, first of all, get out the yellow bowl, and brownies, I don't know how many batches of brownies have come out of the yellow bowl, they are just not good unless you make them in the yellow bowl [laughter]

and that is a coveted thing that the kids want after I die, they speak for the yellow bowl [my aunts come into the room] well when everyone comes to listen I don't know what to do.



Texture:

My grandmother was more than happy to share the story of the yellow bowl. She was unsure how this qualified for my school project, but she was proud to explain the magic. During the conversation, she was collected, never boisterous. Her hands moved in rhythm with her words, not gesturing specific things, but filling the air around her. The volume of her speech increased when she began to laugh. She definitely believes that food tastes better when it comes from the yellow bowl.

Emma Thornton
Utah State University
Survey of American Folklore
Professor Lynne McNeill
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