Mildred Edith Hicks Bryson: My Great-Grandmother

by:
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I am very fortunate to have a great-grandmother who is still alive. Her name is Mildred Edith Hicks Bryson, and she will turn 96 really soon. She was born on May 17th, 1914, on Florence Avenue on the East Side of Joliet. She was born at home, which is one of the many differences between then and now!

When I interviewed my great-grandma Millie, she told me what life was like during her girlhood. She went to Woodland Grade School and—get this—she lived close enough she could walk home for lunch! (Wow.) Most kids had homemade clothes, like my great-grandma. You could only have store-bought clothes if your family had a lot of money. For Christmas, her parents would save a quarter every week to buy presents. Sometimes the kids would put out pie plates instead of stockings. (Who knew?)
The next morning, the pie plates would be filled with fruit, nuts, and candy, a rare delicacy in those days. Transportation was different, too. People walked a lot more than they do now. A few people had cars, but streetcars were used more. In those days, many houses had cisterns, which collect rainwater. It was used for washing dishes, flushing the toilet, washing your hair, etc. If my great-grandma needed fresh water for drinking and cooking, she would walk down the block to fetch a bucket of water at the neighbor's well.

I really enjoyed conducting the interview with my great-grandma. I learned a lot of things that I didn't know before. It surprised me how different life was when my great-grandma was a girl. I love my great-grandma (my "Gigi") very much!
Bibliography

Interview with Mildred Edith Hicks Bryson. Conducted by Lily E. Bryson. May 5th, 2010, Joliet, IL.

Great job, Lily!