



# My Story

Shirley Lokstad Schoenfeld

*Name of Storyteller*



This is just a couple memories I have of my Norwegian Grandma Lokstad, who never spoke English. Elen Oliversdaughter Øitangen was born in 1868 at Bardu, Troms, North Norway to folks that "migrated" from Tynset and Alvdal in Hedmark. I wish I could've learned Norwegian from her, but was not encouraged to do so. There is a great story about how she met and married my Grandfather Johannes Iverson Løkstad there in Bardu, but that is in the Hedmark book already.

My memories of her are from 1945-1956. She died in 1956 at the age of 88 years. When we were little, she would put us on her foot and sing a song that sounded like Rhea, rhea, runken, hesten ..... We spent every Christmas Eve at her house. She liked to listen to 38 rpm records of Norwegian singers, and then we had to sing for her, and we listened a long time to the Bible being read by my Uncle Ingvard. The Christmas of 1956 was very sad and quiet, as she had died December 20th. It was the first time I remember being in a funeral home, and the smell of the flowers stayed with me for years. She usually had my aunt shop for long stockings and warm clothes, or she made us wool socks for skating, and warm mittens.

In her last couple years, she was senile, and wandered - they said she talked about "walking to Norway with the dog, Shep" and she would also tell the dog. She never got to return to Norway for a visit, but her family there wrote many letters, which she saved every one.

When they always visited us on New Year's Day, she would put food on her plate, but would be slipping it down for the dog. Before that, I just remembered her as being strict and stoic. We were at our best behavior when we visited her. Even though I didn't know what she was saying, I remember well the sound of how she talked, and when I got a tape of the 200 Year Jubilee in Bardu from 1991 (which I attended) - the lady that was narrating had the exact tone of voice - made me get shivers.