



## **FUNK, Katherine**

My Life Story – written by Katherine Klippenstein Funk in 2016 (at age 91).

My parents were Jacob and Helena Klippenstein, Russian immigrants, who with their two little girls had fled their homeland in 1923 when life became unbearably chaotic with revolution, starvation, and fear of death.

I was born in 1925 in Dominion City, Manitoba, the third girl, which was not considered a positive event. Fortunately, my parents loved me anyway! In 1926 we moved to Rush Lake, SK where my father attempted to support us by farming – the only option to immigrants at that time. Dad was ill suited to this task – his career in Russia had been teaching. However, he did his best, and endured many crop failures, especially through the dirty thirties.

Three boys and one more girl were added to complete our family. Daily we hitched up our two wheeled cart and drove the three miles to school, unless it was colder than -20F. Education was important to our parents and we were encouraged to use this tool to better ourselves. Our spiritual life consisted of morning, evening, and Sunday afternoon devotions around the kitchen table. Dad played the violin, mom corded on the guitar, and we all sang. Mom was hard working and resourceful. Life was pretty good if only we'd had more money. Even as a child I was conscious of being poor. The burden of "how will we survive the winter" was heavy on me. I still bear the marks of that burden. I assure you, I help you farmers worry when rain doesn't come in season.

In 1942, after sixteen years of farming we had our first good crop. During that harvest, my fourteen-year-old brother Henry was killed in a threshing accident. This forever changed our lives. Our mother was never quite the same after losing her son. Our father leaned into his faith, and feeling a nudge from God, accepted a leadership position and was ordained as a pastor in the Herbert Mennonite Church. I was seventeen and in grade eleven when my brother died. On Monday morning Henry's desk at school was empty. I was heart broken, and even now, seventy-three years later I am flooded with sorrow at this memory.

By this time, World War II was raging. We felt it in Canada as well. Workers were urged to enlist in the army, so they left their jobs. The need for teachers was great, so after grade 12 I enrolled in Normal School in Moose Jaw.

After the two month training period I was deemed a teacher. I was eighteen years old, had been recently baptized, and accepted a teaching position fifty miles away from home. I had 25 students in grades 1-10. I came to realize that children will learn in spite of their teacher, for what did I have to offer?

There were many young people my age in this village and I enjoyed the social life and my freedom. There were even barn dances, but well – that was going too far. I spent three years here after which I got a promotion to teach back in my hometown. We rented a small house so that my younger sister and two brothers could live with me and attend school in town. At the age of 21 I was responsible for 25-36 students and 3 younger siblings at home. Somehow we managed. Dad would come to town with the horses and take us home for the weekends. Mom would make us food for the week ahead.

After five years of teaching I chose the road that led

to CMBC, where I thrived and grew spiritually. I worked part time as a nurses' aid to support myself. I made wonderful lifelong friends and met my life's partner there. Henry and I were married in 1951, three weeks after my convocation, and joined hearts and hands in the service of God for 60 years. My father married us. Henry was already ordained and ministering in Carmen, Man. so I joined him there. We rented a tiny old house for \$25 a month. In 1953 Bob was born, and eventually learned to walk in spite of the uneven heaving floors. In 1953 we moved to Rosthern where Henry served in the St. Vital Mennonite Church and finished his Education degree at the University of Manitoba. Christine Marie was born here in 1956. It was a difficult and lonely time for me, as we shared a small house with one bathroom with another family who also had two babies. Following this, we moved to Rosthern, Sask. where Joanne was born in 1960. Henry taught at RJC. My father had recently passed away so we moved mom to Rosthern. My sister Mary lived down the street and my sister Helen lived in the next town. These were wonderful years and I wasn't lonely anymore. After 4 years in Rosthern, we moved to Waldheim to pastor in the Zoar Mennonite Church. There in the course of 9 happy years, our children grew up. I took correspondence courses and attended summer school at the U of S. I returned to teaching and it felt so good.

In 1971 came the invitation to Drake. We packed up, pulled up our roots, and entered this community. Bob had just finished High School and left for Bible School. Chris and Joanne made new friends and eventually married 2 of them! I joined the staff at Drake Elementary school and taught Kindergarten for 13 years. Thank you for accepting us just as we were.

Henry retired at the age of 65 and I also stopped teaching. We experienced a voluntary service term at a Bible School in Mexico. Other travels included the Maritimes, Yukon, Grand Canyon, and many places in North America. These were good years. Our children settled near us and were a big part of our lives. They gave us 9 grandchildren to love, and there were many happy times at "gramma's house."

Henry's health slowly deteriorated and dementia set in. We watched him slowly walk away from us. He moved to the Lanigan Care Home for the last 13 months of his life. Words cannot describe the sorrow of losing Henry. Now, at the age of 91 I am also living in the Care Home. I am sitting there in my room right now as I write this. The care is good, the kids are wonderful, and I'm waiting to go "Home". I have lived a full and rich life. I tried to live for the Lord. My performance was not perfect (far from it) but if I had to do it all over again, I would make the same decisions.

But I am sorry to leave my children and grandchildren, May God bless each one of you! I know that you loved me. We will all meet again in heaven and sing in the Hallelujah chorus, or have a wiener roast.

I love you!! Katherine, Mom, Gramma, Great Gramma  
Mom completed her earthly journey on Friday, January 28, 2022 at age 96.

She "crossed over" into eternity and we rejoice with her.

Thank you to the Lodge staff that cared for her.

For online condolences, tributes or memorial donations please visit: <https://fotheringham-mcdougall.com/>

  
**FOTHERINGHAM-McDOUGALL**  
FUNERAL SERVICE