

Life History of Anna (née Hübert 1911 – 2001) Klassen

Written by Sister Maria Kliewer (née Hübert)

Anna was born as the fifth of fourteen children on October 6, 1911, in the village of Nikolaifeld, Territory of Omsk (6 children died). Our parents, Heinrich and Blandina Hübert (née Thielmann) had moved from the Ukraine to Siberia (1910) and owned a large farmyard, since father was a remarkable agriculturalist, even though by profession he was a teacher. As a result, there was always a lot of work, so we children had to get with it from an early age. But we were willing workers. Sister Anna was especially hardy, at the age of 8 already milking three cows. Twice daily Mother had to carry away the full buckets of milk. Anna's hobby was baking and cooking. She was the kitchen commander; the rest of us, as a result, had little to say. She cooked and baked superbly, so we simply shut our eyes sometimes when we were shushed out of the kitchen. But Anna did not like school. And apart from the Bible, she read no books. While still quite young she became a member of the Margenau [Mennonite] Brethren Church, and sang in the choir as long as that was permitted.

In 1924 we moved to Putschkowo, the neighbouring village. Here Anna got to know her future husband Johann Klassen, with the wedding celebrated on June 24, 1934. Blandina was born April 20, 1935; 1937, son Johann—but he died after only 18 months. Anna appeared in the world on January 27, 1938. And the fourth child, then, was Johann—October 8, 1939.

June 22, 1941—War. Immediately the social situation in the collective changed. The members no longer get foodstuffs dealt to them; everything is given to the state, to the front. Families are burdened with unbelievable taxes in terms of food and money; nothing remains for us at home. In March 1942 Johann Klassen is conscripted into a work camp for forced labour in Tscheljabinsk. For two years Anna and I move in together, since that's easier, living in Nikolaifeld. May 1944: things go badly for Johann Klassen—he's declared unfit for labour, dismissed, free to die at home. He comes home on May 9; on June 11 of that same year he closes his eyes forever, and finds his last resting place in the cemetery in Nikolaifeld. Then a second severe shock hits Anna and the family: September 1953, daughter Blandina dies at 18 years of age, leaving a 10-month old baby, a malicious brain disease decrees an end to her blooming, young life. Blandina still quiets her little daughter, and then what I'll never forget: when Anna, with her little granddaughter on her lap, sits down beside the coffin of her dead daughter, the child recognizes her mother, tears at her dress, cries, and calls out "Mama, Mama!" She wanted to drink.

August 1957 – Anna Klassen and Peter Thiessen marry. January 1959 – The Thiessen family and my family move to Alma-Ata. Anna and Maria are picked up later. Things work well for Anna—she is busy in the business, attends church regularly, and has good female friends. In 1989, to Germany. Anna was healthy in the first few years, but with advancing years her strength waned. And in the last years she lost her memory, but not her firm faith. Although she could no longer recognize anyone, she still spoke her prayers clearly. Her Lord called her home on February 24, 2001. She now sees what she believed. She leaves blessed memories.