



The Catholic
Archdiocese
of Edmonton

Joy in Christ
100 Jubilee
1912-2012

Jubilee 100 Biography Project

Biography of Elsie Hook

Submitted by St. Rose of Lima Parish, Onoway

Elsie (Engleman) Hook was born February 22, 1934, in the Onoway Hospital, and grew up on a quarter-section farm, 41.5 miles southwest of Onoway.

Her father, Edmund, and mother, Rosina, came from Europe in the late 1920s, arriving in Halifax before taking the nine-day train west to Alberta. Edmund arrived in Alberta in 1927. He was met by his brother, who helped him find work. Eventually he saved enough money and bought a quarter-section of land west of Edmonton, and built a small one-room house, where he lived until he was married.

Edmund and Rosina were married on November 17, 1928, at Sacred Heart church in Edmonton. Rosina continued working in Edmonton for a few more years until they saved enough money to build a new home. By 1934 they had saved up and bought a cow, two horses, chickens and pigs. Elsie was born shortly after on a warm February day after a 41.5-mile drive (by horse and buggy) to the Onoway hospital.

Growing up, Elsie was surrounded by her German-speaking family and did not learn much English until she started school, walking 21.5 miles every day, summer or winter, rain or shine.

In 1968 Edmund and Rosina sold the farm for \$19,000 and built a new home in the village of Onoway, where they lived until their passing.

In her own words Elsie shared the following recollections about St. Rose of Lima in Onoway:

I just remember a few things about the church, of what my mom and dad told me. Our first little church was built about 1929-30. Our first priest to say mass in that church was Father Michael P. Rooney. They did have another priest before that, but he travelled by horse and buggy and said mass in the homes of people. His name was father Stacey. I remember we had a wood stove in our little church; it was situated closer to the front. A very dedicated man, Anthony McNamara, always came early and built the fire in the winter; he also helped the priest with mass. Another man, Delmar Newton, also helped out. Those days not too many sat at the back of the church, because of the cold. If I recall, we only had church once a month because of having to travel with horse and buggy or wagon or sleigh. Our family attended regularly.

When I was 10 years old my parents sent me to Lac la Nonne camp for 2 weeks. We had three nuns teach us about our faith, prayers etc. In those two weeks at camp, the first week we prepared for First Holy Communion, and the second week for confirmation. It was a lot to learn in two weeks. I was confirmed by Bishop Jordan in 1944. Then when I was 14 my parents sent me up to Lac La Nonne again, this time to help out in the kitchen, prepare food, clean, and help some of the younger children.

I also recall through the summer months we had catechism once a week in our own parish, taught by younger ladies from another parish. I used to enjoy that.

Elsie was married on Nov. 14, 1957, by Father Michael Blanche and joined the CWL. She continues to be a member today. The church has been quite important to Elsie, because of its role in gathering people who believe in God, to pray together and to sing together.

Our St. Rose of Lima parish celebrated their 50th and 55th anniversaries. Elsie was involved in all those things. In 1970, she was parish council chairperson. As she remarried in 1970, the council presented her with a large Jerusalem Bible, which she still reads today.

Elsie has been blessed with eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Her family lives within a radius of 35 miles and she continues to dedicate her time and talents as a faithful steward to St. Rose of Lima Parish in Onoway, Alberta.