

KIRSTINE CATHINCA FLEMMER 1846 –

Kirstine Cathinca is the mystery child of Christian August and Betty Flemmer. Why I say this will become clear in what follows. She was born at the family home in Kørsor on the 17th January 1846. She was apparently healthy as her baptism was delayed until the summer, when the family celebrated her baptism on the 30th June 1846. The 1850 census records her as Kirstine Katinka aged four, along with the rest of the family. This is the last mention there is of her.

Family accounts of the trip to the Cape in 1852 always mention that '*Dr. Flemmer, his wife and seven children*' left for the Cape. This shows that Kirstine who was six when they left was still alive. Newspaper reports of the Flemmers' arrival at Algoa Bay record 'Dr. and Mrs. Flemmer, seven children and servant' so she didn't die on the voyage. I feel sure that if she had died on the trip to Cradock this sad event would have been mentioned in family accounts of the trip.

I have not found her death recorded in any church or government record, nor has any gravestone been found in Cradock. When my grandfather MT Flemmer was putting together a rough family tree he records her as Kirstine Katrinka Flemmer. No husband is shown, but it does show that he had been told about her, probably by his own father. And that's all there is. It's strange to me that this close knit family, who kept quite good family notes make no other mention of her at all.

In writing the Flemmer History I have avoided speculation but the mystery of Cathinca calls out for some! The most obvious answer is that she died as a young girl in Cradock or when the family lived for a short time in Bedford and that for whatever reason we have not found the records. The other possibility is that she became estranged from the family for some reason and whatever oral history there was within the family, died with the generations. We just don't know.

Finally, I found a telegram in the Pretoria Archives which I have never been able to link to a Flemmer family member. Dated 1898 it is handwritten and a poor copy but is from what looks like 'C G' Flemmer, school secretary at Roodekoppen near Hiedelberg. Addressed to the Transvaal Republic Education Department it is an order for more desks. Could this poor copy actually be from C K Flemmer who would have been aged 52 then? It seems unlikely that we will ever know the answer.