



## **K. Delphena Nessel**

**1909-2001**

K. Delphena (Swatling) Nessel started her life on a farm in North Albany, New York where the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers merge.

As a child she learned to play piano and was giving lessons to others by the time she was 18 years old. When not teaching piano, she was learning the skills of canning, cooking for a large farm family and sewing clothes.

Del attended “normal school” at Cobleskill, New York when she was 18, and graduated in 1926. She was awarded a teaching certificate, but shortly thereafter married Jeff Nessel and started a family. They had five children – Helen, Francis, Douglas, Robert and Charles. When the Depression made things difficult for everyone, Jeff, a butcher in a large market in Schenectady, became unemployed. They moved to Ballston Lake where they were able to stretch their meager funds and send their children to Burnt Hills – Ballston Lake Central School.

After the war when enrollment numbers were increasing but space was limited, the district opened Little Troy Schoolhouse in 1951. Del, whose children were all in school, was approached to teach kindergarten at the schoolhouse. She was required to take courses to upgrade her certification and did so during the summers and evenings at Oswego State, New Paltz and Oneonta State Colleges.

The Little Troy School experiences became legendary in her family and for the children who attended. Del loved teaching and she would always visit each new student’s home prior to the start of school to introduce herself. That way, she used to say, on the first day of school the students would be greeted by a person they already knew. It was the start of a beautiful friendship. When Little Troy School closed in 1963, Del transferred to Charlton Heights School where she taught until her retirement in 1970.

- Written by Doug Nessel, Del’s son