

MEMORIAL MINUTE FOR ELISABETH METZL
January 7, 1988

Elisabeth Metzl was born Elisabeth Hiebel in 1905 in Vienna, Austria. She was raised a Roman Catholic, but became interested in Quakerism while a student at Swarthmore College. During her teaching career at George School she joined Newtown Friends Meeting. She later transferred to Swarthmore Meeting where she was an active member until 1982 when she moved to Friends Village and returned her membership to Newtown. Elisabeth's brother, whom she greatly loved and admired, is a leader in the Rudolph Steiner anthroposophic movement in Austria, and Elisabeth considered herself an anthroposophist.

As a very young woman Elisabeth was on the staff of an international school in Switzerland. It was in the difficult years following the first World War and material resources were in short supply. Life was Spartan and character-building as the staff not only taught but also maintained the physical plant. In the late 1920's she was selected to accompany two students from this school to their home in Swarthmore, Pa., as their parents were unable to come for them.

Mrs. Aydelotte, wife of the President of Swarthmore College, befriended Elisabeth, persuaded her to enroll in the honors course there, and to live in the Aydelotte home. She graduated in 1931 with a major in French and a thesis on Molière. During her senior year she was called to George School to substitute for a French teacher who was ill. After her graduation she spent the major part of her long teaching years at George School, although she also taught at Shipley School. She made lasting friendships at George School with her colleagues and with her students. Those of us who were her pupils and her friends know the excellence of her teaching.

In the 1940's Alois Metzl, an older professor of Elisabeth's, came to George School from Austria and married her. At this time her mother also came from Austria to live with them. There were a few happy years with this household until Alois's death. Elisabeth's mother spent her declining years in Newtown Friends' Home.

During Elisabeth's retirement in Swarthmore she spent a number of years as homemaker and companion to Dr. Frederick Luehring, a retired member of the physical education faculty of the U. of P., and a notable hiker even in his 90's. Those of us in the George School family who were still in the area, enjoyed their company at reunions, something Elisabeth never missed.

In fact her active schedule was formidable, and she often invited one of us to go along - travel (every year to Europe to help her brother care for a seriously ill wife), opera, lectures, swimming, concerts, theater, piano at home, at BCCC, Princeton, George School, Philadelphia, Swarthmore. She was still going at peak speed until her heart attack, subsequent surgery, and final stroke this fall. She died peacefully on November 6, 1987. We miss her.

Ella A. Fraser