

The Delta kappa Gamma
Society International

DKG Vermont State Chapter

Founders' Brief Biographies





Nellie Adams

Nellie was born in Antiquity, Ohio. She graduated from Ohio State and her graduate work was at Columbia and Northwestern. Nellie spent 41 years of her professional career in the College of Education at the University of Vermont.

Nellie was a state delegate in 1944 to the White House Conference on Rural Education and Board of Director of Vermont Education Association for 8 years. She was also an active member of New England Reading and International Reading Associations.



Jennie Allingham

Jennie Allingham was born in Canada. She began her work in America as a Trainer of Teachers. At first this was a one year course added on to High School. Jennie was the First State Helping Teacher for the Vermont State Department of Education and was considered an authority on rural education. She was an active member of the Vermont and New England Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development. She helped organize the Association of Retired Teachers of Vermont. She made her home in Fair Haven and died in 1967.

“She gave her whole self to her work and made it a pleasure to learn, partly through her great sense of humor.”



Florence Black

Florence Black was born in Warick, Rhode Island in 1898. Florence attended Brown University and later received her M.A. from Columbia and did additional graduate work at Cornell and New York University. Her first position was history teacher at Castleton Teachers College and then Castleton State College. She was appointed Dean of College in 1942 and was an active and forceful part of the Castleton faculty for 45 years. The Black Science building was named after her to honor one who had “during her decades at the college cultivated the mind of man and unburied talents”.

The story goes that President Woodruff had on occasion to reprimand her friend for riding a bicycle on the Main Street of town and for going into the local post office while wearing her gym uniform. Her former students remember her for the sense of security she gave them and her warmth and concern.



Sara Moulthrop Holbrook

Sara was born in 1876 and came to Vermont in 1922 from Yale where she received her M.A. degree. She was chosen for research and demonstration work in a nationwide program dealing with the prevention of Juvenile delinquency. She joined the faculty at the University of Vermont and taught there until her retirement in 1946. Sara also directed a training program for nursery school teachers and served as consultant to the Peter Pan Nursery School at the University. She was recognized nationally for her work with social problems. Her concern for the underprivileged and troubled is commemorated in the Sara M. Holbrook Community Center in Burlington. Federal funds and at hard time Sara's own funds were used to keep the center going.

On her death, Jean Simpson eulogized her friend with these lines

Successful living's legacy lies not in

what was won

But rather in what was given . . .

In sympathy, an understanding heart,

A willingness to spend and to be spent,

That those who follow find a clearer path

And higher goals in which they may aspire.

Elizabeth Warner Morrill Kirkness



Elizabeth was born in 1906 and attended University of Vermont and earned a fellowship for graduate study. She took graduate courses at Vassar and the University of North Carolina. Elizabeth, Sara Holbrook, and Bertha Terrill started the first nursery school in Burlington, Peter Pan Nursery School, which was affiliated with the UVM Department of Home Economics. Elizabeth directed the school and also taught child development and family relationships at the University of Vermont.

Elizabeth was also a feature writer for the Burlington Free Press and co authored a book with Dr. Alan Gladstone called Beyond the Scalpel, a book about a Vermont surgeon.



Mary Markham

Mary (Molly) Markham was born in Proctor and graduated from Proctor High School. She received her B.S. in Music Education and her M.A. from Boston university and did further study at Columbia University.

Mary began her career as Music supervisor of the Proctor Schools. She later became assistant supervisor of the public schools in Detroit. In 1922 she returned to Vermont to become the director of music, chorus, glee club, and orchestra at Castleton Normal school which later became Castleton State School where she remained for 35 years. Wit, vim, vigor, and variety were her memorable qualities.

Her frequent advice to her classes was "when teaching music, sing, don't talk." Her philosophy was summed up in her statement: "Music like all the arts, must be loved to be studied effectively."



Alice Mary Morrill

Alice Morrill was born in Swanton, Vermont. She earned her B.S. and her M.A. from Teachers College, Columbia. At the time of her early death in 1942 she was a candidate for a Doctorate in Education from New York University. Alice joined the faculty of Castleton Normal School in 1923 as supervisor of student teaching and later became Dean of Students, a post she held until her death in 1942. She served as president of Vermont Education Association, the Castleton conference, and the Tri-county Association.

Her students eulogized her in 1943, " You have been like a silver cord binding us together, holding us true to our purpose. You trusted us . . . We only hope we may be fine enough to make you proud of us".

A yearbook tribute to her expresses equal admiration: "A dignity that is hers designates her a leader in the immediate area and in the state with praiseworthy comments from others."



Grace Strong Mounce

Grace Mounce was born in Woodstock, Vermont in 1884. She attended University of Vermont in 1906 and taught in St. Albans and in Rochester, New York. She spent her married life on Upway Farm in South Woodstock, Vermont. Grace was first woman to serve on the Woodstock Town School Board. Grace attended many national PTA Conferences and had many friends among national and state leaders. A Grace S. Mounce Student Aid Fund was established to be administered by the state PTA.

Her pastor eulogized her “You are an angel of mercy and your quiet influence is a blessing to our whole community. Whenever I run across your trail, I find you strewing help and happiness.”



Mary Jean Simpson

Mary Jean Simpson was born in East Craftsbury, Vermont. She received a PHD from the University of Vermont in 1913. She also studied at Mount Holyoke and Columbia Teachers College. She taught in Craftsbury and Montpelier and was Principal of People's Academy in Morrisville. In 1937, Mary Jean became Dean of Women at the University of Vermont and held this position until 1954. To honor her, the university gave her an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree in 1956 and named one of the dormitories on the Redstone Campus for her. She also received the Distinguished Alumni Award in 1961. Dr. Simpson was a woman of great integrity and of great loyalty to her state and its institutions.

Dr. Simpson was author of Alpha Lambda's State song the words of which reflect her appreciation of Vermont, her "love of the right and the freedom to defend it" and her desire "to light new torches for our youth to follow/To blaze new trails.



Mary Burke Sullivan

Mary was born in Newport, Rhode Island in 1888. She served as assistant to the Director of Teacher training at Rhode Island College for ten years. She came to Vermont to serve as an instructor in teacher training for the State Department of Education. Mary joined the University of Vermont faculty as associate professor of Education and English in 1923. She was a supervisor of student teachers for many years.

At her death in 1954, tributes spoke of her “life of service, her attractive and winsome personality, her capacity for friendship, her strong character, and outstanding ability. She met life’s minor collisions with a wit and humor that turned them into something of inspiration for her friends.”



Bertha Terrill

UVM's first female faculty member — was hired in 1909 to teach what was then a revolutionary new program called Home Economics. Like agriculture, "home ec" was a practical vocation considered controversial at UVM and most universities during an era when a classical education was in vogue.

Terrill, a native of Morrisville, developed Home Economics from one course taught in a basement room in Morrill Hall — a former storage room from which she swept the plaster — to a comprehensive department known today as Family and Consumer Sciences Education.

She launched Extension courses, fostered research on nutrition, sanitation and family life and helped establish the study of the household arts throughout Vermont. Always concerned with underprivileged populations, she also helped to create what would later become the Sara M. Holbrook Community Center in Burlington.

"Ms. Terrill was a revolutionary in that she was changing the face of what the university taught and who got to teach it," says Sharon Snow, director of the UVM Women's Center. " She was an important part of a movement in the late 1800s and early 1900s toward professionalizing homemaking and motherhood."



Caroline Salome Woodruff

Caroline was born in West Burke, Vermont in 1866. She attended Johnson Normal School and served as a teacher and principal in the public schools of St. Johnsbury for 26 years. Dr. Woodruff became head of Castleton Normal school in 1921. She remained as head of the school until 1940, building it into a thriving four year degree school. In 1937, she was elected president of the National Education Association. Dr. Woodruff presided over the NEA convention at New York City at which President Franklin Roosevelt gave the address. She was also first women president of the Vermont Education Association. Dr. Woodruff received honorary degrees from Middlebury College and Norwich University. She was the first woman to receive this honor from Norwich.

Dr. Woodruff attributed her success to 3 principles: the glorification of whatever she was doing, seeking to know people who were doing worthwhile things, and a faith in a power greater than herself.

At her death in 1949 Alpha Lambda stated: “Miss Woodruff’s greatness lay not, however, in the distinctions of public offices and honors of which she had a large share, but rather in her unceasing devotion to the boys and girls of Vermont that they might have great opportunities and to the profession of teaching that it might be the medium through which those opportunities may be realized for them.”

