

Jessie Vithen, 98

July 1, 1905 - Nov. 14, 2003

HARLAN — Jessie May Roberts, oldest daughter of William E. and Elaina (Michaelson) Roberts, was born July 1, 1905, in Harlan. She attended Polk #5 and completed the eighth grade in 1918. She attended Harlan High School for one year and graduated in March, 1923, with a normal training certificate from Iowa State Teacher's College in Cedar Falls. She taught two years at Mt. Zion School and five years at Jackson #1.

Jessie married John Edward Vithen Aug. 22, 1928, at the Lutheran Parsonage in Windom, MN. In January, 1929, they moved to the Pete Schmidt farm in Polk Township where Jeannine and Jeanette were born. In March of 1938, Johnnie and Jessie moved to the Hans Nielsen farm in Jackson Township. They farmed in partnership with a brother-in-law, James Nelson. After the Nelsons retired to Kimballton in March of 1945, they moved to the Nelson farm. Jessie returned to teaching again at Jackson #1 in 1951, and transferred to Eik Horn in 1958, when the country school closed. In the fall of 1960, she began teaching in Harlan at New Park School after receiving her B.S. degree in elementary education from Omaha University. Johnnie and Jessie moved to Harlan in 1963. She retired from teaching in 1970, and then worked at Farmer's Department Store until she lost her sight due to macular degeneration. She was a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Harlan. Jessie died Nov. 14, 2003, at the Avoca Nursing and Rehab Center in Avoca, at age 98 years, four months and 13 days.

Preceding her in death were her husband, John in 1995; her parents; a brother, George Roberts; a sister, Lucille Kardell; and a son-in-law, Jerome Legan. She is survived by a brother, Glenn Roberts of Iowa City; her two daughters, Jeannine (Lyle) Poldberg of Carter Lake and Jeanette (Merlyn) Knudsen of rural Harlan; eight grandchildren; 14 great grandchildren; three great great grandchildren; and other relatives.

Funeral services were held Nov. 18, 2003, at Immanuel Lutheran Church with Pastor Delwayne Hahn officiating. Honorary casket bearers were Paul Kite, John Poldberg, Adam Poldberg and Deric Poldberg. Casket bearers were Steve Houton, Bryan Kite, Bradley Legan, Max Knudsen, Kevin Larsen, Warren Poldberg and Brian Poldberg. Burial was in the Harlan Cemetery. Burmeister-Johannson Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

