

Julia's Story

Julia B. Olson came to the Town of Hill from west of Ogema in 1925 to keep house for Fritiof Hultman. A devastating tornado had swept through the area in September of 1924. Overwhelmed by the work of repairing his house, outbuildings, and clearing the downed timber, Fritiof put an ad in the paper for a housekeeper to handle the domestic chores. Julia answered the ad.

Fritiof Hultman's farm was originally the homestead of his parents, John and Anna Hultman. Julia loved this farm on Hultman Lake and she grew to love the farmer as well. Fritiof and Julia were married on June 9, 1926. They had two sons, Melvin and Arland. Melvin and his wife Kathy are now living on the home place.

Fritiof was a progressive farmer. In addition to the usual cows and horses, he raised fruit trees, ginseng, and foxes for fur.

The family worked hard on the farm, but Julia took time from her busy days to plant beautiful flower gardens. She also had another hobby, taking pictures, which added so much interest and culture to their simple life on the farm. Her camera was a small box camera, but the pictures she took were so clear and well planned. Wherever she went, her camera was with her. Julia took pictures of the people in her family and people in the neighborhood in the activities of day-to-day living. Birthday parties, anniversaries, picnics, social events, school activities, as well as funerals were all recorded on her films. She had a love for scenery as well. She took pictures of winter scenes, summer gardens, flowers, crops, lakes, houses,

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and farms. The pictures in this album were taken by Julia from the late 1920's to early 1940's.

The idyllic picture of life in the Town of Hill was also brought forth in Julia's column *Us Hill Folk* printed in *The BEE*. Her weekly column was a valuable contribution that kept people in touch with social events and activities in their neighborhood and surrounding areas. It enhanced the feeling of community as it kept people informed and involved in the every day lives of their neighbors. In her work as a columnist, she received a free subscription to *The BEE* and a box of stationary at Christmas time.

Julia's writing and picture taking came to an end in September of 1942 when an unexplained illness left her in a noncommunicative state. Her husband and sons cared for her until she was hospitalized in 1946 when Fritiof died.

In 1967 modern medicine prevailed and by nothing less than a miracle, Julia began to open her eyes and communicate. In 1974, when she was 69 years old, she returned home for a visit. Her memories were entirely intact. A letter that she wrote after her visit to her neighbor Ella Lundberg, is included in the back of the album. She spent her remaining years at a nursing home in Menomonie, Wisconsin, until her death in 1992.

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