

Hofmann, Julius Valentine ^[1]

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by Julian G. Hofmann, 1988

20 Feb. 1882–17 Aug. 1965

Julius Valentine Hofmann, teacher, administrator, forester, and conservationist, was born in Janesville, Minn., the youngest surviving child of Valentine and Rosalia Frodl Hofmann. His parents emigrated to America from Austria (now Czechoslovakia), purchased land, and operated a farm. Hofmann grew up in a farming community, was graduated from Janesville High School, and spent two years as a book salesman. He later attended the [University of Minnesota](#) ^[2] where he received a diploma from the School of Agriculture (1909) and a B.S. (1911), an M.S. (1912), and a Ph.D. (1914) in forestry. His was the first Ph.D. awarded in forestry in the United States. In 1915 he married Ella Kenety, the daughter of William and Anna Powers Kenety of Fulda, Minn. They had two children, Eileen Rose and Julian George.

Hofmann began his professional life in 1903 teaching school. During his college career he was a teaching fellow in botany. After graduation he joined the U.S. Forest Service and became technical forester of the Priest River Experiment Station in Idaho and then director of the Wind River Experiment Station in Carson, Wash., where he remained until 1924. At Wind River he developed techniques for and initiated studies in fire control and the natural establishment of forests following fire. He also developed the first tests related to forest genetics in the West.

Afterwards he moved into college administration and teaching. As assistant director of the Pennsylvania State Forest School, Hofmann taught classes in forest management and initiated studies to determine the extent of heart rot in forests of sprout origin. In 1929 he was named head of the Department of Forestry at [North Carolina State College](#) ^[3]; in 1932 the department was upgraded to become the Division of Forestry. Hofmann initiated a program of land use by purchasing tracts of land on a self-liquidating basis and building a sound forestry program. The present School of Forestry has the use of over 80,000 acres of land purchased under this concept.

Hofmann was known throughout the forestry profession for bringing modern [forestry](#) ^[4] to the South. After bitter political fighting in Pennsylvania, he established the new forestry department at North Carolina State College, where forty-six students followed him and seventeen fully trained foresters were graduated the first year.

He was the author of a U.S. Forest Service bulletin, *Relative Humidity and Forest Fires* (1923) and U.S. Department of Agriculture Bulletin no. 1200, *The Natural Regeneration of Douglas Fir in the Pacific Northwest* (1924); contributed to such periodicals as *Ecology*, *Journal of Forestry*, *Timberman*, *West Coast Lumberman*, *American Forest*, *Journal of Agricultural Research*, and *We the People*; and wrote numerous newspaper articles. His Ph.D. dissertation was entitled ["The Importance of Seed Characteristics in the Natural Reproduction of Coniferous Forests"](#) ^[5] (1918).

Hofmann was a fellow of the American Academy of Science and a member of the Ecological Society of America, Botanical Society, Geographical Society, Society of American Foresters (chairman, Appalachian Section, 1934), North Carolina Forestry Association, and Alpha Zeta, Xi Sigma Pi, Sigma Xi, and Alpha Gamma Rho fraternities. In 1959 he was honored by the Society of American Foresters for outstanding contributions to the forestry profession, and in 1960 he was the recipient of the University of Minnesota's Outstanding Achievement Award reserved for former students who attained high eminence and distinction. In 1964 he received the annual award of both the national fraternity of Alpha Gamma Rho and the Southern Forest Institute, representing southern forestry industries.

Active in community affairs, Hofmann was chairman of the committee that acquired and organized the [National Park Recreation Area at Crabtree Creek \(now Umstead Park\)](#) ^[6], which was turned over to the state of North Carolina. He was a member of the Rotary Club from 1924 until his death. His lifelong desire to help boys led to his participation in the [Boy Scouts](#) ^[7]; he served as president of the Occoneechee Boy Scout Council for four years and received the Silver Beaver Award in 1942.

Hofmann traveled extensively in the United States, central and western Canada, central and western Europe, Mexico, and all countries of South America except Paraguay. He also took a trip around the world. He enjoyed life and kept young growing and developing plants, playing golf, and taking care of his farm and woodland holdings.

References:

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Additional Resources:

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