

This Prairie Land

Visiting Kulm

A comfortable agricultural-oriented community, Kulm, North Dakota has changed and adjusted to the times. It is a cozy town with friendly, inquiring, innovative people. PRAIRIES Magazine likes to explore these towns and cities of the Dakota heartland, learning about local customs, buildings and people. Kulm was no exception. The following photographic essay was another enjoy-

(Text continued on Page 25.)

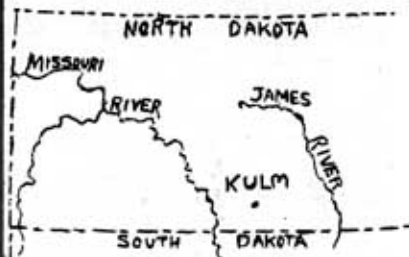
Photos by Nancy Palmer



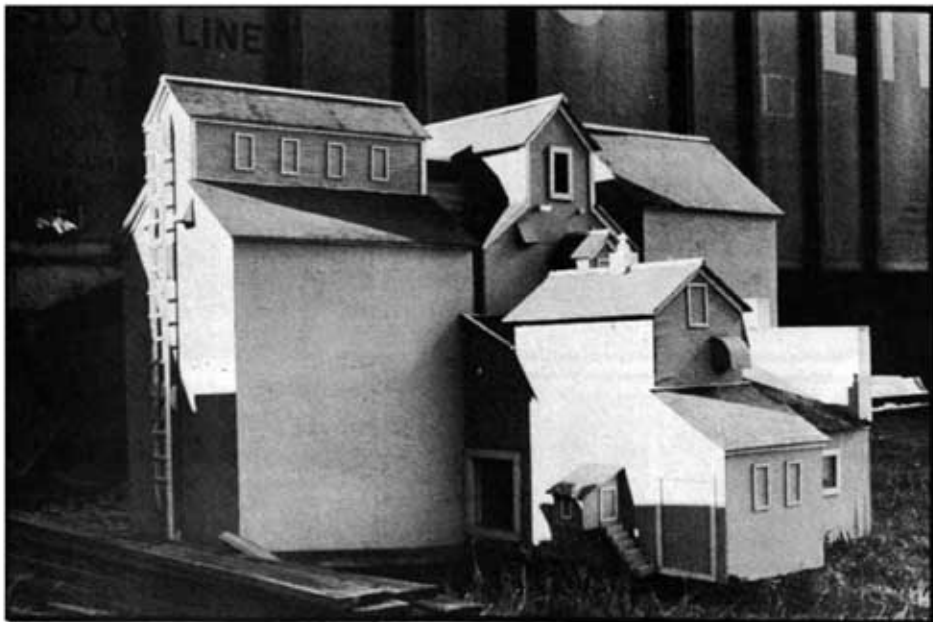
A study of faces: Tanya Jones and her St. Bernard dog, Moscow.



Main street during a busy afternoon.

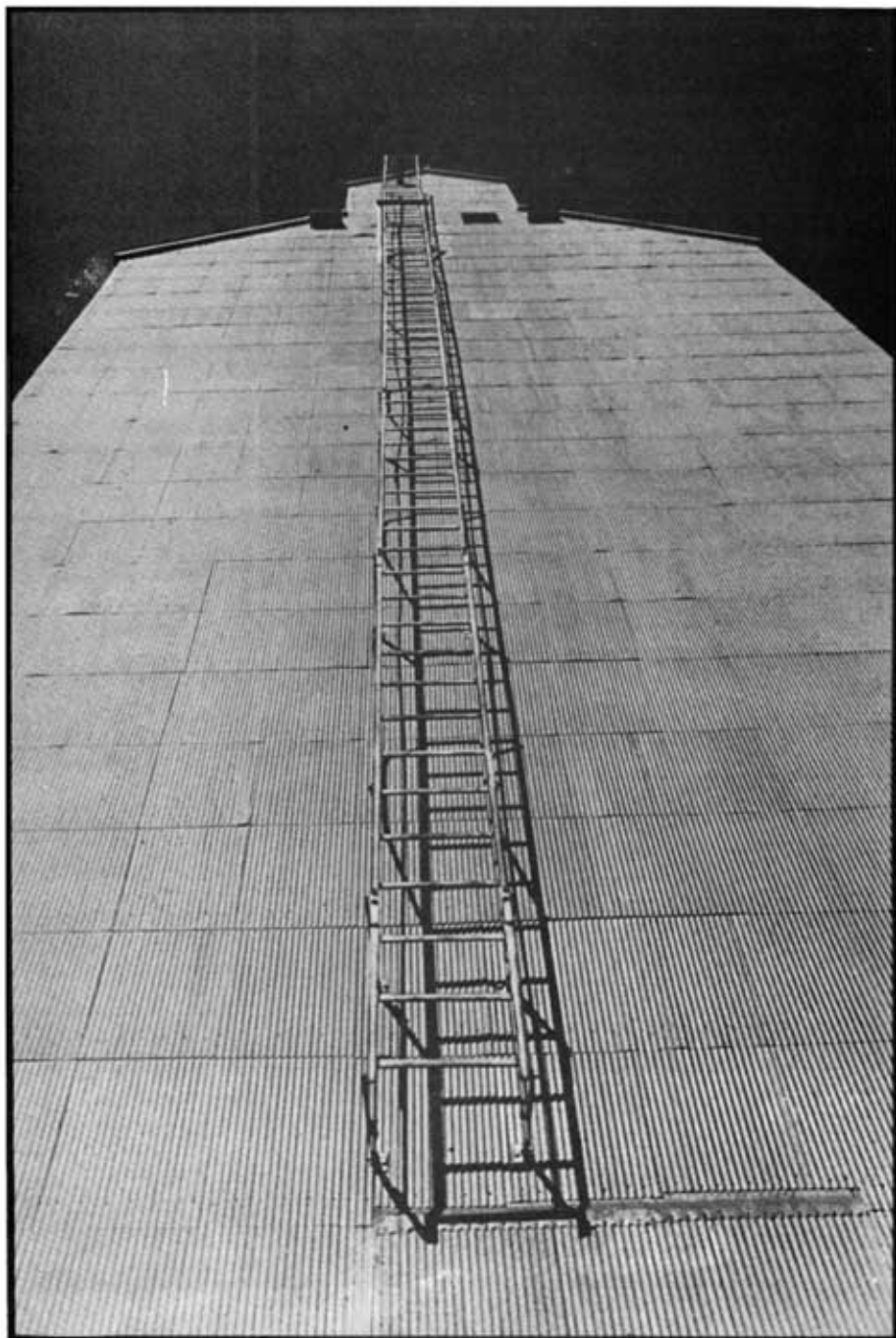


Interesting architecture: air conditioner goes full blast as temperature rises.



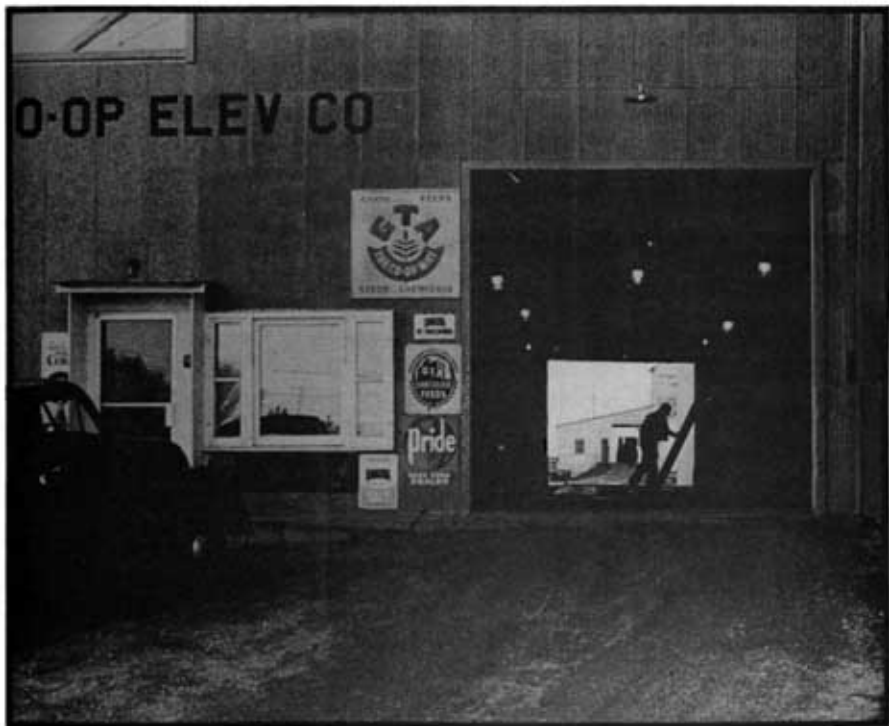
This four-foot-high model of the Farmers Co-op Elevator was made by E.M. Elhard.

**On opposite page, a grain elevator—
from a different viewpoint.**

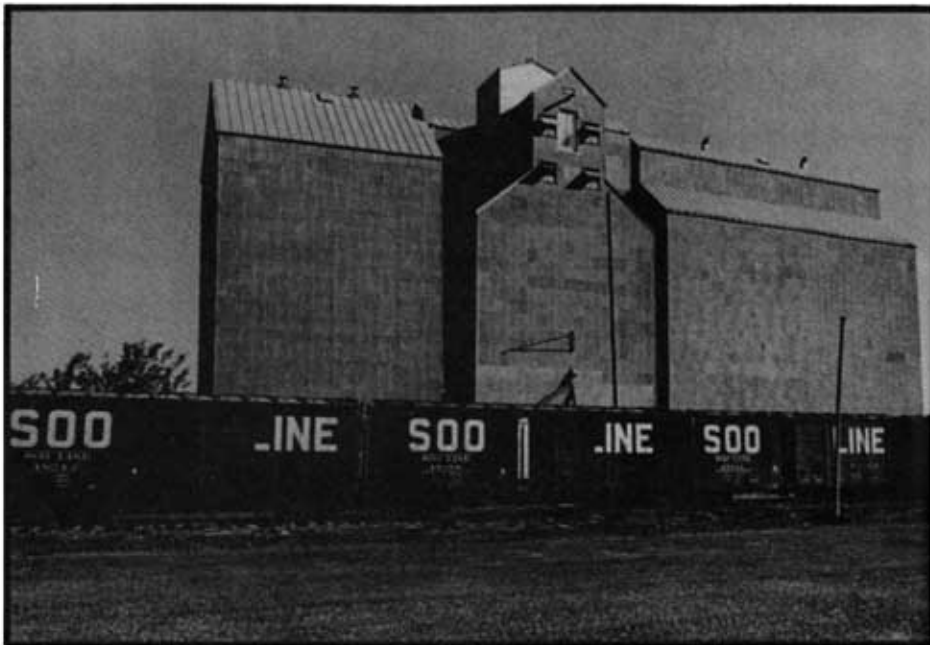




**Barbara Maiss and daughter Sara
enjoy the fall sunshine.**



Silhouette of a laboring man.





Many of the early towns and settlements (Kulm not excluded) were directly dependent upon the coming of the railroad. A community's prosperity was often linked with whether or not there was a railroad depot located within its premises. And so, whenever rumors circulated that a railroad company was considering building a grade to a certain town, the story spread like a prairie fire. James W. Foley, North Dakota's poet laureate, captured some of that excitement—and anguish—in the following poem:

WAITING FOR THE SOO

A farmer once sat by the grade of the Soo,
And waited and waited and waited
In vain for the trains which were soon to pass through
As stated, oft stated, oft stated.
In storm and in blizzard, in sunshine and rain,
He watched while the gophers were eating his grain,
But years passed away, and his vigil was in vain,
Yet he waited, and waited, and waited.

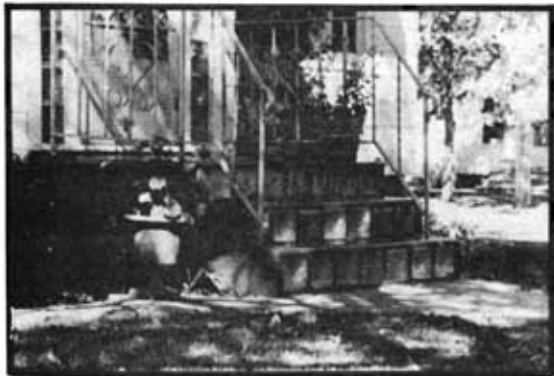
The seasons passed out and the seasons came in,
While he waited, and waited, and waited.
He grew pale, faint and weary, and sunburned and thin,
Yet he hated, he hated, he hated
To give up his place by the side of the grade,
Which ages before his forefathers had made,
For he felt that the steel rails were soon to be laid,
So he waited, and waited, and waited.

His hair it grew long, and his beard it grew white,
While he waited, and waited, and waited.
Yet he watched through the daytime and watched all the night,
And waited, and waited, and waited.
His farm buildings crumbled and went to decay.
The angel of death took his neighbors away,
But he laughed and said, "Gabe, I have come here to stay."
And he stay did, and stay did, and stay did.

Years, ages, and centuries 'round him had rolled;
Yet he waited, and waited, and waited;
The last trump had blown and the last bell had tolled,
Yet he waited, and waited, and waited.
Then Gabriel, thinking he hadn't quite heard,
Blew a second long blast, and then even a third;
But the farmer grinned grimly and never once stirred,
Just waited, and waited, and waited.

Then Gabriel came from his station on high,
And pray did, and pray did, and pray did.
"Now, Gabe," said the farmer, "that's all in your eye,"
And he waited, and waited, and waited.
"My dear sir," said Gabe, "you'll be left all alone;"
"You're wasting your breath, for I'm deaf as a stone,"
Said the farmer, and Gabe gave an audible groan
And waited, and waited, and waited.

A million years passed by, and still the two stayed
And waited, and waited, and waited.
One day a shrill whistle they heard up the grade,
Yes they did, yes they did, yes they did.
"What's that?" gasped the farmer, and Gabe's wonder grew.
"It's Adam the Second," said Gabe. "If it's true,"
Said the farmer, "I'll bet you he's bringing the Soo,"
And he fainted, and fainted, and fainted.



A unique use of glass blocks—for steps.

Conversations: There is always time to stop for a visit with a friend. In the background, teenagers gather to talk too.





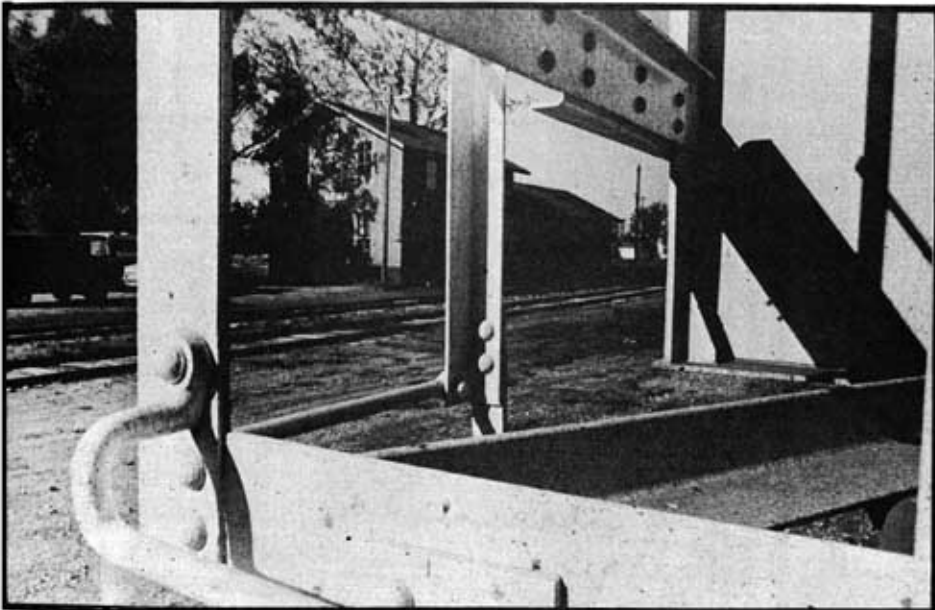
Monday is wash day: there's no sense in using the electric dryer when the sun does just as good a job.



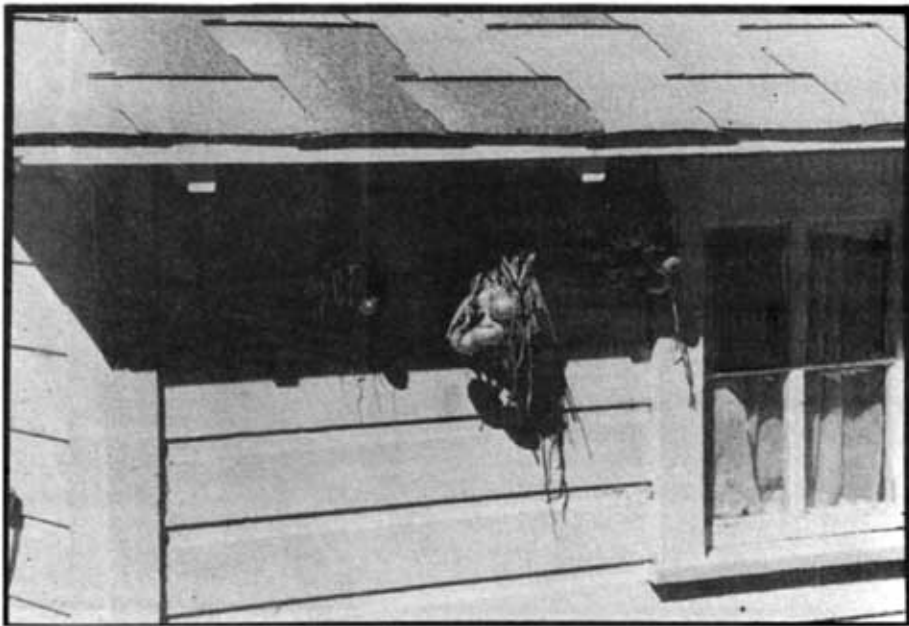
**American gothic house sits stolidly
by row of trees.**



**Kathy Stadler looks at one-day-old
Norwegian elkhound puppies. The
name of the mother dog? Ralph!**



Depot framed by railroad car.



Just like an Andrew Wyeth painting,
onions dry outside a shed—a familiar
autumn sight,



The Assembly of God church in Kulm: steel, brick, mortar, spirit—the essence of the faith on earth.

able assignment. The photos point out some of the art, drama, and way-of-life in Kulm.

Located along Highway 56 on a stretch of fertile prairie land, Kulm boasts of several distinctions. One distinction is that it is the home-town of television actress Angie Dickinson. Her father, L.H. Brown, was once the publisher of Kulm's newspaper.

Another unique feature is that Kulm (pronounced Kul-um) is believed to be the only town in the United States with that name—although there are other Kulms in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and South Russia.

Traditionally, the two major nationalities which have combined to form Kulm, North Dakota are the Swedes and German-Russians. Today, in the telephone book, Scandinavian names like Sjostrom and Bjur mingle just as numerously as the Germanic Hehr and Kleingartner. The mix has given the town its own unique character.

Back in 1892, when the Soo Line Railroad Company built a grade to Kulm, the town became an important business center for the farmers of the area. It still is today. ■

A fancy windmill decorates front lawn.

