

JULIA HILLS



Julia Hills was born September 26, 1783 in Upton, Worcester, Massachusetts to Joseph Hills and Esther Ellis. Married Ezekiel Johnson January 12, 1801. They had sixteen children: nine boys and seven girls. Died May 30, 1856 in Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie, Iowa.

Very little is know of Julia's early life. There are records, however, that lead us to believe that she came from a religious family and that she and her brothers and sisters were given the opportunity of an education. Their family seemed to be very close. Julia's family belonged to the Presbyterian Church. They held a strong belief that what we do in this life will effect us in the here-after.

Julia's father died while she was still at a young age. Her mother later remarried and there were several children by this marriage.

Julia was six years old when George Washington took the oath of office to Her husband would not join the Church

become the nation's first president. She grew up in one of the most imaginative and creative periods of our nation's history. It was just after the Revolutionary War had been fought and when our present government was being formed.

With the forming of the government and the signing of the constitution came not only national advancement, but also cultural and religious advancement. For the first time people could worship as they pleased. Public schools were becoming more plentiful and education was encouraged to a greater extent.

At the age of 17 Julia married Ezekiel Johnson who was ten years older.

The records of the births of their children showed that the family was always on the move.

The oldest child, Joel Hills Johnson joined the Church as soon as he heard the message. The news of his conversion was looked upon by his family with horror and disgrace. He sent his mother, Julia Hills Johnson, information and encouraged her to join the church. She was baptized and shortly after all of her children who had attained their maturity were also baptized. Ezekiel did not accept the gospel and would not permit the minor children to be baptized.

Two years later Julia "left Pomfret, New York with her family of fifteen children to join the Prophet Joseph Smith at Kirtland, Ohio, in defiance of the wishes of her absent husband, Ezekiel." At the time of her baptism, the Prophet laid his hands upon her head and gave her a blessing for bringing such a large family into the Church. Julia's family, including her married children's families, is represented as being one of the largest families ever to join the Church and move West.

which caused much strife in the family and

he eventually left.

After the temple was built and dedicated in Kirtland the Saints were driven out and eventually ended up in Nauvoo, Illinois. Money was scarce and there was much sickness and death along the way.

Julia's husband came to Nauvoo and tried to get his family to go to Chicago with him. When they wouldn't he spent time between Chicago and Nauvoo.

The family was very close to the Prophet and the martyrdom was a real shock.

Julia and her family left Nauvoo to join the saints but she died at Council Bluffs, Iowa, never reaching Utah.