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## Recollections of the 1940's *Life in the Hills Remembered—Part 3*

*Maude Bailey Haskin*

The 1940s were a time of great change for Maude and the entire way of life of everyone here in the hills. Electricity and all that came with it was completely new, eventually even such wonders as television and electric milking machines for the small farms. There was a great war, women went to work outside of the home, and little girls grew up.

Almon continued to drive the school bus, along with doing farm work. From 1935 to 1944 he earned \$75 a month to drive the bus, 1944–1947 \$80, and 1947–1948 \$100 a month. The girls started school in 1939 when Loretta was 6 and Beatrice had just turned 5, and stayed together through graduation in 1951. In first grade (no kindergarten then), Loretta was sick one day and could not go to school. A crying little Bee got on the bus and when they arrived at school, no one could make her happy (to put it mildly), so she came back home with her Daddy when he had finished his morning bus run. The little girls had always been together.

Sometimes they had a hired man on the farm, but not for long periods. Maude said she would rather do the farm work herself than have someone around. The girls would help a little with the barn chores (very little as Beatrice remembers), maybe helping get in the cows, feeding the calves, or gathering eggs. One of the girls wrote in 1944 for a school project, that they had 21 cows at that time (and that was a lot for a small farm). “Tippy” was the cow dog. “On the summer nights, Tippy goes after the cows and brings them to the barn, while my father stands at the barn.” You could see the whole pasture then—now it has all grown up to brush.

World War II broke out on December 7, 1941. Maude’s memories of the war will be a separate article.

The farm prospered through the years and Almon built an addition on the barn. Some time in the '40s Ford Nickerson of Gilboa installed a barn cleaner that was his own patent. They had the horses, Prince and Kit, for years. They bought a silo for \$15 from Van Buren’s in Hobart, where they bought all their farm machinery. In 1947, they bought their first tractor for the farm, and also a milking machine. Maude said, “Oh my, that milking machine was such a help!” Both these items were great timesavers for the farmer, and his wife. In later years they had all registered Holstein cows.

In the summer Maude was busy in the house taking city boarders, as was a common thing among many

neighbors. She did all the cooking and baking, getting up at 5 a.m. or earlier to bake pies for dinner and cakes for supper, before starting breakfast. Favorites were banana cake and rhubarb pie. Gracie Place would clean the bedrooms and do the ironing of muslin sheets for all the beds. Almon's mother, Ethel, would come each day and help in the kitchen. Her "warmed-up potatoes" were a big hit for supper. Almost every afternoon she cut up the potatoes left over from the noon meal, and browned them in bacon grease, stirring them for an hour or so. An early 1940s advertisement in a New York City newspaper, told that the charge for the boarders was \$2 per day.

The boardinghouse business grew and in 1943 they bought the place where the Molles live now, and made each room a bedroom. In 1947 they remodeled a large old barn on their property into a dining hall with six bedrooms upstairs. With these additions, at the most they had 87 people boarding. Often on Saturday evenings, the boarders would meet in the dining hall and peel apples so she could make pies in the morning. Without their help, there was no way she could peel all the apples and make pies for 70 or 80 before breakfast. The guests treated this like a party. Almon often entertained the "city kids" at the barn. They loved the animals and a chance to ride in his little old truck.

Haskin's dining hall became a community center during the winters, with many Chapel Church suppers, retirement and birthday parties, Saturday night dances, wedding receptions and showers. For the dances, the music was old-fashioned bluegrass type with local fiddlers, Almon's father Almearon and Dick Mattice. John Shafer was on guitar, Mr. Archibald on banjo, and Almon or Belle Mattice played chords on the piano, with any strangers just joining in. Many local young people learned how to square dance at these dances. It was a good and safe place for the young folks. Old, young and in between danced. The ladies brought sandwiches or a cake for refreshments and a "hat was passed" for the musicians. The large dining room and kitchen took up the whole downstairs. It was heated with a big fireplace that would be just "a-roarin" on those cold winter nights.

About 1948 Almon went to work for the Town of Gilboa operating the grader, snowplow, and bulldozer until 1972 when he retired. His wages through the years were: 1926–28, 40¢ an hour; 1930s, 30–35¢ an hour [notice the cut in Depression pay]; in the 1950s, \$1.25 an hour; and in the 1960s \$1.50 to \$2 an hour.

Maude went to work in the school cafeteria in 1947 and worked until 1950. She went back in 1962 as cafeteria manager and retired in 1973. Many former students remember her "mystery sandwiches" and "pine bark chowder."

Time went on and soon it was 1950. Her recollections will be in the next issue.



Maude Bailey Haskin has been an observer of life in Gilboa for all of her 95 years, and is documenting her views on life in these decades. The war years will be covered in a later issue.

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