

By DIANE ROESING O'BRIEN

HOPE — One of the loveliest drives in this area is the road out of Hope village that climbs along Hatchet Mountain. As the long line of the Camden Hills comes into view, the Payson orchard is on the left, with a remnant of an apple shelter. Across the road stands a barn — the farmhouse is gone — and the weathered sign above the big door reads "Gil. Payson, Hatchet Mountain Farm."

Eighty years ago this was a busy place, the farm and home of Hazel and Frank Payson and their two young children, Eileen and Gilford.

Eileen and her brother roamed all over the farm, from the pond up to the top of the mountain. Though there weren't any other children nearby, several lived down in Hope village, about a mile away. In the spring these children would come up to go mayflowering, and Eileen might climb the mountain three times in a day with them.

She and Gil walked the mile to school down at Hope Corner. Eileen always won the wildflower and bird contests in school because of all the time she spent outdoors.

Frank was a road commissioner for the town as well as a farmer. He grew vegetables, apples and blueberries, and kept half a dozen cows.

Though Frank sold some of his produce, "mostly we ate it," Eileen says. In later years he concentrated on apples and blueberries, marketing the apples from a stand along the road. He and Gil did most of the blueberry harvest, raking and winnowing the berries, then bringing them to Eileen, who sat under a tent, out of the hot sun, picking over the berries and packing them in one-quart boxes. Frank then drove the day's pick down to the Boston boat in Camden so they could be delivered the next morning to the city market. In the 1930s Eileen, her brother and a crowd of friends went to Bangor on the last trip of the Boston boat.

From the age of 8 to 18, Eileen belonged to the Golden Rule 4-H Club. The girls concentrated on such homemaking skills as canning, cooking, sewing and room improvement or decorating while the boys learned about farm animals and their care. Eileen practiced her skills at home, making yeast rolls, canning 600-800 jars a year and sewing most of her

clothes. For these accomplishments she earned credits in the club.

Eileen helped out her mother a great deal as well. Like many families at the time, the Paysons were a multigenerational household.

Emma and Gilford Payson, Frank's parents, lived in their own separate area of the house. As they got older and both became sick, Hazel brought their meals in to them, helped them dress and kept their room clean.

After the elder Paysons died, Hazel and Frank decided it was time to have more children. They'd had only the two all those years because of the work involved in caring for two invalids. Natalie was born in 1933 and Glenn Ann in 1934.

As a teen-ager, Eileen worked summers picking raspberries and peas for Bert Brown, who lived at Hope Corner. She also worked at Laforest True's cannery, which processed squash, apples, blueberries and pumpkins seasonally. The cannery operated until the mid-1930s and provided a market for area farmers to sell some of their produce.

The three summer camps in Hope — Hatchet Mountain Boys' Camp, Highfields and Alford Lake Girls' Camp — bought supplies from local farmers. Frank delivered milk to the boys' camp, and Eileen enjoyed coming along. But she really loved the girls' camp because of the beautiful horses they had there.

Eileen and Gil went to Camden High School. There was no bus, and Hope parents took turns driving the town's students. Frank's turn always came in mud season since he had an old Model T that could get through the bad spots, especially the flat on Route 105. Occasionally, if they had a game or some other activity, a student stayed in town with a relative or a friend of the family.

Eileen graduated from Camden High School with the Class of 1934. She married Bradford Young of Lincolnville and has made her home there ever since. She is well-known to townspeople as she was Lincolnville's town clerk for many years.

Photos courtesy of Eileen Payson Young and the Lincolnville Historical Society.

A Girl from Hope

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