The Perquimans Weekly, Hertford, N.C., Thursday, December 5, 1974-Page 7 Jimmy Hunter: Perquimans High To Cy Young

(Continued from Page 6)

by any means. Jimmy, like his four brothers and most friends, was "just one of the boys."

THE HUNTERS' parents now live in the house Jimmy and He-len vacated when their new one was completed one year ago.

They have raised two grand-children, Debbie and Kenneth Ray Boyce, the offspring of a di-vorced daughter, Lily.

Mr. Hunter still works the fields and enjoys hunting as much as he always has. Mrs. Hunter continues to take care of the clan, though she is often fighting a losing bout with asth-

"I just hope," she said, "that we'll still be around for our big anniversary." The Hunters will be married 50 years Feb. 15.

Abbott Hunter is a man of relatively few words-to those he does not know, anyway. He does not seem to enjoy discussing in detail the background of his most famous son. Mrs. Hunter, on the other

thand, is a proud mama.

"WHEN JIMMY was a small boy." she recalled, "he'd be running around and saying how nice it would be to play big league baseball. But I guess a lot of youngsters do that."

Not many, though, turn out to be prophetic.

We're mighty proud of him." she continued. "He's pitched two perfect games, you now-one against Elizabeth City (junior year in high school) and one against Minnesota (for the A's in 1968)."

Kenneth Ray Boyce is now 16



Before Finley: Employer Bill Fowler

Charles O. Finley and Bill Fow-

On a given day, Fowler is still

found working feverishly in a

shack next to the gas pumps,

chomping on the end of a cigar.

"Jimmy's one of the nicest,

most honest men I've ever had

helping me," he beamed. "He

worked nights, after school, on

Saturdays and even on Sundays throughout high school.

"I think as much about him

as I could about any other man.

I've never heard him curse, fuss

or grumble or nothin'

ler.

years old, and only time will tell if another prophecy is fulfilled.

"When Mr. Finley was here to sign Jimmy," recalled Mrs. Hunter, "he said to Kenneth, 'I'll oe back in 12 years to sign you.

That was 10 years ago, and the consensus among Hertford natives is that Kenneth Ray could become a major leaguer, 'with continued improvement."

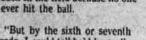
JIMMY HUNTER was "courtin'," too, when he was in high school. And he was working on the farm. And at Fowler's country store and service station across the road from Perquimans High.

not one bit. He's the same Jim-. he loves to hunt, loves my . . to fish. He's an everyday boy in everybody's book."

CHARLES WOODARD, a graduate of Carolina, and Francis Combs, a graduate of N.C. State, were classmates of Hunter's. They all continue to be good friends.

...

"I went to school with Jimmy from first grade on up," said Woodard, as he took time out from filling Monday afternoon prescriptions. "In grammar school I played third base and



grade, I could tell he'd be really good. That's when the pitchers usually just throw straight and hard as they can. But even then, Jimmy had a curve that made some of us jump straight across the plate."

...

COMBS, WHOSE twin brother Fred earned All-ACC honors as a defensive back at State in the late '60s, was Hunter's catcher in both high school and legion ball. Francis spent some time in the New York Yankee organization and now is a salesman in Raleigh.

"We played legion ball in Ahoskie, two or three games a week for two years," said Combs. "It was about an hour drive, but it was the closest we could play ball.

Jimmy pitched. We'd all just sit back in the field because no one "Most of the things I remem-ber, though, were off the high school team. His baseball ability was something. He was so much

stride.

better, so far superior to everyone else. There were 10 or 12 scouts at most all our games. I knew it was just a matter of time before he'd hit the big leagues . . . though I didn't think it would be quite as fast as it was.

> Hunter the pitcher has only gotten better. And Combs, who spent two weeks with the Hunters in Oakland over the summer, thinks Hunter the man has grown neither better nor worse.

"Since he's gotten all this at-

tention," said Combs, "he's

maybe a little more outspoken

than he used to be. He says a

little more what he thinks, but what he thinks hasn't changed.

He still takes everything in

. . .

THERE IS nary a dissenting

voice. Jimmy Hunter, Major League Superstar with the World Champion Oakland A's tor the Zany A's as the wire services call them), is still Jimmy Hunter, Perquimans High, class

"Had I not been able to play pro baseball and had I gone to college," said Hunter, "I probably would have gone to East Carolina and become a game warden.

But with \$100,000-plus per

year contracts for as long as he wants to continue playing ball, and with the unspoiled countryside of down-east Carolina to roam and scour in the off-season, Hunter is now "playing it

When it's all over, I just want to come back here to Hertford and farm." And hunt, fish and be "just a

from bigger oven.r...

controls...only Amana

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O

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important things!

country boy." Jimmy Hunter will not have

changed then, cither.

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Actually, Hunter has had just "And he hasn't changed a bit, two fulltime employers-