

I'm James Christopher Hoyt, 1407 North Fourth Street, Pekin, Illinois, Tazewell County. I was born May the 12th, 1911 at St. Joseph, Illinois, which is in Champaign County, east of Urbana. I was the youngest of 13 kids. My mother was Julia Etta Clements, daughter of James Clements and Julia Ann Kerby. They had five children - Elmer, Enoch, Jennie (we called Aunt Dot), Mary (we called Aunt Mape) and my mother was Julia Etta (called Aunt Et). James Clements was reported to be a cousin of Samuel Clemens or Mark Twain. The Clements farm was Northeast of Urbana, just across the road from the Brownsfield Timber, which has never been cut. The Clements cemetery is on the east side of the road, across from the Brownfield Timber. That's where my mother is buried with her first husband, John William Aplin.

My mother first married John Applin and had three kids. She is buried in the Clements Cemetery, northeast of Urbana, next to her first husband.

My dad first married Mary Etta Walker and had nine kids. He is buried in Mt. Olive Cemetery, west of Mayview, between St. Joe and Urbana, on the north side of Route 10.

Grandma used to talk about going to Broadhead, Wisconsin and New Daniel where they had relatives. The Indians who lived nearby would come and want to buy their roosters. So they'd buy the roosters and take 'em away. Pretty soon the roosters would come squakin' back home with no tail feathers! All the Indians wanted were the tail feathers!

Grandpa James Hoyt got separated from his dad and brother when they came to Illinois from Syracuse, New York. He later went back to try to find his folks and eventually found his dad

after a great many years. His dad said, "Take off your right shoe. I want to see if you're my son or not." James had a crooked toe and that's the way his dad identified him.

My dad tells about his older brother George, who moved to Elcor County, Kansas when he was young. His mother used to go out there on the train. The grasshoppers were so thick that when the train would go through, the grasshoppers would make a cloud and tracks were so slick that the train could hardly run.

My folks were married May the 10th, 1910 and I was born May the 12th, 1911. I was named after my two Grandfathers - James Clements and James Nathan Hoyt. My Dad was Norman Christopher Hoyt and his name Christopher was after his uncle Chris Hoss. We lived in the northeast corner of St. Joe, first house out in the country.

The school I attended, which was a high school and grade school combined, was in the southeast corner of St. Joe. We had to milk cows in the morning, bottle the milk, deliver milk on the way to school, pick up the bottles on the way back. The school had no gymnasium nor auditorium. I went nine years in the old school, then a new school was built across from our house. I started there my sophomore year in the fall of 1926 and graduated in 1929.

I worked for Charley Routh in the summer of 1927, shocking wheat and oats for a dollar a day. In 1928 I got a chance to work on building Illinois Route 49, North of Route 10, east of Ogden, where we worked from six at night until six in the mornings and got 25 cents an hour. That was \$3 a day which was BIG MONEY in those days.

In the summer of 1929, I helped build a nine-foot slab north from St. Joe,

right past our house, to the German town of Flatville. I bought a 1927 Model A Ford sedan, the only Ford I ever owned.

I had a chance to go to a school at the University of Illinois for ten days to become a milk tester. They called me up before Christmas and said they had a job in Tazewell County. I said, "Where's Tazewell County?" and they said "Pekin," and I said, "Where's Pekin?" I didn't know where it was!

That was a long way from home in those days. They said they'd meet me down there on January 2nd, 1930 at the Farm Bureau Building in Pekin. My mother thought I was going away around the world. She could hardly bear to see me leave home. I got about \$75 a month, board and room, and my laundry done.

I had 26 dairy men to sign up to have their herds and records kept for a year. I had Mennonites and Brown Swiss and I didn't know what either one of them was. So I got here!

I got some good advice from the guy who was in charge of the testers. He said, "I want to tell you something before I leave. If you want to last on this job over six months, you keep your mouth shut when you go around from one family to another, because you'll hear all the gossip. You don't know nothin' until they talk about cows and dairy and stuff and then you talk. And don't date any of the girls of those you test with their dads. Because another dad will say, "What's the matter with my daughter that you don't take *her* out?" So I had to stick to that.

I started college in the fall, September 1932, staying with Aunt Dot. I sold my car for \$400 to Jerry Cash on the University's Dairy Extension staff. He gave me 10 notes, \$40 each. Each month I gave him a note and he gave me \$40. Then I'd pay Aunt Dot my money I

owed her. I was supposed to get a student job but Governor Horner cut off all the student help the day before I got down there to go to work.

So the next spring when the bank went busted in 1933, my money was tied up - I couldn't go back to school. But I got a chance to go to work for Carl Oswell Mort and run a milk route. He paid me \$30 a month and then the guy who took my job as tester went back to school, so I got to start back as a tester in January 1934. I tested from 1934 'till September 1935.

In 1934 the farm advisor said, "Why don't you start a dairy club? All these people you are testing have kids as well as purebred dairy cattle." So we started the Pioneer 4-H Dairy Club, with 30 members. Twice we went to the state fair and won the Governor Horner trophy for the best 4-H dairy project in the state of Illinois.

I met Mabel Pollman in the summer of 1934. We were married July 29th, 1935 in Mexico, Missouri. Married girls weren't supposed to be working at Silco, so we didn't tell anybody until the next year when Silco changed their rules. She stayed in Pekin with her folks; I went back to Champaign and my last three years at school. I still had an AG scholarship, even though I had layed out for two years. I had my classes all in the mornings so I could work in the dairy department in the afternoons and on Saturday morning. Mabel's family was Pollman. She had three sisters and two brothers. Her dad's name was George Pollman and her mother was Katherine Zimmerman Pollman.

I graduated in June of 1938 in the top 10 % of my class and was on the U of I dairy production judging team in the fall of 1937. I was president of dairy production and on the AG counsel.

I had a chance to take a two year scholarship at the University of Vermont, but my folks and Mabel's folks didn't want us to go 'way out in Vermont. Then I had a chance to take a job with Madona County Farm Bureau starting at \$150 a month. Boy, was I glad to get the job! I was in charge of the 4-H club and also was in charge of membership in the Farm Bureau.

Our boy Larry James was born February 29th, 1940 in Macomb and passed away with leukemia December the 6th, 1949. Janice Elaine was born June the 2nd, 1947. I was drafted in February of 1944 and served in the Army in Texas at Brownwood and El Paso. I ended up as a sergeant 3rd class in the veterinary school, as an instructor. I got out of the Army in November of 1945. After that I took a job with Sealtest Rosell out of Peoria with a procurement plant in Macomb. Sealtest is the same outfit that Leon (Chub) Hoyt worked for. Then I got a chance to come back to Pekin with the Farm Bureau in September of 1947. We lived in Mabel's sister's house until Mary passed away December the 6th, 1949.

I was offered a job at First National Bank in 1954 and stayed until June of 1960. I was in charge of managing the farms and also was a cashier at the bank. I left there and went with Mike Flanders, a local auctioneer. I managed his farms, cashiered his sales and made his income taxes out. I had a real good job there.

And then Vergil Varvel, a local businessman who had his own supermarket and who was the originator of Bird Farm sausage, offered me a job. He wanted me to manage his farms and his feedlots, where he fed his own cattle for his store, and so I did.

July 21st, 1968, Jan, Mabel, and I went to Mork on a Sunday afternoon to

look at a new car. On the way back, a young man hit us head on and put us all in the hospital. Mabel had a shattered left leg and was in traction for months. She was in the hospital from July 21st till November 1st, 1968 - 15 weeks! Then she had to be in a wheelchair for two months, then on crutches seven months.

I was hired as the Tazewell County zoning administrator in November 1970, where I worked until June of 1976. At that time I qualified for Social Security, so I retired. The guy who took my job talked me into taking a part-time job as a field inspector. I worked on that job until November of 1991.