

About 7 years ago when I was broadcasting for the Minnesota Farm Network I did a radio interview with the owner of a company called Vintage Aerial. This is a company that has thousands upon thousands of aerial photographs of farms and homesteads across the United States with most of the pictures coming from the 1960's and 1970's. If you were on a farm at the time, you may have had a sales person stop by the farm to sell you a copy.



The salesman who brought the 1967 Kleven farm picture you see here came with a special deal. We could get a painted 24" by 16" enlargement of the black and white photo framed. My parents bought one and today it hangs on my office wall. My parents had it on the kitchen wall for many years. When they moved to town, the picture hung in the dining room.

Painting the picture means something different than a painter doing everything from the beginning. They took the picture, enlarged it and offered to paint out the junk behind the buildings. My mom was always skeptical of salesmen anyway but she blurted out to him that we don't have junk behind our buildings. Even though I knew there was some junk behind the old grainery and I'm pretty sure also behind the old chicken house. But rest assured that was not the time to correct her. Actually there was never a time to correct her when she was scolding a salesman. The gentleman did offer to basically white out anything we did not want in the 'painting'. You can see the framed painting by scrolling down.

Well over the years I've always compared the original black and white to the painting and it's like those two pictures side by side where you're asked to find the differences. In the original there is a corn crib by the south end of the barn. My dad said that was going to be torn down so we should paint that out. So they painted what it might look like if the corn crib was eliminated. Today if you were to look close at the painting, you can see an outline of the corn crib. We never did tear it down; we lined it with steel siding and used it for storage of shelled corn. In fact it was still standing when I sold the farm in 1990. It is however gone today so the painting is finally more accurate.

There's an Oliver side rake near the garage. For some reason, my parents wanted that painted out. I guess my mom thought it was too junky looking. But the rake was painted over with green to match the grass under it. But the painting today has a kind of brown splotch with an outline of the rake in the middle of that splotch. I remember the salesman asking if they wanted the school bus painted out. They said no and I'm glad they did. They told him it was too much of a fixture on the place to remove it from the picture. The old bus garage in town did not have room for all the buses so my dad offered to store it in the quonset machined for a small annual fee. This is why I got to drive a school bus at the age of 11. Occasionally I would have to back it out to get to a tractor. I would back it out and then park it where you see it in the picture. There was a pull type backhoe that was parked outside the south door of the quonset. The tractor it was hooked up to was inside. My mom thought that should be painted out. Don't ask why, I don't know. That today in the painting is a green splotch with an outline of the backhoe.

The other painting over of things on this picture was the roof of the hog house, chicken house, people house and garage. The originals I thought looked good but they took an awful lime green color and put that on the roof of those four buildings. When we first saw it we thought it looked unnatural and as I look at it today, it has not gotten any better.

Vintage Aireal has vastly improved how you can go looking for your old farm picture if one was ever taken. And apparently they took one of every farm. You can go online at [Vintageaireal.com](http://Vintageaireal.com) and search by state, county and by a particular part of a county. I did that the other day just to see what I could find. The picture you see on this page is still on the website. And I found a few neighboring farms. The Roberts Brothers farm which was the next door farm was on there with pictures from 1967 and 1969. Lots of machinery and Oliver's were scattered about as that is where the Oliver dealership was located for many years. I found the farms of Harold Vangness, Ernie Johnson, and Owen Engvall among others. There used to be a house with a detached garage just to the north and west of the Engvall farm. I saw a picture of it from the 60's. It's all farmland today but that was where my parents lived when they moved back from California in the mid 40's. The land and house was owned by Grover Dengler.

My dad moved from Braham, MN to here in 1936 to work for Grover. My parents lived in this house when my brother Harv was born in 1945.

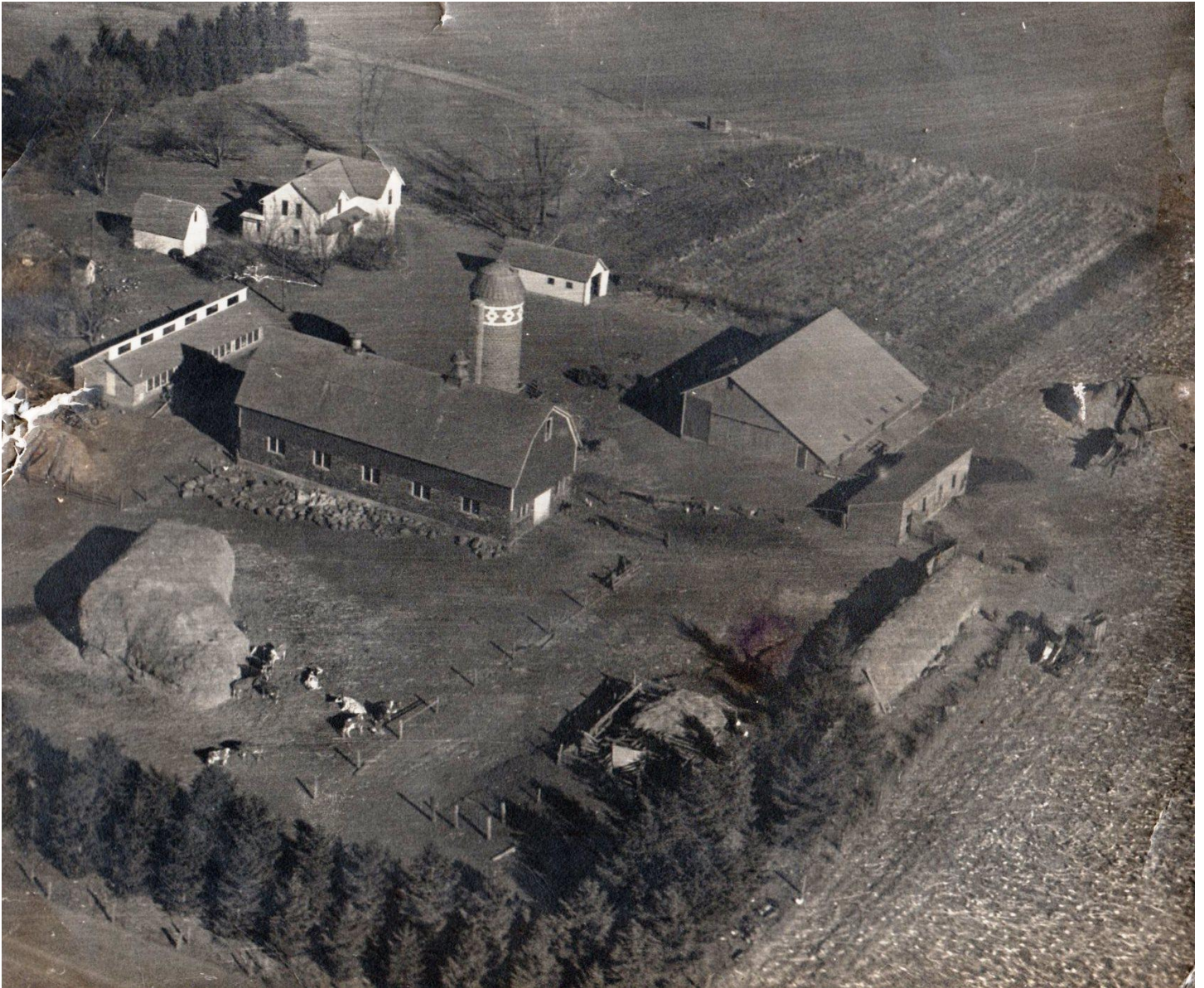
Below is the painting of the picture you see at the top of this story. You can note the green roof on the hog house, chicken house, the house house and the garage. You can also see the attempt to white out, if you will, the hay rake between the school bus and the garage and the backhoe just outside the door of the quonset machine shed. If you scroll down further I have a close up of the painting.





Below is a 1939 aerial picture of the same farm that was taken by Clyde Saugen. Clyde flew a 2-seated plane with a plain box camera and his own telephoto lens that he made from a cardboard box. The only reason we have this picture is that Clyde's brother Don was a good friend of my parents and as he was going through old photos that Clyde had taken, he noticed that this one was the Kleven farm even though the picture was taken 14 years before it became the Kleven Farm. I believe it was the Haislet farm at the time. Colleen Sathrum Hayne told me that Clyde and Don were cousins with her dad Howard Sathrum. Howard's dad Johnny and Clyde and Don's mom were brother and sister.

Keep scrolling down and you'll see the picture of the farm as it was in 1939 with the camera pointing east-northeast. The 1967 picture was looking northwest.



This was the Haislet farm back in 1939. Again it did not become the Kleven farm until 1953, 2 months before I was born. This 1952 license plate was on my dad's pickup when he moved to this farm. It hung in the quonset shed for many years.



The West Concord Historical Society museum has this picture below which is Skyburg, MN taken in 1936 by the aforementioned Clyde Saugen. The pic is looking west southwest.



The next picture is the Kleven farm taken in 1960. Photographer is unknown. The farm in the background at the top of the picture is the Roberts Brothers farm where the Oliver dealership was for several years. The picture looks to the southwest. West Concord would be 2 miles to the left of the picture.



Keep scrolling for more pictures....

This picture is looking northwest and was taken in 1955. The farm in the upper left of the picture was the Doris and Lewis Wencel farm. Doris was a sister to Dewey Scott. Toward the bottom right of the picture you see a tree in the fence line. Now go back and look at the 1967 picture at the beginning. You not see the fence but you'll see the tree. I always wondered why there was a tree in the middle of a field. We worked around it for several years and finally in the late 60's we dug it out. You'll also note clothes on the line. My mom was using wind and solar power long before it became fashionable as did many on the farms and small towns. My mom used this clothesline until she left the farm. She would not allow cottonwood trees to be planted anywhere as those cottonwood seeds would fly into her clean laundry.



Keep scrolling, I have a couple more pictures.

This picture is looking straight north taken in 1969. More clothes on the line and you'll note a basketball hoop and backboard on the south end of the garage. I made that in Mr. Hilbert Hoof's ag class in school. Also the roof on the hog house was two-toned. That's because we did the east half one year and the west half the next year.



Thanks for looking. I have more pictures but that's enough for now. Thanks for all the good comments I've received on this column and others. I'm glad you enjoy them.

Emery