

Driving north from West Concord on highway 56 I go by a farm just north of Hegre Church as you enter Goodhue County. In my younger days, it was the Joe and Marie Johnson farm. As I went by it recently, the farm catches the corner of my eye and I said to myself, self, there's something missing. And sure enough I exclaim," The barn is gone". I don't know why I exclaimed loudly as I was the only one in the pickup and I could have certainly heard myself in a softer voice. So forever now as I go by the Johnson farm, it will always have a void.

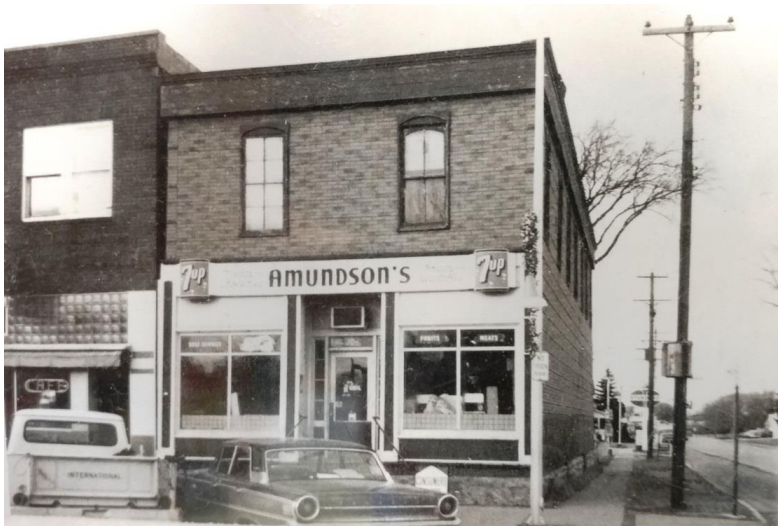
For most of my first 37 years of life, I lived on the farm which was about halfway between West Concord and the old Johnson farm. And as things disappear around the landscape, even if they've been gone for 40 years, I still envision what it looked like in an earlier lifetime. As I enter Kenyon on highway 56, I still see the old railroad trestle that went over the highway. This time of year with the leaves off the trees you can see the cement support just off to the east where the trestle ended. The trestle has been gone a long time but I can still visualize it.

There are other places around the area that I still see things as they were. Just to the east of the Ellington town hall used to be a farmstead with quite a few trees. Back in the late 60's, Phillip Carpenter had a farm auction there. My dad bought an International 'H' tractor at that sale. That was the only time I was ever on that particular building site but I drove by it hundreds of times. That site too has been gone for many years as its all tillable land now but I still see the trees and buildings there.

It's the same story for my old farm where Ray and Annalee Thomas now live.

Ray sent me a picture this summer showing the old woodshed behind the house that had aged out and was being torn down. I never got taken out behind that woodshed. All of my discipline was done on the front side of the woodshed. I've driven by a couple of times and sure enough it's still there in my mind. And it always will be. I have a few pictures from way back that will help me remember it. As a boy of 3 years of age, we had a German Shepard named Lady who had 6 or 7 puppies in a particular litter. The picture shows me in front of the aforementioned woodshed playing with all the dogs. And somewhere a picture exists from the 1920's showing the snowdrift between the fairly new woodshed and house taller than the woodshed. That would put the snowdrift at 18 to 20 feet high. All the years I lived there, the biggest I remember is about 7 feet high.





Heck, to this day I still see Ernie Amundson's grocery store and Boots Raddatz' café with the green façade where there's now a park. When they say an image burns in the retina, I think it burns in the back of the brain and somehow keeps surfacing.

Finally, I did this survey on Facebook a couple of years ago. I don't usually do these as I scroll right by them but I thought this one was worth sharing here as it gives you an insight to some things about me. So here we go, 20 random facts about me that may surprise you.

1. Do you make your bed every day? Nope, Slumberland already made it.
2. What's your favorite number? 5,281.
3. Dream job? Skittles taste tester.
4. If you could, would you go back to school? Only for the Bumstead sandwiches.
5. Can you parallel park? Cars yes; pickups yes; boats no.
6. A job you had? Depallitizer operator at Kenyon Canning Company.
7. Do you think aliens are real? Yes and they're not all Mexican.
8. Can you drive a stick shift? Absolutely!
9. Guilty Pleasure? Watching the Brazilian Women's Volleyball team!!
10. Tattoos? Not yet.
11. Favorite color? Sky Blue Purple.
12. Things people do that drive you crazy: Too many to list here, one would be not being able to park between the lines. Bonus answer: When I see brake lights before turning signal.
13. Phobia: lutefisk.
14. Favorite childhood game? Spin the bottle.
15. Do you talk to yourself? Yes, I need the expert advice.
16. Do you like doing puzzles? Life's a puzzle so yes.
18. Tea or Coffee? Coffee – black. Bonus question: Pepsi or Coke? Pepsi
19. First thing you remember you wanted to be when you grew up? A grown-up.
20. If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be? Popcorn or maybe Bumstead sandwiches.

Below is a picture from 1958 of me playing with German Shepard puppies outside the aforementioned woodshed. My mom told me that as soon as I would wake up in the morning, I was out to the woodshed to hang out with the dogs. What a wonderful time in life that was.



Here's another picture from about 1955. We had a church picnic with the old woodshed in the background.

