

Frank Johnson is selling his house. 7/15/2019

He has moved to Zimmerman.

He plans to retire with a Chinese lady friend from England.

Frank and his then-wife Cynthia moved into the old house on this farm almost 40 years ago. The old house that we moved out of in early 1977 when this house was new.

Frank and Cynthia had three little kids when they moved in.

They rented the house for a couple years before Sharon and I sold it to them.

They were always good people and good neighbors.

Frank has gotten a bit odd since he and Cynthia divorced a couple decades ago.

Not bad odd.

Just unique odd.

A, Mom might approve, type of odd.

They were not the first renters for that old house.

One young couple strung a lot of drying wires above the stairway to dry the marihuana that grows here.

A later tenant, who inseminated turkeys for a living, do not ask me about that, got several months behind on his rent.

It was late fall and I was picking corn a few miles south.

I picked until mid-night or so each night.

One night I pulled a train of gravity boxes, full of corn to the farm about 1 a.m. The old house was all lit up. The tenant had his belongings loaded in his pickup and a trailer.

Apparently, he was hoping to skip the past due rent.

I was happy to be done with him.

This was the idiot that cut down one of the giant cottonwood trees because it had some dead branches.

Anyway, what I actually want to write about is the current condition of the old house.

A week ago, I moved the cattle herd, north, across the town road. A new born calf got left behind.

The calf ended up using Frank's, now heavily wooded yard, as a hideout.

Frank had already vacated and I needed to find that calf.

I spent some time walking around the yard and looking at the house.

Pa would be pleased at how well our remodeling job from 1970 has held up.

The house has all the same \$10 Knox Lumber combination windows that we put on.

The four-tone siding that Pa supplied looks as good as new.

I do not think many people ever realized that we used four different shades of dull or olive green on the exterior.

Pa would scrounge the excess siding panels from houses that he sided for Thompson.

He had a lot of different colors but not so much of each.

When we did the siding, we used a darker green at the bottom, until that ran out, then a little green above.

I calculated how much coverage we could get and determined that if I used two similar, but different greens on the back add-on, Pa's stock could cover the whole house.

It worked that way.

The short sidewalk I poured in front is still there, but quite worn.

The outside cellar entrance is still there but filled with rotting hay.

Over all, the house does not look five years older than when we moved out.

To all of you who helped fix that shack in the winter of 70, congratulations and thanks.

I can still see Bob Miller senior, standing at the top of the steep, narrow stairway with a book of matches in his only hand.

He said, "Burn it, Tom."

That was probably good advice, but it is not the road we took.

So, Frank is offering an overgrown, brushy, two-acre lot with a fundamentally rotten, old farm house for \$75,000.

I hope he gets it.

My best wishes and condolences to whoever buys it.

Tom