



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Cuyahoga Valley
National Park

Mailing Address:
15610 Vaughn Road
Brecksville OH 44141
Visitor Center:
1550 Boston Mills Road
Peninsula, OH 44264
www.nps.gov/cuva

Farming in the Valley: 2011 Oral History Project

The following are transcripts from four audio clips in the **Childhood Adventures/Animal Stories** section. Visit <http://www.nps.gov/cuva/historyculture/animal-stories.htm> to view the entire page.

Willis Meyers shares stories about running into a cow at night and about being sprayed by a skunk before going to school.

Cow at Night

"I used to play with my neighbor kid, and I went over there one night and I stayed too long and it got dark. I was scared to go home! *~laughs~* We went across a man's pasture that had the cows in it. It was in the summertime. They was a black cow layin' in that pasture, and you couldn't see her 'til you fell over the top of her . . . that's when you'd know she was there. And I started home, and I was runnin' just as hard as I could run 'cause I was scared, and this cow was a'layin' down there and I fell right over the top of her. And when I did, she jumped up. And boy, from then on . . . The next fence was four foot high and I think I just cleared that when I went over it, I was scared so bad!"

Sprayed by a Skunk

"Kids used to like to do trappin' in the wintertime, you know. I walked cross-lots over there, and on the way over I'd check my traps to see if I caught anything. And this morning I had a skunk. You know what they smell like. I stepped on the trap with my foot to release him out of that trap, and of course I got the smell out of that skunk on my shoe. Well then I went to school, and we got in there, and after the school warmed up a little, the warmer it got the more that skunk was startin' to stink. The teacher, she was tryin' to find out who it was, you know. It was me, but I was the only one that knowed it. She'd walk around the room, you know, sniffin', *~laughs~* tryin' to find out who had that skunk on 'em. The kid in the seat next me, she kept a'gettin' in close to him, and close to him, and she finally decide it was him. *~laughs~* She made him get up and sit in the hall the whole rest of the day. And it was **me.**" *~laughs~*

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Pat Morse, who grew up across from Hale Farm, remember encountering a scary rooster, searching for eggs, and cleaning up after roosting chickens.

Chased by a Rooster

"In the yard, oh gosh . . . My favorite thing was to go next door to the twelve kids next door, and the barn was between the two houses, and there was a *mean* rooster in there! ~laughs~ And he was *really* mean! He'd attack you with his sharp beak. And one time I didn't go out to the road . . . we'd usually go out to the road to get around the rooster. One time I did not go out there. I thought, 'I'm not afraid of that rooster.' Well, he came a'chasing me, and chased me in the barn and I was against the wall. I *knew* I was gonna *die*! I just knew I was gonna die! ~laughs~ And Don Wilson came along, and he said, 'Oh no! That rooster!' And he slung it clear across the hay mow and he saved my life! ~laughs~ I just thought he was the greatest in the world." ~laughs~

Chickens in a Tree

"Now, the ideal thing is to have free range chickens? Well, the Wilson's chickens were strictly free range. ~laughs~ And our biggest sport with the chickens was to find the eggs. They laid 'em all over. And we'd crawl under the barn and all over the place, looking for eggs, and then we'd have an egg fight because . . . well, the boys were always throwing it at the girls. ~laughs~ So that, we thought, was great sport.

"One time . . . which was, as I look back, was absolute stupidity but . . . as kids there were quite a few of us, and we decided we wanted this one tree. It was small enough that we could climb it but it was good in size. I should say, the limbs were low. Well, the chickens roosted in that tree. So our job was to clean up after the chickens. ~laughs~ Nobody else did, so we wanted that for our tree. So we cleaned up. ~laughs~ Kids today wouldn't even give that a second look. They'd run the other way." ~laughs~