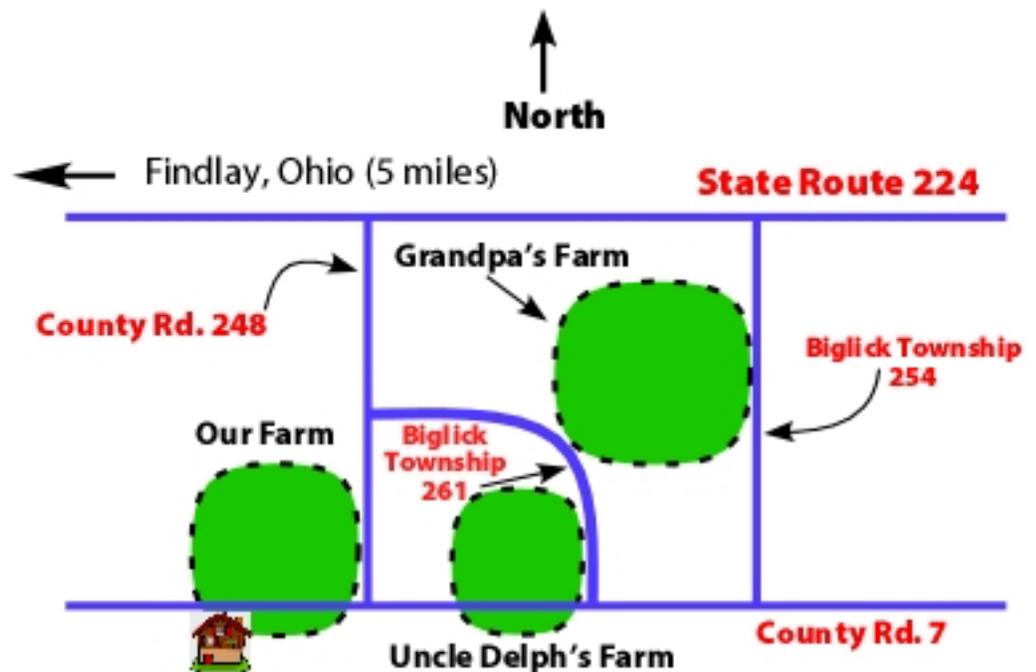


How to Fall Asleep: A Farm Boy's Trick

Almost seventy years ago I was a ten year old farm boy in Northwest Ohio. My father, with the help of his brother, my Uncle Delph, and me of course, farmed our 120 acre farm and my grandfather Stahl's 180 acre farm. Uncle Delph also had a 100 acre farm between those two farms and my farther (and I) helped him with his crops. Dad and Uncle Delph owned the large pieces of farm equipment together (combines, corn pickers, hay bailers) and each owned their own tractors, plows and smaller pieces of equipment.

Our farm was at the corner of County Road (CR) 7 and CR 248. Grandpa's farm was on Biglick Township (BT) 254 and could be entered from BT 261. Uncle's Delph's farm was on CR7 beside BT 242. It was about one mile to Uncle Delph's farm and two miles to Grandpa's farm. There were no buildings on Grandpa's farm.



I would join my father on his/our/my tractor any day he was in the fields. He had made a seat for me right behind his seat and it was just wide enough for me and a bag of toys. He would always double loop a piece of chain over my lap, a WWII version of today's seat belts. I would ride there, or on his lap, for several hours while we were plowing or discing, or planting. When the task was easy I would get to steer, but mostly I was a passenger. When I was twelve I got to operate the tractor by myself for the less complicated maneuvers, but between the ages of six and ten, I accompanied Dad. After several hours, I usually became restless and my father would deposit me under a tree to play with my toys (all farm toys of course...tractors, plows, discs, planters, combines...which soon became a farm for me to farm in miniature. When we farmed at our farm I would often get to bring my dog, Doc, along on the tractor, which made play time much better). I would play until it was time for lunch at our house or for the picnic we had brought to Grandpa's farm.

I explain the above to put this story into context, which so far has little to do with my "going to sleep" technique. After lunch my father always had to take a thirty minute nap. Small boys don't care much about naps and so I needed to learn how to go to sleep when it was not a particular need of mine, or sit and wait until my father awakened. We would always lie down in nine to fifteen inch grass under a tree, or when we were home, along the North side of our barn in the shade.

I would lie there and watch the clouds pass above me. The grass was cool, the lunch had been delicious and soon I was asleep. My father would always wake up before me and tell me it was time to

go back to “work.” We would head back to the fields until it was time to milk the cows.

Over the years, I have never had much trouble sleeping, but there have been times that family concerns or work related issues would stir my mind and I had difficulty going, or getting back, to sleep. The first thing I always did was to write down any items that were on my mind on a pad of paper I kept by the side of my bed. Once they were written down, I didn’t have to ruminate on them and knew they would be there in the morning.

If writing the “worry item” down didn’t/doesn’t permit me to sleep, I always fell/fall back on my farm boy trick...and it almost always works for me. In my mind I “go” to the cool grass beside the North side of “our” barn. I lie down, spread my arms and legs and watch the clouds go by. I try to focus on the clouds and not let any other thought enter my mind. Usually, I am asleep in several minutes. The more I have used this technique, the more effective it has become in helping me fall asleep. I only need it once a month, but it is a winner. Pick your own special place to “go” and try it ... let me know if this technique works for you.



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Note: The map was developed by Henry Halem, a Master Map Maker, Glass Blower and Friend. He said if anyone else needs a map... they should expect to pay him a fee.