

Skunk

In the mid-1950s a natural history museum, in England I think, requested Prince Albert National Park supply them with a skunk for taxidermy and display. The skunk was to be killed and prepared for shipping without damage to the skull or pelt. Jim Settee, a long-time employee of the Park, was recruited for his skill at skinning and preparing the pelt. Rather than trapping a skunk in the Park, my dad turned to the nearby farm community of Cookson where a farmer was having a problem with a skunk that had taken up residence under one of his out buildings. A live trap was set and baited with a raw egg. The next morning there was a skunk in the trap. The trap was carefully covered with a tarp and placed in the box of the truck for the trip back to Silver Grove. My dad got the skunk he needed and the farmer got rid of the skunk he didn't need. Back at Silver Grove, the trap was offloaded in an open area far from the warden's cabin and buildings.

The big question was how to dispatch the skunk without getting sprayed and without damaging the skull or pelt? Asphyxia was chosen. My dad had a table saw that was powered by a small gas motor. The saw was placed next to the trap. Fence posts were laid around the edges of the tarp to keep the exhaust gas in, and the flexible exhaust pipe tucked under the tarp and into the trap. Leaving the motor running, Jim and my dad retreated to the cabin for a leisurely lunch.

After lunch, the trap was uncovered and, to their surprise, out staggered the skunk, drunk as the proverbial skunk but still very much alive. Thinking quickly, Jim picked up a fence post, dropped it across the skunk's back, and jumped on it, breaking its spine and ending its life.

The remainder of the task was completed without anyone getting skunked.