

The Bark Covered House by William Nowlin
Excerpt Six -- Wild Animals

“We found wild animals and **game** to be very **numerous**. Sometimes the deer came where father had cut down trees, and **browsed** the tops. Occasionally, in the morning, after a little snow, their tracks would be as thick as sheep-tracks in a yard, almost up to the house. The wolves, also, were very common; we could often hear them at night, first at one point, then answers from another and another direction, until the woods rang with their unearthly yells.

“One morning I saw a place by a log where a deer had lain, and noticed a large quantity of hair all around on the snow; then I found tracks where two wolves came up from the west, jumped over the log, and caught the deer in his bed. He got away, but he must have had bare spots on his back.

“One evening a **Mr. Bruin** called at our house and stood...at our north window. (My brothers and sisters) thought (he was) one of us, (since) father, mother and I were away. They ran out to meet us, but discovered instead a large black bear. When they ran out, Mr. Bruin, a little less **dignified**, dropped on all fours, and walked **leisurely** off about ten rods, then raised again, jumped over a brush fence, and disappeared in the woods.

“Next morning we look for his tracks and, sure enough, there were the tracks of a large bear within four feet of the window. He had apparently stood and looked into the house.

Vocabulary: game = animals hunted for food; numerous = in large numbers; browsed = chewed and ate; Mr. Bruin = formal name for a bear; dignified = proper, not silly; leisurely = slowly and calmly.

Questions to think about and answer:

1. Which wild animals does William say lived around his home?
2. In what ways could William tell there had been wild animals nearby?
3. Who did William think caught the deer laying in his bed?
4. What did William see to prove to him that the wolves bit the deer?
5. What did the deer have on his back after that?
6. Why did William’s brothers and sisters run out of the house when they saw a bear?
7. What did the bear do when the children ran out of the house?
8. Do you think the children were afraid when they saw the bear? Why?
9. What did the family see the next morning to prove a bear had been at the house?
10. How close had the bear been to the window?