



Shooting Notes 1953

The October opening was postponed due to fire hazard from dry weather, though hunting was permitted to 1:00 pm that day. I missed out on this, not knowing the details. The season was reopened, after moderate rains, on Thursday 29 October, but because of dense fog and drizzle I did not hunt but stuck to my drawing board and worked on the jacket design for Huck Watch.

Friday - 30 October - a lovely day, cool and sunny and miraculously damp. Kay, Puff, Feathers and I (leaving Willa at home with Meadows and Charm) drove to the ^{west prong of the} Capris Rock forest and hunted the Scott Run country, parking on the hard top road. We hunted down the ravine toward the valley, but I missed the exact cove I was after and had to double back up the ridge. Feathers and Puff were moving nicely, not too wide but hunting intensely. However they did not nail the first bird that flushed wild about me, quartering back over my left shoulder. I swung (trying the "fast swing" that Dr. Norris recommends) but missed.

I'll use the symbol  to indicate point of trigger pull while swinging fast past the bird. Since the grouse went behind me, I put off following to cover further preferences out ahead and, after finding nothing, doubled back.

at the second time. Well along on the next shoulder of land,
Ray flushed a bird below the dogs and myself but it went
back and down the ridge. We hunted on toward North Run
and #3 flushed from Puff and took off over the trees, going
up the second valley. We followed and, near the old
feeding shelter where I've flushed birds formerly, I saw two
grouse go up, one after the other, ahead of Puff and feathers.
I couldn't resist a try at the second one but it was rather
too far out - a rising shot.  We failed to make either bird.
Then we followed the ridge well up toward the road, then doubled
back down the valley and ate our lunch before crossing to the next
shoulder, the one with the large table rock or rock arch formation.
There, in the good cover above the rocks and rhododendron, ~~off~~
I came on Puff, stiff on point. Walking ahead of him I heard
the grouse take off the leaves and go out with a delayed flush (it
could have been two birds). Ray saw it go down over the ridge
but I had no shot or sight of it. We hunted all the shoulder
out to the point of rocks and rhododendron where I saved the
ground with fertile shells last season but moved nothing.
Dropping over into the third valley (the one running down from
the old house site) we went down to North Run - a
beautiful humlock-rhododendron area ~~the same size~~

holes that actually held water. We felt the birds would be certain to be using this area but then we followed the tram-road for a fair distance and didn't move a feather. Turning up the steep pull I parted from Kay, arranging to meet her up the hillside after I circled the top area. I dragged up three lacy *Podocarpus* thickets and huge rocks with fine granite feeding grounds but didn't move any birds. Swinging back toward Kay I was following an old trail when Puff froze in his tracks, pointing about the road to my left.

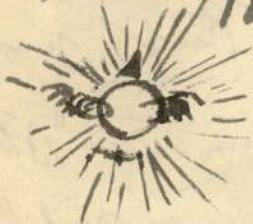
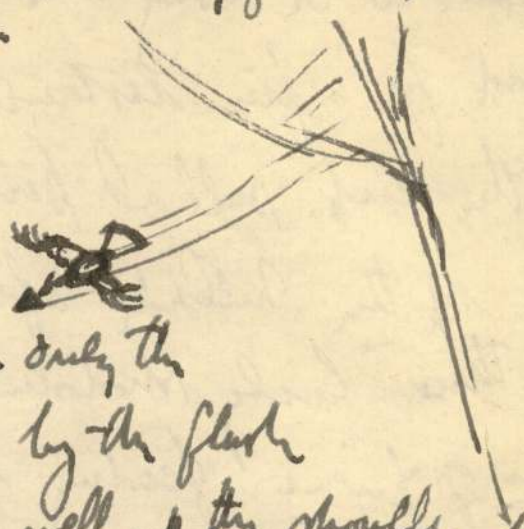


It was a fine point and hot. In a moment I saw a grouse flush well ahead with little or no sound, and as I watched it topped the trees and then settled down to the ground, silhouetted against the sun which was dropping fairly low. As Puff moved in

a second bird went out and I cautioned him to "stay." At my voice a third bird flushed and hit in a sapling. Puff had frozen again a few yards to one side and below the bird in the tree and soon feathers came in and backed. I walked closer and closer but, as so often happens, the grouse only perched there, head and tail tucked, twisting its long

reach at the settlers and at me. I finally had to rear in
under it and kick a sapling to flush it and, of course, missed.
My shot was too near a snag. It
should have been a fast swing.

I followed and saw one of the birds
go up wild ahead of us with no sound. Only the
movement of the leaves blown off the ground by the flock
warned me what was happening. I hunted well up the shoulder but
had to turn back with no further action, working toward where Cay
was waiting. Puff made a wild point but after I pulled in
and produced no bird he moved off. While he worked out ahead
I stepped into the bird, ~~#8~~ ^{#9}, and saw it flash directly into the
sun. I followed the movement of the bird with my gun bands,
pulling as I saw a blazing sun with two wings, but felt the
bird level off and fly reluctant back the ridge.



A SHOT INTO
THE SUN

Dropping down over the crest of the ridge thru
rocks and rhododendron into cool shadow, I
had just whistled to Cay and got her answering
whistle when a bird flashed in front of me
and crossed below me — a rising ^{cross} shot to the right. I
made a fast swing and pulled, seeing the grouse fold and
tumble in front of Puff of 7. They both moved in
as a shower of feathers floated down in the breeze.

It was a gratifying shot - a fast swing, pulling as I passed the
bird's head and it seemed to have centered him perfectly. It



is a shot I have made several times before but
was a less had difficulty justifying to
myself since I couldn't account for the
exact lead, as I normally try for it. Now,

~~realizing~~ realizing this is what Dr. Morris refers to as the
"fast swing" I can shake off my guilt complex and proceed to
employ it for I believe it is efficient on grouse, especially
on quartering, crossing, and fast-rising birds. At any rate I
intend to try to use it this season and see what happens.

all this time, Ruff and Feather were checking who should retrieve
my bird and, as usual, Ruff brought it in - a large bronze or
red phase cock (I think), a gorgeous sight with the head
and extended far on either side of Ruff's muzzle, and a
beautiful retriever.

About this time, Kay called and
I realized she had come up but
not quite soon enough to see the
retriever. After due rejoicing
all around me but for the direction



RUFF BRINGS
IN THE FIRST
OF THE SEASON

of the station wagon. For the sun was getting low. Crossing the
valley to the next shoulder Kay heard # 11 go out wild and
we tried to follow and keep in our line of travel, too. It
seemed to get us a little higher on the mountain side for a while

we crossed the next (and last) valley I was in strange territory.
 However, rather than lose altitude I kept going and soon
 came out on the site of the old C.C.C. camp road. Doubling
 back I lost my directions for a short time, finally checking
 up on the sun and the compass. As we topped one rise of
 ground we moved three birds wild, making 15 grouse moved.
 We moved one of these for a second time, making 18 flushes, but
 had no chance at him. By this time the sun was behind the
 trees and I still hadn't found the road. Making another
 correction in direction (by compass) I finally
 came out on the road not a hundred yards from the
 station wagon. We were all four pretty tired after a
 six-hour drill in rough, steep country, but as always, that
 pleasant plumpness in the back of my shooting jacket
 meant worlds and it was a wonderful first day.

12:00 - 6:00 (6 hrs)

uninterrupted tailwind.

The bird was a cock

exp: 5 or 6 quakes
1 green leaf

5 shots - 1 hit

March 15

18 flushes

3 products } Puff
1 retrieve } Puff

1 killed over { Puff
7 feathers

Saturday 31 October - I had planned to hunt alone with
 Wilda and Puff in the Fish Run country but after taking
 pictures of the yesterday's game with your shadows and
 Puff and Fatters I got a late start. Just as I was leaving
 Ed ^{Fredericks} ~~Fredericks~~ and Cost Smith drove in, having hunted yesterday
 near Kingswood at a friend's cabin. I knew they'd like to
 go with me, so I took them up to the Forest, parking at the
 Sand Springs. We hunted out the old Greenville road, moving
 nothing, and dropped into the head of Middle Valley. The
 new high tension line crosses the head, to my surprise. We
 had a couple of fine looking points by Puff but not a single
 feather did we find in the entire valley. Crossing to the
 first tower ridge I took them out to the end where we found
 wonderful grape cover with loads of fruit. Puff made a fine
 production with Wilda close by but I couldn't see if she
 honored or not. The bird went out the ridge, offering no
 chance to either Ed or myself. We followed and I
 later heard it flush wild. Meanwhile, Cost had shot above
 me and some ^{thing} plopped down out of a tree a few yards to my
 right - a gray squirrel, that scurried up the hill. I had
 that it was a bird he'd hit but ^{actually} he had shot at

another squirrel. It was the first time I ever seen a
squirrel scared into a drop out of a tree. We crossed the
gas pipe line and doubled back the ridge toward the first tower,
keeping on the southern sunny side. Grouse #2 flushed
below me (I think from Wilde) but I had no shot.
Further on, Puff made a nice point but nothing materialized
until some bit later when a bird flushed from both Puff and
Wilde and I think he'd had it at a distance. I saw the
grouse rise and settle on the crest of the ridge about and
in front of Cat & Ed. I think they had scared me on
the way, as well. We went up and both Puff and Star,
Cort's old dog made short points and moved on. Then as
we worked out a ~~point~~^{shoulder} of the ridge Puff began a series of
points and moving up that was entirely unlike him. It
could have been a running bird but he usually moves up
and pins them. Too, the wind was in his face and I
think he could have got scent from a distance. Ed and I
followed and then after he dropped to the left and over
the side, he pointed again ^{and a heavy sounding grouse.}
flushed - #4. Cort ^{had} also flushed a bird that he said

was ahead of us and soon I saw it boil up near Wilder - (who hadn't pointed all day as far as I could see) and flush directly back over my head. It was over me to some for an incoming try, and gone by the time I could wheel around and shoot.

I could tell the other two were getting pretty tired and impatient but for the car so I started us out the ridge as directly as I could. But it's a long haul and not very walking and before long Ed began to feel rather upset. I think he was probably unduly apprehensive but we insisted that he rest and take it slowly. Art carried his gun and I tried to push the left footing but the damned track seemed endless. Finally we

pulled up to what looked like the tower knob and I went ahead and found the tower driveway, then hurried on and got the station wagon and met them when they came out. There's too bad I couldn't provide better shooting but they were very gracious about it and I think felt better, once they were back at the cars. What has happened to that country and its prairie I don't know unless the squirrel hunters are cleaning it out, which I rather doubt.

No shots 3 production {Ruff

2:00 - 6:00 (4 hrs.)

Monday 2 November - Sunny and warm (62°) and
getting dry again, with a bit too much wind. I left Ray and
Wilda at home and took my two orangers to the Lick Run
country. On the way, I could see the burned area on top of
the Brieries, still scrubby with stark snags jutting
above the low growth. As I passed the farmhouse approaching
Lick Run, I missed the old collier that used to rush at
the car and call us names as we passed and I wonder how
long he's been gone. I parked near my usual place this
side of the Summers' cabin and started Puff and Feathers
up through the cover above the road. It was unproductive
today, though I covered the edge of the cliff of rocks. At the
tram road I hurried along to the fast little run hoping to
get the dogs water, but it was dry. For that reason, I
gave up hunting my usual path up that ~~stream~~ ravine and
possibly passed up birds I might have normally found,
going, instead, along the tram road toward the next ravine.
Dues having trouble keeping Puff and Feathers moving into
cover properly, due to the heat and so in order to get them
into good country, I stepped above the road and into good
looking grapevine cover. Almost immediately a grouse flushed
and bored away to the rear, keeping low as it dodged
brush. I located it on the barrels and just as it was making
the edge I pulled and saw it. Puff and Feathers were behind

moved in as the bird went down, going after it as it
 fluttered along the ground away from him. He caught it
 and began shaking out his mouthful of feathers and I knew
 being hot and dry that he'd give me a treat if it before he
 retrieved. Feathers had come up to me and his being there
 didn't help matters. Finally, after a bit of prima donna
 temperament on Puff's part I got tough and ordered him to
 retrieve, but fast. He did, more or less. I know it is the
 heat and the gagging mouthful of feathers that he doesn't
 like when he's panting for breath but I have to insist on
 performance.



The grouse was a yearling with the right
 wing tip nearly shot off - just hanging
 and still alive when Puff retrieved it.
 I probably should have held a bit to
 the left to center him. Actually it
 was within yards of where I had killed

one grouse last season (if not two birds) and was under a
 poplar hanging with clusters of grapes. I let Feathers
 retrieve the bird since he has missed out on both retrievers
 so far. Then, after giving them a chance to get water at the
 nearly dry source, we hunted up the mountain. We would
 only be single from the rains, well toward the top but
 couldn't move him the second time. We ate lunch just
 below the meadow field on the ridge and then hunted
 out covering excellent cover with a fine bird of feathers

the third ravine. Heard nothing until we started down the mountain. Puff and Feathers were side by side when I heard two birds flush and I think they were both pointing without much doubt. Am crediting both with a production, because Feathers was, if anything, in front. Did not move these birds again or any others until I got below the tramroad. Along the Third Ravine a grouse flushed in front of Puff but I can't call it a point. We followed this bird down to Sick Run but had no further flush. After a drink in the "creek" - a mere wet spot among rocks - I sent the boys up the far side among rocks and hemlock and rhododendron cover. We made a big bird that could have been from a point by Puff, altho I'm not crediting it (he was out of sight below me when it flushed and acted as if he'd had it) and it went up over the boulders and got a wild flush again from it. Also flushed another - #7 - when we dropped back on the rocks but heard no others tho we crossed Sick and hunted up over the first ledge we had followed above the way up. Can't ~~understand~~ ^{understand} why we didn't hear more. But, knowing the one bird made it a lovely day. Just before we got to the car both Puff and Feathers hit hot scent (probably they were moving out ahead of us) and I was pleased with the way Feathers stiffened out for a moment. He was the verge of something out

into a good dinner dog. Came home to a delicious grouse dinner - the first bird from Friday.

1:50 - 6:00 (4hr. 10 min.) shot - hit
interrupted tail-band
new.
crop: few quips, green leaf
Lacandoner
8 flushes

1 productive } Puff
1 retrieved }
1 killed over }
1 productive } Feathers
1 killed over }

Since it is one of those odd coincidences, I must add to the above day's notes. I have checked last season's notes and find that today's bird - ~~the first~~ as I thought - did actually flush in the same spot, and that I dropped it within yards of where I dropped the first bird of the season last year. The chief difference was that last year's was killed over Puff's point. Also find that I did shoot a second bird on another day last year within forty or fifty yards, or less, away from here. Last year's were both yearlings. This was a yearling today.

Tuesday 3 November - Ray, Puff, Wilda and I left Feathers at home with the two buppies and drove to the Roaring Gap, where, of course, we found Kinsey Tife's red pickup. The day was windy and dry and unfavorable for hunting the higher ground but, in view of Kinsey's being ahead of us on lower levels, we took the high parts. The first indication of any birds was in the first ravine where Puff made a nest point while working the far side at the lower margin of the hemlocks.

I approached after hustling to Kay and, keeping on my side of the ravine but lower than Puff, stood ready. Nothing happened for a few moments and then the grouse exploded to one side of Puff and started back the ridge, offering a rising but mostly crossing shot to the left.



For a moment I felt I would have no chance to shoot - a carryover from any old effort to find the "spot ahead" to lead - but I went into a quick swing and pulled as I passed his head and saw him fold and tumble. Puff moved in and caught the sound of the wings flapping in the leaves and retrieved the bird as Wilde came back for the action. It was a large bronze - not so red as Friday's bronze - but with the unbroken tailband. However, this bird had met with an accident and had lost a half dozen of his tail feathers on the right side - which were being replaced by new feathers just emerging from the quill sheath. It hadn't affected his flight at all.



Fortunately, Kay had been in full sight of the proceedings, though she missed the point, but the rest was complete with flush, shot, fall, and retrieve. Wilde couldn't waste more than a moment on us and the bird shot back to work at once, so we followed her example.

We worked up the main valley, keeping high on the hillside but not clear to the top, and covered the woods up to and including the first main fork of the valley. Here I left Kay to wait and I corviled the head and far shoulder but ran into cattle grazing so couldn't cover as much territory as I would have preferred. I rejoined Kay with no further action and we then hunted out the thick rhododendron point of land.

As Puff plunged down over a deep gorge a gopher, #2, flushed wild and went up the hollow but we couldn't follow without changing course so left him for later. After working the triangle of land with no results, we pushed our way out of the dense rhododendron and came onto the log road - and Kenzie, who was on his way back to his car. He had been out since morning and had shot two birds. While we talked to him, Kay and I ate our lunch and then, about 4:00

p.m. parted company and went on hunting up the log road while Kenzie went back to his car. We heard him shoot once again. We made absolutely nothing tho I covered the left fork above the mill and crossed to the main valley and

covered a good little piece of it while Kay waited for me. On my return to Kay, I found I had forgotten to reload after lunch! On our way back home we held to the left side of the valley and Kay heard a wild flush from the general direction of

altho both Willie and Puff were hunting diligently, I could see their empty mouths or hear their panting and I knew they had no bird. Just when I began to get uneasy, I heard a sound like wings fluttering and peered through the maze of leaves and made out Puff with that wonderful shape in his mouth. It was so thick that retrieving looked nearly impossible and I tried to fight my way to him to accept the grouse from where he stood. But he carefully worked his way down and under the brush and came around to the little trickle of water where he sat, hindquarters in the cold water, and delivered in proper style. It was a yearling bird with the left - or far - wing shattered, and it was dead.

I held the grouse up high for Puff to see and then climbed up the steep bank, following a fallen log that lay so steeply I was almost like climbing a tree - and taking a lot longer to come out than to go in. That ended our day very beautifully though I felt as hadnt made nearly enough birds. We walked to the station wagon by the main log road and set out of the woods



about 6:00. The shooting today was, for me, exceptional.
I must write Dr. Norris and tell him how
much his work has done for me.



RUFF MAKES A
WET DELIVERY

2 shots - 2 hits
Moved 3 - 4 flushes

2:00 to 6:00 (4 hrs)

1 productive }
2 retrievers } Ruff
2 killed over }
(1 of which was }
a kill over point)

The bronze had unbroken tail band }
The yearling had interrupted " " }
2 killed over } Wilks
{ Code
{ crop: empty
{ here gone
{ crop: 1 small
{ crop: 1 small

Wednesday 4 November - I took Feathers alone, feeling he
needed a chance to handle the show himself, and drove to the
Hoy Miller country. I worked out the cover about the old lane
leading back to the abandoned farm. On top, at the edge of
one of the fields, Feathers bumped a covey of quail that
scattered, squealing, into some thick brush below. After
he calmed down enough to stop running wild, I tried to
get him into a single I had seen land, but it must
have run or lain very tight, for he never found it.
Directing him into some nice quail cover along an old
fence where I'd flushed grouse last season. I started
up the left edge, keeping outside to cover the open
ground of field. A moment after Feathers disappeared
into the thick branches of a hawthorn, a grouse

flushed, crossing to my left and rising. I swung past and pulled but missed and shot again with my left barrel as I swung past and missed. That folded him, well out in the open among some thin greenbrier and locust saplings. It took a bit of handling to get Feathers on the scent. He kept quartering in an effort to locate the bird. Finally, coming against the wind, he spotted him and retrieved him to me nicely, but hid the grouse as the ground without sitting or waiting for me to accept it. I must school him to sit to deliver.

It was a large dark-ruffed bird with scarcely-interrupted tail band, very large tail and large bird that must be a cock. After I congratulated Feathers, and he me, we went on up the ravine where I walked into #2 not far from the first. I wasn't shooting any more in that vicinity but held my gun on him in a dry swing and think I'd have had a chance of hitting him. Swinging left over the top of the knob I covered the nice woods covert and walked into #3 in a papering. I had no shot at him. Following the edges of the woods along old fields, I worked us back to the old tamarack home place where Feathers and I enjoyed our lunch with our beautiful big grouse lying on the rock beside us. After lunch, I covered the edges immediately around the old house site and Feathers put up #4 that went back the way we'd hunted from the first point of

our circle I left the actual field edge and stepped into the woods and saw a grouse, #5, flush - rising and dodging the branches before he leveled off. I couldn't get my gun up but followed his line of flight. at the end of a fair grouse flight, I saw Feather swing to the right and begin to work up a scent his tail very merry. Before he could freeze, the grouse flushed and rose, nearly straightaway, and I fired at it well out through the saplings, swinging up past it and pulling as I topped it. It fell solidly.



Feathers dashed in, gathered up the bird and ran back to me like a delighted child.

Part way, the grouse slipped from his very soft-mouthed grasp but he came on with a big wad of feathers in his mouth, thinking he was delivering the goods. I had to "retrieve" them from him, scraping them out of his mouth, and then send him back. The next try was only half-successful, for he brought the grouse almost to me and lay down. at last I insisted upon full delivery, tho he didn't bring it quite to hand, laying it on the leaves at my feet.



Thursday 5 November - As we were to go to the concert in
Morgantown tonight, I took a close-to-home hunt on Lower
Spiker across from our place, parking at the 4th entrance and
walking back to Hemlock Run to cross Sandy. I had Wilka and
Puff, leaving Featherst at home with Kay, and as I was leading

Wilka across the dry creek bed, a grouse flushed from a
hemlock on the far side and bore toward the ridge. Both dogs
saw it and from then on, Wilka was leading me. As we covered
the border of hemlocks along the creek a second grouse flushed from
Wilka and crossed to our place. I suppose a lot of our birds are
moving across Sandy, at least at times. I ~~climbed the~~ ^{followed the crest of the}
ridge ^{to} a log road, walking upstream till I was near the
Faulkner's hemlocks and turned back downstream, first
gaining altitude to the log road halfway up the hillside. We saw
nothing in here, but I went on till the road joined another that
descended the steeper part of the ridge and hung on, just above the
steep cliff. Near the more acute part of the drop-off, Puff
came onto the path and, following it a few yards, swung into a
nail point, down over the edge. It was too sheer to make in below
him and I had to wait, hoping I'd get a look at the bird.
Wilka came running in and I stopped her into a back point
on command. While they both held, I moved close to Puff and the
grouse went out, diving down over the ridge in the wrong direction,
since I didn't want to retract my steps. We walked on with no

further excitement until we had come to the lower tract of
 hemlock second growth that is just rice grass cover now.
 Ruff was ahead of me and I saw him hit scent and move
 in to establish it, still with an active tail. Before he froze,
 a bird flushed out low, scudding down the hillside without
 clearing the cover. Then, rather unexpectedly, a second bird rose
 up, offering a nice chance before he reached his pitch. I swung
 up, firing as I passed him, but tho he seemed to waver, he
 leveled off and pitched down the hill and I realized I had
 missed.



As I got that unpleasant sweaty feeling, I
 heard a third bird flush further ahead.

I followed the bird I'd shot at, just to be certain I hadn't hit but
 down along the creek we put one out of the rhododendron that
 crossed to the other side and I was satisfied that it was the bird
 I was following. Moving on downstream, I tried to follow the
 other two, keeping low along Sandy. After an adequate grouse
 flight, I turned and worked back, walking along the creek
 edge, outside the marginal rhododendron. I hadn't gone far till
 Ruff pointed and though I walked in and Wells cut ahead,
 nothing materialized. Thirty yards or more beyond, as the dogs
 were working the cover in front of me, a grouse exploded from
 the tangle to my right, climbing rapidly to clear the top

area thoroughly, we didn't see a bird. It is possible that it reflected a run up into the dense rhododendron hillside above the flat. Returning to the opposite side, I walked up the ridge and hunted the upper edge but felt the birds were not that high, since it was cold and windy at times. Dropping down to the level of the original triple fork, I went further downstream and shortly walked into a bird that flushed from a tree, dropping as he glided out. I had no call to even try the shot



I GET A BUNCH OF LEAVES

but my reaction was something beyond me and I blasted at him as he zoomed up and over the hill, too far to be a good chance. This sort of shooting is bad, when you take shots you know better than to try and usually comes when you're frustrated by former misses and particularly by a lot of flushes of the kind the birds were pulling on me today. I felt this was the bird that I'd missed last as he dove thru a tree. I followed and after missing both Puff & Wills, I stopped to listen for them. ^{There were Puff had a production.} There was a distant flush and in a moment a grouse showed coming down over the trees and crossing ahead of me, I swung ^{and I heard the dogs bark in.} part and fired as I thought I should but tho' it is a shot I've often made, I



want making it today. It may be that I want swinging fast enough, and not getting enough lead.



I've often taken that type of bird with a sustained lead held a length and a half ahead. But since I like the fast swing better I want to give it a fair try. We found only one of these

birds - and that after pausing for lunch and for me to settle down. It was after starting out again. I was working up thru a little crabapple thicket when I found Puff frozen like a picture. He was turned toward my left and I had to walk in some pines before anything happened. When it did, the bird



flushed well to my left and out a piece. I tried for him as he rose and again as he leveled off but didn't touch him. We moved him



RUFF HAS ONE.

again later on but had no chance to shoot. I think, considering my work with the gun today that it is just as well. I got no more shots than we moved another young bird when I went back down and hunted further on the "island" at the base of the hill. Also, back at the upper end Puff found another pair that I'm calling #10 & #11 though I can't say he pointed them, but I think he probably did.

It was nearly 5:00 so I dropped down to the bottom and

walked to the car. Pride gets before a fall or something like
 that. at least my pride sure the hell went th after my last
 few days of lovely shooting, just when I was getting confidence
 in myself, it was pretty bitter beer to have to chalk up
 6 straight misses and the the cover was rather difficult
 and the birds beautiful tacticians, I had to say my
 shooting today really smelled. Going on to the concert and
 listening to a bar- baritone didn't help my feelings any, and
 when I learned that they had closed the room again
 because of fire hazard, it was a definite low.

1:00 to 5:00 (4 hrs.)

6 shots - no hits

11 birds

18 flushes

3 products of Puff

1 back point on command of Willie

Friday 6 November. Kay and I decided that, since I was no
 fire menace in the woods, ~~that~~ I hadn't really heard about the
 new closure and so, while she went to Morgantown to
 shop, I would take Puff and hunt little scrubby above the
 bridge. Kay dropped me off and I worked up the ^{north} side,
 moving exactly nothing. The day was cold and windy, so I wasn't too
 surprised not to find birds in their usual places. After covering
 the ^{north} side rather well, Puff and I dropped over the bridge
 to the ^{south} coast, hunting it low all the way from my

point of crossing up to the Beaver Hole. There was still a lot of water in it with a thin coating of ice ~~on it~~. Puff was not working his cove well, checking back to me too often and standing till I'd wave him on. It was almost as tho my net calling or whistling to him (I was trying to not be too conspicuous) bothered ~~him~~ or confused him. I worked up the ridge to the top of Mike's woods above the "Beaver Creek" field. There in the margin, two large birds flushed, one - two, wild. Both went out and down one and we followed but didn't raise either. Climbing again, I had just topped the ridge when a big grouse flushed well ahead of me and I tried a snap at him as he leeked off but missed.

I marked him as going out the upper edge and followed, flushing a bird from one of the peepers that was too small - and too close - for him. I failed to raise either bird or out the edge of the cove and so I coiled up into some straggly, half grown clumps above the woods. As I was about to leave it, having covered only a portion, I nearly stepped on a huge grouse that got out from a stump a yard or so from me and roared away. He was so close I could count the peacock "eyes" of his lower back markings and



my reflex was purely automatic. I swung past him and pulled before he could get behind some saplings, and I felt my gun muzzle dip as I tugged at a locked trigger. I had failed to push off the safety. It was just as well, for - if I had hit him at that distance - he'd have been blown apart.



1 SPARE A BIG ONE

I worked down and out to the old stone-fence clearing but moved nothing further until I doubled back the ridge

at a lower level. Here, we made another bird that could have been the #4 grouse from the gaperies above, and this time he went down over the ridge. Around the shoulder of the hill I took time off for a bite of lunch - at about 3:30 or 4:00, sitting behind a rock to break the wind that cut at us. The day was still overcast and cold. After lunch, we worked the ridge, even lower - getting into the really nice hemlock and rhododendron cover - and here we got results. First, Ruff made a nice point that produced a bird that seemed to flush from a rhododendron. I almost got a shot at it. I count this a fair chance of being the #4 bird we'd tried before. Further on, Ruff hit scent and I heard two birds flush about and ahead of me and saw a third

bores, very low to the ground, up the slope. Following the
two I'd heard, we moved another and saw at least a
tree and go down over - again I almost got a shot. There
were a couple of repeat flushes but no shooting or dog
work. ~~at last~~ ^{we had} reached the old stone fence clearing
again (I always cherish its memory as the place where
Puff made a lovely retrieve as a beginning, running out into the
clearing to pick up up that had flushed from the stone fence -
and again as the place where I had dropped a grouse
flushing across the clearing at a time when I sorely needed
a hit to reclaim my shooting confidence.) Today I came
on Puff on point in the woods just below the stone fence
and headed into a clump of young hemlocks. I clucked to
him to let him know I saw and began moving around
and in front of the point. Nothing happened. I moved on,
circling entirely across and back into Puff who was solid
rock on the other side of the little hemlocks. There was a
separate pile of stones to
my left, entirely away
from the stone fence and



leaving a narrow space between the pile and the hemlocks.

As I started to walk into this small area, directly in front of Puff's point, the grouse exploded and went out skimming the ground, straight across to my left and not ten yards from me. I made a very fast swing and fired, scarcely aware of what I was doing. It caught the grouse just as he went out of sight behind the stones but I saw him fall. It was one of those fantastic things you don't know how you do and is, I suppose, a pay-off for the many trials you fail to bring off. Puff was there in a flash and retrieved the bird - a



Large grouse that looked like a cock, with an almost uninterrupted tail band. I

noticed that there was something odd about one foot - a sort of swollen club-foot effect that could have been an injury. The swelling was limited to the foot below the ankle and all the ~~top-nails~~ ^{top-nails} were missing, with the toes or forks of the foot rather stubby.



It was a beautiful large bird with no other abnormality and its flight was very fast. I worked the ridge down over to the

lower path and up to the Beaver Hole again, crossing Beaver Creek

to the Shaffer side but didn't see a bird. It was getting
toward sunset time, so I crossed Sandy again and walked
the mile or more home up over the ridge to the east margin of
our place. It was a fine day with lots of birds around
and a kill over a point - of the best.

1:00 - 6:10 (5 hrs) 2 shots - one hit

2 producers
1 retriever
1 kill over point } Ruff

There was a cove (almost uninterrupted band) $14\frac{1}{4}$ " from
crop: grapes and a few leaf fragments.

Observed a long period of inactivity, due to prolonged
ban on West Virginia hunting from 5 November, during which
Ray and I finished the book, Hawk Watch. On ~~the~~
Saturday 14 November - we felt the need to celebrate
finishing the day before and so about 2:00 we drove out to
Walker's in Pennsylvania with Ruff & Feathers. The Walkers
hadn't arrived as yet, and after waiting till 3:00, Ray and I
started back the ridge from their house, following the old
abandoned road. There were hunters all over the mountain today
and even two ahead of us on the ridge. We cut to the
right of the old road, hunting out the shoulder. It was a
lovely day, Indian Summer haze, sun, temperatures
around 60. There we had some fine flushed in part

of us and bored out the ridge. We followed but did not
 move it. After traveling some distance I dropped us down over
 the shoulder into the edge of the hollow to the right - Piney
 Run on the map, but merely dipped into a little draw with
 good grapevines and lots of rhododendron following the
 contour of the bank. Almost immediately a bird flushed
 from a grapevine and flushed up to the shoulder but tho' I
 could see it well, I could not get a good swing past it. Kay
 joined me and I led the way into the little draw. As we
 walked up an old log road we heard a quail flush from the
 ridge above us to our left and I saw him, red as a cardinal
 in the afternoon sun, zooming down over the trees toward us.

I took him as he was coming in, but missed, and, turning,
 swung past quickly and fired almost in the same
 movement and saw him fold and go down in a dense
 tangle of rhododendron. I reloaded and sent both dogs in,
 finally crawling in too, after marking



the spot of fall by a
 pair of trees. I crawled
 around, fighting the



stiff branches but neither of the dogs had located
 him, tho' they were quartering the tangle industriously.

Finally I started to work up through a slight opening, as Kay
 suggested the bird may have fallen on the far side of the
 thicket. Looking low thru the under parts I saw feathers

lying down with the quon between his paws. I ordered
him to fetch but he was panting hard and just lay there
with his tongue dangling. Finally after I got sterner, he
got up and left the bird. Ruff, still circling busily,
swung near, but the scent and struck the bird, picking
it up and retrieving it nicely to where I crawled out to
daylight and Kay got to see the delivery. Why
feathers behaved as he did I don't know, but it seems to
be part of the early development. The bird was a
very large, very red bronze with uninterrupted tail band,
completely collapsed with both legs ground to pieces by the
shot. I don't think he ever knew what hit him. We sat down
and ate a candy bar and enjoyed looking at the quon - a
beauty. All this was at about 3:30. Moving on, we circled

above the whodolundron and walked into another quon #4, that
went up and back the ridge. I don't believe the one I shot
could have been the #2 quon flushed for I think that bird went
further up the hill. It looks as if there were a concentration of
birds in the head of the little draw that runs down to Piney.
I attempted to hunt down into the valley but some bit of
drooping down there discouraged me. Instead we worked out to
the point of the shoulder to ~~see~~ ^{look} looking over,

where there were some brush piles from recent cuttings. In one of them a quail flushed as Puff approached and went back the ridge. This gave me the idea we'd have at least three or perhaps four birds on our way home, but we didn't see a one of them. Feathers made a very nice "near point" in one of the brush heaps. That is, he feathered up and was very intense, but his tail never froze. As he went on, he was extremely eagle. On our way in, we sighted the two hunters, in red, down thru the woods when they were walking out the road.

We circled into Russell Welkers' land and moved two pairs of quails, two on the far side of his line and two in the grape-vines on his place. Puff made a nice point and altho he had moved on, there was a bird there ahead of him and

credit it as a production. We went in about 5:30 and found the Welkers home. Russ had been hunting on the far side of the woods but moved nothing.

Large brood, unaccomplished
 band: - cock
 crop: empty

2 shots - 1 hit
 several q. - a flusher

1 producer }
 1 retriever } Puff
 1 kill over }

3:00 to 5:30 (2 1/2 hrs.)

1 assist on find }
 1 kill over } Feathers

Monday 16 November - Drove Ky to Winton about 1:00 and bought
a Pennsylvania non-resident license as the dry Indian summer
weather is holding and the West Virginia forest fire situation
is worst. I feel there will be no shooting in our state for
weeks. I drove back to the mountain road back of the
Summit, using all three settlers - Puff, Wilds, and Feathers.
Parking at the Pine Knot road, I made a big circle down
on the brink of the mountain but found the forest crown too
high and cover too open for birds. Doubling back on the
Hutchinson hollow side of the old road, I returned to the
car and drove on out past the road turning to Walkers.
Out that road I found the cover still too open, so
went down the Walkers road to the first dip where we
saw grouse cross. Parking there I hunted down over the
steep ridge to the headwaters of Poney Run. As we
approached the mass of rhododendron at the head of
the run I thought I heard a grouse flush from
the dogs but never flushed it further. Altho I covered
the entire basin at the top and then hunted
down the dog road along the creek to the first
tributary on the left, we didn't move a feather. The
creek was mostly rhododendron and hemlock along the
creek but no feed. I imagine the birds would have been
concentrated in spots where feed was present but I

didn't find such a place. Climbing up to the paved road
via the tributary hollow, I crossed to the north side
and hunted back up to the gas well, then crossed and
hunted the south side of the road, covering the brink of
the ridge to the station wagon. Not a bird, tho Puff made a
side point that Wilke backed.

3:00 to 6:00 (thru no shots
mowed one - 1 flash

Tuesday 12 November. Kay and I left Feathers with the
puppies and took Puff and Wilke to my old favorite
cave along Tub Run. The country looked beautiful -
as lovely as ever. Jim Cunningham's shack has had a
face-lifting and is now a Pittsburghers hunting cabin -
all very convenient for parking them. This was another
of the long string of sunny warm Indian Summer days.
We had the Inghram's movie camera and started the
actual hunting sequence. Kay got a shot of us, starting
out against a backdrop of rhododendron that should
be good. As we hiked up the left ridge of Tub Run I
saw us too far up the hillside and tho we went
thru fine cover I think we were too far from water. We
kept climbing however



a knob up under the Davey Elkins place. There was sunlight
sifting thru the woods and when we came to a rather open
piece of woods, Kay shot an action picture of both Puff
and Wadda quartering nicely well out below us. Soon
after Puff went onto a point and Wadda moved in and
I stopped her on a lovely back point, her tail straight as a
bayonet. Kay moved in for a shot that should be a
homey. I walked in but there was no bird. Casting them
down there some photodensitron we dropped over a low
ledge of rocks and walked down the beautiful cove -
paperies and logs to the right of an old path. I started
Puff in to walk thru and almost at once we heard a bird
flush. Puff froze on an intense point and we both decided
he had hit the vacated spot so didn't take the picture
tho the sun was spotting him nicely. Almost immediately
a grouse started off the ground ahead of him and I
fired and missed. I'm sure I didn't swing fast enough
if at all. I believe I was too anxious to "have" of the camera.
Unfortunately Kay didn't get to "shoot" me either. We
followed the bird up over the ledge, back in
the direction we had

At a surprisingly short flight, near where Ray had photographed the ^{#39} double point, the grouse flushed wild and went up a shoulder of the hill. We followed and, again, in a shorter distance than I would have expected, the grouse flushed to



WILDA BACKS RUFF
FOR A MOVIE.

the hill. We followed and, again, in a shorter distance than I would have expected, the grouse flushed to


the sight of an old path a cleared line, as we were on and took off low, to the right. I tried to swing  part and fired, missing, and  tried again as he showed in an opening. That time I

saw him side slip and go down over the rock ledge in a gap in the rhododendron and I was certain I had hit him. However, as we hunted hard below the ledge where he would have fallen and I believe he must have just been peeling off and diving over out of sight. After an adequate search, we moved down to the stream again, trying to follow where the bird might have gone. Ray suggested that we were too far to the left so we swung down to the rhododendron along the run and walked into a grouse that flushed on across the little hollow. I fired too fast and without a swing and of course missed and a second bird went out. I then decided that they were #3 and #4. Ray had the first shot on no

decent state of mind, but as we went on, in line with the flight
of the last two birds



I was walking in front of Ray,
who had the movie camera, all
set to get a picture of me if I
got a shot, and the dogs were
in front and to the left. As I

went up a path and approached a clump of rhododendron, I heard the
commotion of a grouse tearing out and stood ready, if I should get
a look at him. For a moment, it didn't look as though I would, then
as I stepped to the right, I saw him going away from me and
climbing toward a rhododendron ledge. I  held above him and fired and saw him go down in a fluttering
descent that looked as if feathers flew. When I called to Ray and
ran up toward the place, I saw to my dismay that the bird had
gone down in a huge mass of boulders and rhododendron. I plunged
in and put the dogs to work tho I could tell from the crevices and fissures
in the rocks that we had a job ahead of us. After a little while
both Huff and Wilda got discouraged (too many misses earlier in
the hunt) and I knew we wouldn't find our bird. The bad moment
came when I began to doubt that I'd hit him, that he had gone
down, but there can be no question about it for with the rock
ledge above the tangle he would have had to climb to clear
it and it would have been in my full vision. Furthermore, I
did see him go down, not in a ~~climb~~ but in a

fluttering settling descent. We ate lunch sitting right up
 in the rocks when he'd disappeared and I took two or three
 more tries at locating the spot from the point of flash and
 fire and did get Puff to hunt some more, but it was one of
 those places you could throw a game bag and never see it again.
 I hate to think of leaving him there but I had no way of changing
 matters. Finally, about 4:30 we left and hunted up over the
 top and down the point of ridge toward the fork of the creek. On
 the way a big grouse flushed ahead of us, offering no shot,
 making #5 for the 8th flash. We had a time working out of this
 area since we were hemmed in by rock ledges and rhododendron
 dense along the stream but ended up along the creek following
 an old log road. On one attempt to get across to the south side we
 followed an old cutting trail and flushed #6 from a tangle of
 rhododendron. Puff had been hot on scent but didn't point
 the bird tho it was near and I wonder if the grouse wasn't
 perched off the ground in a branch. Finally we fought
 across the creek and came out on the trail a log road that I
 had tried to follow on the way up. There wasn't much we
 could do as dark as it was other than follow the road down
 the mountain toward the car. At an intersection with
 another old road, I came on Puff on point. It didn't

look too intense and I didn't believe there was a bird there.
However, I warned Kay to get me in the finder and be
ready if I shot. She had me focused and said she was all
set and I walked in. The grouse was there all right, across
the path from Buff and to my right. I tried to take him
as he rose thru some thick brush and saw that I'd missed
him as he sailed up the ridge (undershot, I imagine) but I
felt somewhat less bitter for I felt I had at least given
Kay a good action shot. I turned and asked if she had
got it all right and she said she hadn't got any of it!! She
had been too excited by the birds' flush to pull the trigger on
the camera. Then I did feel hopeless. My shooting had gone
to the devil what with keeping the camera in mind and
trying to shoot at every flush. I don't think I made a decent
fast swing on a single shot.

In fact, I'm beginning to wonder how effective
the fast swing can be on a vertically flushing
bird. I want to give it a more thorough trial but I may decide to
revert to the unslained lead on such a shot, using the fast swing
for the others, except the straightaways. After that we returned
to the station wagon, both rather tired and disappointed. However,
after a cup of hot coffee from the



species, life reports look better and by the time we were a few miles on our way toward home, it seemed like what it really had been - a very lovely day in beautiful grouse country.

I am, however, counting the one bird as a hit, for in all fairness to myself, I am certain it went down.

1:30 to 6:00 (4 1/2 hrs. 6 shots - 1 hit (lost) 2 productives { Ruff
missed 7 - 10 flushes 1 backpoint { Wilder

Wednesday 18 November - I took 7 feathers alone and drove to the road at the Smith school, hoping to find the flat covert Edward Cass took me to years ago. I found it, plastered with notices - two to a tree. However, I drove on out toward Beaver Creek and stopped at the old Boyd farm where, to my surprise and pleasure, I found Dick and Lizzie Lee whom I hadn't seen for years. After I broke away from a prolonged conversation, I hunted down the old road to Beaver, then excellent rhododendron cover most of the way. At the bottom, I doubled upstream and hunted the right side of Beaver. Almost at once, 7 feathers put out a grouse and I followed it upstream, bearing down a little closer to the ledge, and denser hemlock cover but keeping just above it in rather open hardwoods, dotted with good *grapes*. As I

approached some large rocks a dark-looking grouse flushed
and dove into the hummocks, disappearing before I could raise
my gun. As I stood on another rock, looking after him, a
second bird flushed in front of me, pattering in the dry leaves
as it took off, and headed for the stream - crossing to my
left and keeping low to the ground. I made a fast
swing and pulled as I passed his head - sensing that I
had missed and that he hadn't dropped - and, keeping my
barrels swinging - pulled again. Before the left barrel
fired I saw the bird tumble from the first shot in a
cloud of feathers but nothing could have stopped that
second shell.



The grouse fell out of
rock, but when I called

right beyond another

Feathers into retrieval and stepped up, I could, by looking over,
see the bird lying crumpled in a declivity between a small
rock and the ground. Feathers came in and worked hard, but
not finding it at once, got flushed and began circling
wide and wide. I called him back again and again
but conditions were such that he could neither get close
enough nor see the bird. Finally, after repeated calling
on my part, he came in below the bird and, putting
the scent, swung in and located it. He retrieved it

to me after a little delay, laying it on the ground, and when he brought it in he dropped it at my feet. I'll have to work on him his winter to make him set to deliver.

I should mention that as I shot at my grouse a third bird plummeted down the hillside, so I am sure there was a trio apart from the one I was following. I hunted up to the first hollow on the right and within sound of cars on the Beaver Creek - Dinner Bell road. The cover was much too open in parts please me - large timber - that had gophers but little no fruit. Crossing Beaver, I hunted down and stopped to eat lunch on the edge of the stream - a fairly trout stream that, even in this drought - had

considerable water in some pools. After lunch we hunted down low along the right creek bank and flushed two grouse back across the creek that I count two of the birds from the far side. I have no doubt I could have made a number of grouse from the least cover along the stream but I was anxious for shooting and this wasn't the spot exactly. Two new birds flushed further on and I followed one of them up the steep ridge. On a shelf near the top I heard the bird go ahead of

feather but I continued to the crest where I found the best looking gopher. I had seen all day. Then

had been a severe cutting and Feathers and I worked out to the edge and covered them rather well, crawling back to where I had crossed them from below. Feathers was below me and I was whistling to him to head him out the ridge.

To my amazement (and that's the way it always seems) a grouse materialized a few yards in front of me and exploded, going out low and nearly straight away. I took my time and held on him, feeling he was not rising, and when I fired I saw him waver and felt certain he would fall. But he went, still weaving in and out of low growth and I realize he was merely working his way through cover. I should have held a bit above and to the right. That made #7 for 10 flashes.



Feathers worked the cover well and I am certain he wasn't but for I heard a bird

and saw it fly down and back the ridge and I count it the same grouse. Dropping to the creek we moved no other birds along it. At the old house site and the "road" I crossed onto the next shoulder on the left and came across Dick Lee searching for his cows. I hunted up a draw to some old clearings on the flat about when I saw Feathers suddenly hit scent and begin working frantically, his tail going madly. While he was busy with the

paperine tangles to the right a bird blew out with
 very little sound and a second one followed as I moved
 up. Both were too distant for a try in this cover, then
 the amblypterus started. Following these birds we
 moved both of them again making 9 to 15. Then fighting
 my way thru dense rhododendron we moved two more
 one of which I am not sure feathers went pointing. Finally
 I cleared the margin near Dick Lee's place and returned to
 the station wagon about 6:00 a later. I am not counting the
 second barrel fired after the first bird shot at dropped, for
 it was hit and fell out of line of flight.

2:30 to 6:00 (3 1/2 hrs) 2 shots - 1 hit 1 retrieve } Feathers
 1 killed over }
 large yearling with
 black ruff and uncut tailfeathers
 tailband: cork ^{Wsp: empty}
 I think that flat cover near the old clearing might be good country.

Thursday 19 November - Kay & I took all three, Rufus, Willy, &
 Feathers to the Sugarloaf road and parked at the old Bowman
 house which is unused except as a clubhouse at times. We had
 the ^{16 mm.} movie camera and started hunting across the road from the
 house in good paperine cover but made nothing. Kay got a
 shot of the three ratters quartering an old open field that
 should add interest to an hunting movie.

to the lower side we hunted along a little draw for some distance, trying to locate cranberries we remembered seeing with Ralph Wilson but failed to find them (or any grouse - tho we did hear one flush). Getting in the car, we drove up to the flat on the mountainside where Rameat crosses the road and parked there, trying the rhododendron cover along the creek on the left. It was too dense for anyone but the dogs so we switched to the far side of the road, noting two parked cars further up that boded competition. Hunting along the stream we found the cover miserably cut over with brush heaps everywhere so that you had to climb over one after another. We did see bird #2 but got no look at it. In desperation I searched the skyline for grouse and located some higher on the shoulder of the hill with a nice edge of rhododendron.

We walked up and flushed two more grouse, both out of gunshot. Following, we saw one of these in the edge of rhododendron and for a moment it perched on a branch and then pitched over the ledge. Crouching the top - a mass of brush piles, we stopped to rest and while we stood there after a few minutes conversation, heard a bird go out as Wilder circled in to us and saw it bore back over the ledge in the same direction as the other bird.

We couldn't follow without backtracking so hunted as down the slope, only to find the cave unimpossibly open and cut out, we decided to give it up and move lower on the mountain so walked back to the car, stopping above the Bowman place to eat with the view, hazy but unimpaired, ahead of us. I should mention that this was ~~the~~ another consecutive day of perfect Indian summer weather, warm and sunny, the unmercifully dry. As we ate, we saw a small white animal dart across the road and disappear into the cover on the left side, and decided it had to be a cat. The gophers on the left looked better than anything we'd seen for while and, since Kay was feeling rather too tired to go on hunting, she suggested that she drop me off and then go on to the Cal Reckman's to wait for me. It was a nice chance to make a good long hunt down the mountain and I jumped at it. Since I wanted to hunt Ruff alone with Walker's two tomorrow and since I wasn't impressed with Ruff's diligence today I let him stay with Kay, much to his dismay, and I took Fathom & Willa and plunged into the woods. Almost before Kay and the station wagon disappeared, they had made a grove from the dense gophers and as I walked in a stream bird fledged,

nearly offering me a shot. And then a third bird went out below.
I swung in the direction two of them had gone and hunted out
the shoulder into more good grapes and new cuttings. As I was
watching Feathers run down the slope, I saw a white shape
dart out of sight in choker log and recognized a weasel in
full winter white. Feeling sure he would "pop" up again after
Feathers passed, I waited. I detest killing things for the sake
of doing so, but I really felt the weasel was destructive enough
too game to merit it and so when he showed himself again I
gave him the left barrel and saw him go down. When I walked



over I found him dead by the opening of the
log - beautifully white and innocent looking,
his royal, black-tipped tail very striking. I
was surprised to find him in full winter white
at this time of year with no more than an inch snow fall so far.
I laid him up on the log to keep Feathers from finding him
and made off - not too proud of myself. We worked on out in
the direction of the grouse's flight and I came on Feathers in
one of the nicest points he's ever made. He was absolutely solid and
I felt certain he had the bird but it must have moved off
just before we hit the scent. In nothing materialized when I
walked in. In a few minutes Feathers appeared again but

then moved on.

We hunted down the slope and then coiled back toward the pines again.



FEATHERS FREEZES.

As I was walking up the old log road, Wella put out a quail to the left of me. I don't know if she had pointed or not, I just heard the bird, saw her near her head, and the quail was cutting across to the right, keeping fairly low. I was aware of Feathers making about me and ^{slightly} to my right and I was conscious that I must shoot in that direction. Moving fast past the bird, I fired as I passed it and saw it crumple and drop, leaving a cloud of feathers floating down almost directly in front of me and alarmingly close to where Feathers had been. I shudder to think that

I might have caught him in the pattern, his being above me on the slope placing him about the elevation of the bird.

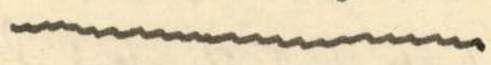
Fortunately it was all right, for he went into action and pounced on the quail, starting toward me, then laying it down, and then delivering it to me very nicely, tho' he didn't sit. We gazed over our good luck, regretted that they hadn't been there to get the shot on film (and the retriever) and then started the long hunt down the mountain. Feathers found and moved another bird, #4 in her and #8 for the day.

the cover near Cal's old hillside wheatfield (again in wheat) I heard #9 go out. At Cal's place, Puff came dashing up with a good deal of hysterical joy and Kay walked up to get the good news ^{and see} the bird. We hunted out the fringe of cover along the bottom and then went in to the Peckers and stayed for a pleasant 1:30 to 6:00 (4 1/2 hrs.) supper and visit.

Large bird with light
 tan tail feathers
 almost uninterrupted
 tail band: oak
 crop: empty

1 shot - 1 hit
 Mowed 9 - 12 flushes

1 retrieve } Feathers
 1 kill over }
 1 kill over } Wilde



Omitted the shot sketch for the Sugarloaf bird in previous notes.



Friday 20 November - I took Puff and met Russell Walker at Pinebrooke for a hunt with Heather and Hussey. Russell was late and we didn't get started until after 2:00. We crossed the road and started into the popperies on Kerby. We'd been out about three minutes when I came on Puff doubled up on an intense point just inside the edge of the popperies. He was crouched and headed away from me but had his head turned back over his shoulder looking in my direction. I stepped up and almost walked on the point, which tore out and bore

straight away, low and fast. I threw my gun up and made a quick shot before he got behind some saplings and saw him drop a few yards to one side of Ruff. I called Russell to



RUFF SPREADS OUT ON A HOT ONE.

get the young dogs in to see the retriever and Ruff did it beautifully, but growled when Heather came close. After delivering it, he watched anxiously and when I let Heather and Harry near the bird, Ruff grabbed it away from me and took it on another

circle, finally retrieving it and sitting to deliver all over again. We dropped down over the steep ridge, hoping to locate porcupines in some of the draws of Laurel Run but although we hunted hard and covered a good piece of territory we only made two more birds wild. It was a hot windy day and a storm was in the offing. There should have been a dozen birds in this country. That evening, Russ drove over and ate buckwheat cakes with us at our fireplace.

2:15 to 5:45 (3 1/2 hrs)	1 shot - 1 hit	1 productive	} Ruff
	made 3 - 3 flushes	1 retrieve	
		1 kill over point	

large bird, almost uninterrupted tailband: .cocks
crop: empty

Saturday 21 November — The early morning rain stopped by 11:00 and altho the sky was heavy with threatening clouds and the weather forecast unfavorable, we took off with all three setters and drove to Wilhelm's. Ray decided against carrying the mail camera because of danger of its getting wet. We parked at Wilhelm's and began hunting up the old log roads above their house. The day was warm and soon after we started, the blue sky began showing thru and continued to do so at intervals between clouds all day. There was heavy shooting going on all around us but we managed to pick a piece of country between the activity. This country is coming back but is still pretty slashed up with all too few grapes. I headed for the grapes on the brink of the hill above Whites' Creek but almost walked into shooting in that part. Keeping to the right, we were walking up a log road when suddenly a bird appeared in front of us, sailing down the slope toward us and cutting to the left. At first I didn't recognize it as a grouse, then made a swing as it set its tail to show its side. I missed with the right barrel (I think my swing was too slow, misled by the apparent low speed of the grouse) and I swung past again, firing the left. I felt certain of the shot but the grouse went on. Then I saw a feather like a thigh feather floating to the ground. We marked the general line of flight and

followed, but then we circled the entire area well, we never did either find or near the bird. Finally, giving up, we hunted on up the mountain, following paths most of the way.




As we approached a specially nice looking part, I noticed that Puff had worked up the path, passing a good possibility on the left. I stepped in and almost immediately walked into a bird that roared out at my feet and began to climb and go straight away. I mounted my gun as unhesitatingly as I could but caught the heel of the stock under my sleeve and tried the shot anyway - missing. As the bird veered to the left I swung past and fired as I went three times, this time driving the full load into an old snag. We followed, with me in a rather misty mood.



Puff had been doing too much checking back with me and when I saw him standing by a pile of brush looking at me, I refused to credit it as a point, for

lack of intensity. As he moved in the grouse flushed, offering a long straightaway that I didn't care to try. I followed but couldn't raise it again. We had reached the ledge of rocks that cuts across the mountain toward the lake and altho I would have liked to hunt above them, we

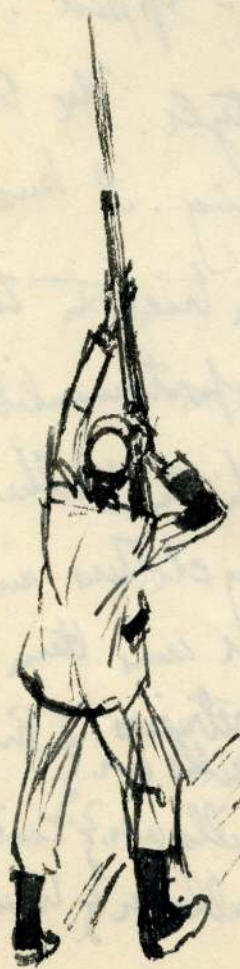
left the lower side for us and that was what we took. At the south end of the rocks I approached a brush heap and heard a grouse explode, taking off low and not quite straight away. My shot was largely subconscious, firing as I ~~passed~~ ^{passed} the bird in a fast swing and dropping it in a cloud of feathers.

Wilde came in first and I hoped she'd find the bird  but she picked the thickest part of the cover. Ruff moved in, in his efficient manner and soon hit the scent and retrieved the grouse -

a yearling. We decided to rest and eat lunch on the strength of our good fortune - and after my two double-barreled misses it was welcome luck. We could look out thru the leafless trees to the distant Laurel Hill Mountain - a blue band far to the west.

After lunch we covered the end of the rocks and got a nice triple point, Ruff pointing with Wilde & Feathers honoring - but the bird was not forthcoming. Crossing the little rhododendron run - would like to have hit the upper side of the rocks at the head of this run but still heard a shot in there from time to time - we covered the far slope and then hunted down the draw, making a grouse, #4. Part way down, we recrossed and hunted back to the Wilhelms, where they went in to visit a while and I moved on to the area where I had missed the first bird, hoping to pick him up if the floating feather ^{scents anything} Nothing happened.

so I worked over the brink of the Whites Creek hill and downstream⁵³ toward Wilhelm's point of land. There, in the fading light, I sat on a log against the steep hill and took a rest and let the three settlers get a last wind before we covered the shoulder of the ridge. Finally, I dragged myself up over loose rocks under leaves and started for the clearing ahead. Then I noticed a nice looking patch of cover I felt I shouldn't pass up. It was a temptation, tired as I was, to skip it but I veered to the left and pulled up the steep hill. At about the third step, I heard a quonr roar off the slope above me and saw him coming out over the trees, only a silhouette against the sky. I had to shoot straight up and as he went over I swung fast, firing almost in the same action. For a split second he went on, then I saw him fold and tumble, striking the hillside well below me. As he hit, he began to move down as fast as he could and, reloading, I



ONE AGAINST THE SKY

ran down to help him in sight as best I could. In the half light I
 soon lost him but the three setters were on hand, all searching
 industriously. Finally I directed Puff to the place I had seen the bird
 lost and soon saw him but scent below me and trail down the
 slope in a winding pattern. Turning toward a small tree ^{trunk,} he
 swung into it and, while he was on one side, the grouse fluttered
 from the other. Puff pounced at it but missed, and the grouse
 dived under a log. Puff tried to bore under with his snuzzle
 but couldn't make it, then, as Wilks came on the scene, he started
 to work on the far side. With both of them hawking, I waited
 and Puff soon came up with the grouse, wing-tipped. He
 retrieved it nicely and delivered in perfect style. The bird was
 a small yearling with its right wing tip hanging. I knuckled it
 out promptly and let Feathers see it. When he tried to take hold
 of it, Puff grabbed him by the ~~ear~~ in a most unsportsmanlike manner.
 I went in to the house and after a few words with the Wilhelms, we
 went to the station wagon where I changed in dry clothes and we
 came home, stopping to talk to Cliff Springer as we came thru Addison.
 The bird was also hit in the ^{left} right hip (pelvis). It was ⁶ shots - 2 hits 2 retrievers } Puff
2 hills over }
2 hills over } Feathers
2 hills over } Wilks
 a hen as nearly as we can tell (interrupted land)
 Crop: stuffed with grapes. Bird very fat.
 First bird: interrupted land - hen
 crop: empty

Monday 23 November - Heavy rains last night, stopping by morning. Today cold and cloudy with woods nice and damp. I went alone with Puff & Feather to the lower Tuck Run country, turning right from MacWest road and parking about 1 mile down the hollow. Taking a road up the left ridge past a cabin in process of construction, I started in the woods above it. Almost immediately a gray squirrel - the fattest I've ever seen - started away from the dogs and came toward me. When it saw me, it wasn't alarmed and merely turned away and moved off along the ground. Just as it disappeared, a grouse came back from the dogs, flying low and crossing to my left. I had a limited look at him in the open path ahead but I swung my gun fast and fired as I "saw" him and saw him fall. Puff came running back and stopped listening, till he caught the sound of the fluttering wings on the leaves above the path. Then he raced in and retrieved it.

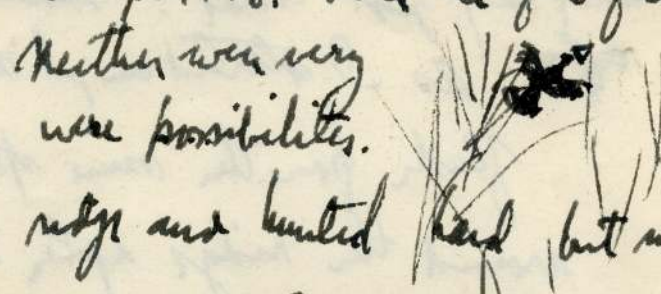
It all happened so quickly, I still wonder what became of the squirrel! The bird was a small yearling with a wing broken and shot in the leg and



feet, but I had to finish it which I never enjoy doing. It was an auspicious beginning, however, and I moved on up the ridge toward the river end. There were porcupines all the way.

concentration but I missed no more birds till I was well up the slope. I found that this area is laced with roadways, laid to reach present and future cottages that will be near the lakes when the water level returns. It rather spoils the place as a piece of shooting cover but there was no one around today to bother me. As Puff cut down across the woods (and he was working beautifully today - colder) he ran into a grouse that flushed up the ridge toward the top. I realized I had been working them with the wind at our backs but it happened to be the direction I wanted to go. We followed the bird to the top but couldn't reach it, and I think it had cut back. At the far end, I ran into posted land, so dropped over to the north side of the ridge. The view was magnificent, clear back to Sugarloaf Mountain with the tower dominating it, and down at the Horseshoe Bend in the river, and back down to river level, but there was no cover on that side fit to hold a bird. I cut back along the ridge and when I came over to the south side and walked down, did more a bird that could have been the #2 grouse. Later on we flushed one I must in all fairness call #3 but found no more until I had returned to my starting point near the cottage under construction. Then, being lower down, I walked into a grouse that flushed in

thick cover below me and as I fired and missed, he cut up the hill, showing himself again in the distance. I tried again with the left barrel and saw him shudder in the tail area but he went on. I think I may have just shot thru the fan feathers and hope it did no harm to him. Neither were very certain shots but both were possibilities.



ridge and hunted hard but never did see him again.

After eating lunch, I dropped down and crept lower on the ridge but had no luck except a rabbit that fooled Ruff into pointing. Going back to the

station wagon about 5:30, I crossed the stream, beautiful along in here, and started up the ridge on the south side of the valley. It was good looking cover with grasses scattered all over but I didn't see a feather all the way to the top - and it was really a steep

climb. Up there I saw along the brink into even better looking cover and then hit new timber cuttings which had left nothing. As we came down, taking log roads, I spotted some unspoiled cover in a little draw, very dense. The dogs approached ahead of me and I saw and heard a grouse go at them a second.

It was rather too far but I tried at him as he cleared the thicket below, missing, and again fired as he leveled off into the trees ahead. I feel there was something wrong with my aim both times but I can't say just what. ~~Further on I should~~

as I started on, I saw a third bird flush from the same spot and go around the ridge after the others. I



followed, hoping still to get into more shooting and, further on, directed Buff into a group of brush heaps with the leaves still attached. He moved in a yard or so and froze. I climbed up the stiff hillside to the upper side and stopped, but nothing happened. Then I started kicking the brush. Finally the grouse flushed, but back on Buff's head and then creaked the hill too far out for a good shot. Buff still held, however, even tho' feathers moved in. Finally I walked down and tramped the stuff under Buff's nose and a half grown rabbit bounded out. They seemed to have a birdy mind today. What with the grouse having been there, I could fault Buff on that.

I followed but couldn't meet any of the birds.

Very small yearling, interrupted band:

5 shots - 1 hit
 missed 7 - 9 flyers

1 productive }
 1 retriever } Buff
 1 kill on }
 1 kill on } feathers


1:30 to 6:15 (4 3/4 hrs.)

Tuesday 24 November - Ray and I took Ruff & Wilda back to
 the Tub Run country, parking at the old Jim Cunningham
 place and hunting up the creek path to the left fork. We
 made nothing until just below the place where we flushed the
 two birds the first trip, and this time got a wild flush from
 the dogs that flew up over the rocks. We circled the upper
 edge but never made it - or anything else. On the way up the
 path, Ray had shot a short scene on the movie camera of me
 waving Ruff into the cover as he came down the path. The
 day was cloudy, as was yesterday, after our rain Sunday night -
 which broke the mid ~~day~~ spell of high-pressure weather we'd
 been having. We ate our lunch on the edge of cave above
 the rock ledge today and, after circling excellent grapevine
 country, we hunted on up the hollow. Hearing nothing, we
 dropped down to where we'd moved two birds from rhododendron
 and shortly flushed a big grouse up over the rock ledge on
 the far side of the little valley. As we followed, planning to top the
 rocks, a grouse flushed out of the dense rhododendron hill that
 I cannot think was the #2 bird whose track we were on. It
 went downstream in an impossible section, so we continued to
 the top. There, after circling, we hunted up the slope and just as
 I had stepped ahead of Ray a grouse came

zooming directly over me and over her head, settling lower as it dropped over the lip behind us. I caught the #2 bird on a second six flushed by the dogs, a few then. We did an about-face and followed it, finally getting a productive point by Puff, rather far down the slope, but it went out wild with no chance to shoot.

There had been shouting and beagle voices in the valleys up West Run but since the commotion had quieted down we thought it safe to move that direction. We had gone there some fair covets when there was a sudden (aren't they all?) flush behind me and

I saw a dark rather roughly feathered bird rise and go ~~to~~ over Kay, who doubled down to give me any possible shot.

It was too dangerous, however, and I waited for the bird to get well up against the sky and level off before I fired at it, feeling I needed to use my left barrel. As it 

was, I'm sure I waited too long to pull after "passing them" the bird, for I sensed a spasm of lead ahead as I fired and the bird went on with no feeling that I had even shot. I'm sure I should have pulled just as I went there, considering that the bird was moving slowly before getting under way. The moment I fired, there was a blast of three rapid shots just over the turn of the hill and we realized the detour was ~~over~~ still on hand.

Leaving them to their activity - that kind of low brow always seems to
 get into the most birds - we headed to the right to follow this
 #4 bird. We were discussing the difficulty of taking ^{rewards of}
 the shot and of the chance Kay had had to get ~~an~~ unusual one
 that time, when Kay exclaimed, "Why here's a bird!" and I
 saw Ruff carrying in a dead grouse. Kay got the camera
 on him and tho he laid it down for a moment, he picked the
 bird up again and retraced it to me with Wilda running
 up to sniff the grouse as Ruff sat to deliver. Kay caught it
 and tho it was rather dim light, it should be a honey of a
 meal. The grouse was a yearling, very dark and looked exactly
 like the one I had shot at - it had that same unusual, ^{dark, sooty} coloring -
 had no wings or legs broken, but had a wound thru the neck. It
 was quite warm and limp and there is no doubt that it is the
 bird I fired at for Ruff came from the direction it had flown.
 Furthermore, there had been no shooting in that part of the
 woods anywhere recently enough to have killed this bird. It
 definitely changed our outlook on the day which up to then was
 none too favorable. We pocketed our grouse and headed down
 toward the forks of the stream to get away from the armada
 on our left, which seemed to ^{have been} ~~have been~~ ^{moving} ~~moving~~ all ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{length} ~~length~~ of

birds. I almost feel they were separate from the rabbit hunters, whose beagles still gave voice on a far hill and I think these fellows (we could hear voices) were bird hunters. Pennsylvania is no pleasure to hunt in with so many people constantly in the woods. I hope our state never gets so overrun. When we dropped to the creek to cross over, I had Ray take the grouse and I got a sense of Ray and Puff and Wilder with the bird against the rugged backdrop of the stream bank. It was rather too late and dark but we wanted a shot of that type. Instead of following the stream path, after crossing Dub Run, we cut into dense poplar cover and should have missed birds. Finally, well down the ridge, I headed Puff into a good looking place and he stiffened up on point. The bird went out far to wild to get a shot at, so we continued down the path to the bottom. At the car, we discovered we'd left our thermos of coffee at home, and since we had four bales of straw in the station wagon to take to Cal & Ellie Reekner, we decided to ask Ellie to make us a cup. They however had got word of our being in the neighborhood with the station wagon full of straw and were all ready for us and insisted on our staying for supper. It was a pleasure. As for the days hunting, it was definitely very thin sport with only one shot but Puff retrieved more than the bird when he brought it in!

Dark speaking, interrupted band:

1 shot ~~hit~~ 2 products } Puff
 1 retrieve }
 1 kill over }
 1 kill over } Wilder

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Thursday ^{Tram} 26 November, Thanksgiving Day. - Yesterday turned
 mean and half rainy, half snow squalls, and we decided it
 would be a poor day for grouse, and since we have a certain amount
 of Christmas shopping to go thru with, we took the day and went
 to Mounton - achieving very little. As it was, I'm rather
 superstitious about the situation and I'm not certain I
 didn't break a fine string of luck. Not that I've had a
 remarkable amount of shooting, or even birds found, but I
 have at least been doing nicely since hunting in Pennsylvania.

Today, Thanksgiving, was still cloudy and spitting snow
 from time to time and quite cold - around 30°. We're not
 too happy about the snow, for yesterday, Ward Harp - Drans's
 patron - wrote asking us up to State College for some grouse
 shooting and we have phoned him and arranged to drive up

Friday evening for Saturday's shooting - last day in Penna.
 Right now it looks very improbable. Anyway, today Ray and
 took the three setters Huff, Will & Feathers to the
 Homer Miller country, parking the usual place. There was much
 more snow in the Brieries than at home and altho only an inch
 or less, it kicked up on my pants legs with every step. Since
 I had been unwise enough to wear ^{George Bird Evans Papers} low hunting boots, that
 meant I had to lean over and slap snow off my legs every

hemlock. Now, two birds went out ahead of us - Pref^{er} but
 the hot went for a point after they had gone - I can't understand
 why today he didn't get anything but false points and yet
 flushed at least one bird. Maybe it's the snow. By this time my
 pants were wet to the knees and Kay dropped behind to build a
 fire while I took the dogs to follow the birds. I missed a
 bird that sounded like two but could have been a double
 take off from rhododendron and I went back down toward
 Kay. When I went to her, Kay said the game had flushed
 into the cover near her and later took off downstream, ^{passing} very
 close to her.



KAY DRIES ME OUT
 FOR THANKSGIVING LUNCH.

We had a nice campfire, while I dehydrated my pants and then,
 about 4:45, started to hunt again. To my disgust I found that
 the snow water had soaked thru my boots so we made a direct
 line to home base, cutting over ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{mountain} ~~mountain~~
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to the tram road, flushing two more birds, one wild (#6) and #7 just above the tram road that I saw plainly, and I didn't even hear clearly as it flushed, let alone see it.

Back at the quinine corner we covered the area again with no results and so cut down the path toward the car. Puff made a beautiful point on the way. I came to him, absolutely solid and as stylish as a picture. I got a short shot of it at F 1.9. Hope it wasn't too dark. However, the Puff seemed certain, I walked in and there was nothing doing. At the car, we got me out of my wet socks and wrapped my feet in a sweater and my old Navy topcoat



RUFF FEATHERS UP IN THE DUSK.

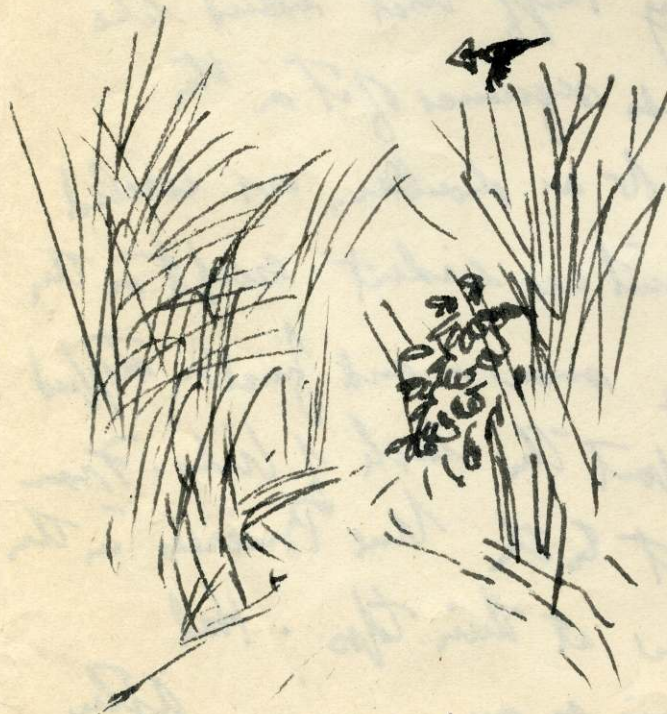
And what with hot coffee and cookies, I felt well. But what a lousy day for birds. No shots

2:00 to 5:30 (3 1/2 hrs.) made 7-10 flushes

Thursday 3 December — Back to grouse hunting after a week's delay. Last Friday & Saturday were rough and snowy, and the first three days of this week were the deer season — one of the most pleasantly quiet we've had. Yesterday would have been

a possible gross day as for weather but tho the sun was out, there
 was a lot of snow left. Today was a honey, clear blue day
 and warm sun melting and softening the snow except on
 shady slopes. Kay and I took Puff and Feathers to the
 Mt. Zim country, parking the station wagon at the John Millers
 and walking the muddy road to the Mt. Zim school. Here we
 dropped over into the valley into rhododendron and snow and
 hunted down the hollow, doubling back to search for several
 grouse that had left their tracks in the snow. We failed to
 see them but did find it good looking cover. Hunting down the
 log roots into the country below Bishop's we finally put out our
 first bird - from a tree, I think - and saw him flush toward
 the right shoulder of the valley in the direction of the little
 draw that I have hunted before. We didnt see him again
 tho we got an interesting point by Puff that looked like
 a grouse and Kay took a few seconds sequence of it on the
 cincholate. After we topped the knob a shoulder, we circled
 thru good grouse cover - tho no fruit was evident except on the
 ground in some bare spots between snow - and finally stopped
 to eat lunch, rather puzzled about the lack of birds. From
 where we ate we could look far out to the Blue Brieries in the
 east and see fields white with snow at their tops. Had
 enjoyed a fine vista of the Brieries on our way in. After

Leach as decided to cut directly over into the main valley
 and cross the far side where the cover is dense but where
 I'd moved birds last year. Dropping down over the
 ridge we got another fine point by Puff. I'm not counting it
 a production because the bird was rather too far below and
 flushed long after Puff had moved on but we did meet
 #2 grouse which went down and to the right. We followed
 but after failing to meet it, took the path down the valley
 into the brushy cover further along the ridge. There are a few small
 hemlocks and isolated rhododendron sprinkled among brush and
 briars. I was in advance and heard Kay whistle rather
 frantically and looking up, saw a grouse sailing from
 behind and above and quartering to my left. I made a
 fast swing and fired as I "went thru"
 him and saw him tumble into the
 cover at the left edge of the path.



As Puff moved in to retrieve, I
 turned to congratulate Kay on her
 warning and upon getting the main
 of the action, for I knew she'd had me
 focussed and probably had got the
 fall of the bird as well. All she could
 do was shake her head! It seems she'd

had me in the funder and had seen me go into the swing but
 the excitement of it all had paralyzed her reflexes! I warned
 her to get a picture of the retriever and she was surprised to know
 I'd hit the bird. She got Puff bringing it to us up the
 path and his delivery. Then Kay took a close-up of the grouse
 with me showing it to the two dogs and one very close up of
 the bird against a rhododendron clump, with a drop of blood
 on the bird's beak. The grouse was a ~~very~~ small yearling but very
 hard! We moved on down the hollow then rather promising

ever and then dropped over the little ravine, walking them
 hemlocks and rhododendron and lots of snow. ^{and heard a wild fluke with #4.} The far hillsides were
 in shadow as we climbed it, rounding a shoulder and working our
 way up thru rocks and more rhododendron at the crest. As we
 passed to catch our breath we could look far down into the
 wild, dark valley and see the Cheat River for a little
 stretch with high shoulders looming in the gap. Even
 back here there were still tracks of deer hunters in the snow.

On top we came out in good bird cover, dense brushy stuff
 with fallen logs and some old grapevines but not large
 tangles. However we moved no birds all the way to the old
 small set and the little ravine. As we passed the sandiest
 hills we came into better grapevine cover ^{on both sides of} the old log road.

As I walked along the path a bird flushed wild to the left and rose, not too high, and leveled off over the ridge.

I fired a rather distant shot as he went up and missed. It is one of the most difficult shots for me - not rising or quartering extremely enough to use a swing past. I am too inclined to hold to a spot above and pull with the barrels stationary. If I did a sustained lead for a split second I believe I'd do better on this one.

Two more birds flushed, both going down into the valley. We



as I fired,

decided to keep on and try to make the first bird further along. We were coming into better grassy cover as we moved along, but there was a lot of snow and complete shadow as it was getting on toward 5:30. I saw some fine looking tangles on the slope above me but both dogs were doing a fine job of covering all possible places. I should mention that Rufus had been working beautifully all day with none of his silly checkbacks that had bothered me earlier in the ~~season~~ ^{morning}. We had come to the general area where I felt the bird should have landed and I warned Ray to be on the alert for action, having promised her I wouldn't ask, "Did you get it?" after the next shot.

Looking down below me and a little ahead, I saw one of the dogs swing into a tangle of grapes and stretch out, his tail solidifying into ~~a~~ road straight out behind. I saw that it was Feathers on one of the nicest points of his short life to date. Puff was working further out but was moving back over way. I motioned to Kay and tried to tell her it was Feathers pointing. As Puff came close Feathers moved in and the quail flushed without offering me a shot as it went out behind the clump of vines. I got a look at it as it pitched for the valley and sailed into a sunny spot among the hemlocks in the hollow ahead. It was a lovely point and one we were all proud of.

Puff is going to have to take up back pointing once in a while - after being the prima donna for so many years.



FEATHERS HANDLES THE FOREGROUND

We made on out the ridge, keeping the same general level

and hunting thru similar cover - grapevine tangles spotted along the hillside and surrounded by fallen logs and snow.

Suddenly I saw Puff frozen on point below me in relatively the same ~~position~~ ^{position} as Feathers had been, below and ahead of me - only Puff was in his high wheel and rolling his

eyes at me as I approached. I warned Kay with the whistle and walked in.



RUFF NAILS ONE.

The bird roared up and I tried for him with the right, missing, and moving past and fired again and saw him go down well out the slope. I called to Kay that I got him that time and heard her say, "I got you that time." Both Ruff and Feathers were out there searching and I reloaded, congratulating Kay on her work with the camera. Then I realized neither dog had located the bird yet. Ruff was working out a bit too far, I thought, and I was sure the bird was wing tipped and it didn't look too good. Then Feathers, who was searching frantically, lit scent and moving into the hillside, ~~pointed~~ ^{pointed} for a moment, and pounced on the grouse. I had warned Kay to rewind the camera for the retrieve and she got Feathers coming in with the grouse, a beautiful big one. Feathers was a bit excited and started the wrong direction up the hill then corrected himself and brought the bird in - ^{very fast - holding it nicely}

until I took it from him. We were all very, very happy - even Buff didn't seem to mind too much sharing the honors with his son. The grouse was a huge cock that dwarfed the yearling when I held them together. Its left wing was shattered at the shoulder. Ray noticed the aperture setting was 3.5, possibly a bit small for this fading light but the snow may have helped some. Too, we found the footage registered 0 but we hope it didn't run out until the end of the retrieve.



FEATHERS RETRIEVES ONE FOR THE MOVIES.

The entire day was perfect in every way and as we climbed the ridge toward the Bishop's, we looked back into one of the most striking views I know - the Cheat River gap winding into the shoulders of Chestnut Ridge with the valley folding in below us, hazy and blue in the twilight. We made a 9th bird as we left Bishop's. 4 shots - 2 hits. Heard 9-10 flickers.



1:30 to 5:30 (4 hrs.)

large ~~bird~~ bird, ~~undriven~~ bird:

yearling, interrupted band:

- 1 productive
 - 1 retriever
 - 1 killdeer point
- } Buff

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1 productive
1 retriever, 2 kills over } feathers

Friday 5 December - Today was forecast to be rainy but although it was warm and very overcast, it didn't rain other than a few drops once or twice. It was very windy, however, and not a good day for birds. I left Puff and Teathers at home to mourn their fate and Kay to gloat over her camera work of yesterday, and I took Wilde, hoping to give her the full stage to herself. We went to the Connolly tract above Clefton where Kay and I had found eight grouse last winter training dogs. Today it must have been the impending storm for we hunted it thoroughly and saw exactly one grouse which went out quietly ahead of Wilde. This could have happened three times I didn't know about. We followed and I heard it go a second time on the upper side of the road. I started hunting about 12:30 and having covered this area well by 2:00, I decided to clear out for better country. As I jumped off the fence at the car, my right foot hit a stub of a sapling that had been cut off in the fence row and turned my foot back on itself, compressing the arch at the ankle. After the discomfort leveled off, I drove the car down to Clefton, eating lunch on the way. At the old Clefton school I parked and hunted up the run behind Wolfe. I marked exactly three birds with no chance to shoot. About 5:00 I came back to the car, with Wilde making a lucky point just before we reached it, but

there was no bird. I suspect it had moved out ahead of us. One bird had flushed from the edge of the creek earlier after Willie passed, and I saw it start out from under a log but couldn't shoot. My ankle was getting pretty touchy by this time and I had to give it up as a bad day.

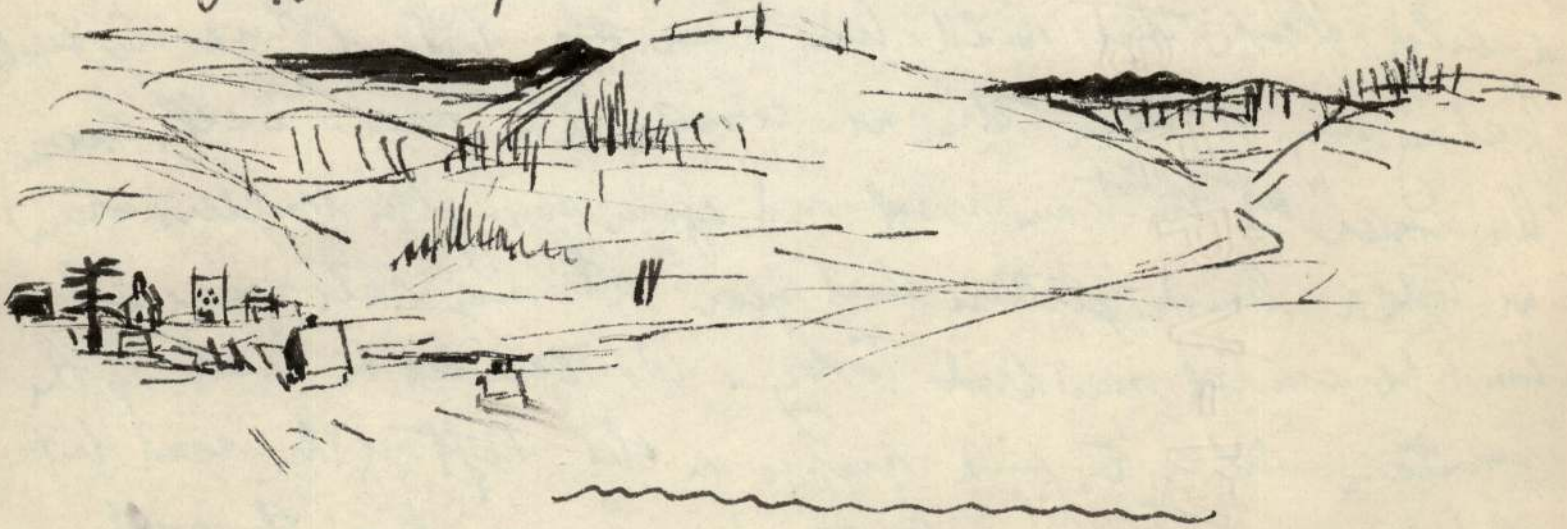
Comelly place : moved 1 - 2 flushes

"Wolf" hollow : moved 3 - 3 flushes.

12:30 to 5:00 (4 1/2)

No shots

I should mention the stunning view from the hill above Clifton, with the Brery Mountain and Pine Swamp that deep purple blue behind and to the left of Tike hill, and Big Sandy valley down stream very wild and purple looking. The small Clifton church looked very effective from up here. Never noticed it before.



Tuesday 8 December - Missed hunting last Saturday -
a beautiful day, and Monday - another - because of my
sore ankle hurt last Friday, but after talking to John
Hibbs re that member, I bound it up and we started out
today to Homer Miller's, taking Kay, Ruff & Feathers. It
was a lousy day and we looked forward to much nicer
luck than Thanksgiving when we were over. Parking at the
usual place, we hunted out the path and partly in the cover to
get the dogs to hit it properly, and I was delighted to find
my ankle very articulate tho, a bit slower than usual.
At the corner grapes we made a grouse from the lower edge
that went out the margin of the cover and, as we followed, a
second bird flushed about from Feathers. We couldn't get a
second rise from the #1 grouse so circled back higher to
follow Feathers' bird and walked into #3 which flushed
wild from the old tram road edge. Following it they heard
a wild flush that could have been #2 but we had no luck
finding any of them tho we circled the area well, covering
the corner at the tram road and again among the boulders where
we took a lunch picture last year. At any rate, none of these
can be counted new birds today. We decided to hunt up the
mountain hoping to find grapes on the left of the road but
I believe we didn't penetrate far enough from the road, and
finding only some cutthroats and

we followed the path but kept in the cover to the right.
 A wild flash showed us #4 grouse as he left the dogs and
 sailed down and south on the ridge. We couldn't follow
 and still cover the area we planned so we hunted on to the
 brink of the basin that heads Lick Run but still no
 more birds. We stopped for lunch on the lip of the basin
 and then started it up the road and the old fields. There we
 circled the opening, keeping just inside the woods, and there we had
 a nice point by Puff, nothing developed. Back at the basin
 area once more we decided to hunt down into Lick Run a piece
 and followed an old deer path. There, several hundred yards along,
 we came on Puff on a point that looked very hot. As I moved
 up, Puff closed in to reestablish his point and a grouse
 flushed that Kay marked as going down the run, straight
 into the smothering sun. We marked him by some large tree and
 followed into some low Laurel & Rhododendron ^{growth} ~~cover~~ with
 otherwise rather open cover about us. As we walked down we
 came to a little opening and then below and ahead of us
 heard a grouse flush from the dogs - who may or may not
 have had him under a point. At first I thought he was going away
 when I saw him rise and level off - then I realized he
 was getting larger and I told Kay to be careful, that he
 was coming at us. I should have tried for him as he

come toward me,

Turning, I saw my part
went over my left shoulder
missing (probably caught

NEXT TIME TAKE
HIM COMING ON.

but I didn't.
him as he
low, and fired
my barrels) and

fired again as I tried to pick a spot to the left and above
him as he lifted for the hillside, but he went on. Those low
head-drumming birds
disorient me tho I



expected to get him going away. We followed up the ridge
and came to some rocks and rhododendron that I had never
been in before - good looking cover. We didn't see the bird
and since they felt we were too far to the left, I circled back
with the dogs while she rested. I finally walked into a
grove that flushed from a tree and, for some crazy reason,
I couldn't get my safety off in time to shoot tho he offered a
fair chance as he rocketed down from the branch and I
had my gun on him. I don't count this as the same #5
bird I had been following tho it could be but by a rare
chance. I ~~called~~ ^{whispered to} Kay to come over and as she approached began
to tell her of the bird I'd flushed and my voice put up #7
which went the same way as #6, up over the shoulder of rocks
where I've found birds other days. ~~We couldn't get up on the~~

boulders in the line of flight so deviated, circling
 then an opening to the right. As we climbed up, Puff went
 on point and the I walked ahead, nothing happened. Feathers
 had come up and they were both stiff on a lovely double point
 but still no bird. Puffed moved on in and Feathers followed
 and both went out of sight below. In a few moments a bird
 flashed and I saw him level off and come my way, crossing
 ahead and to the left. I was sure of him and took an easy
 morning, firing as I "went thru" him. He described a quarter-
 circle backwards - and I expected him to fold, but he
 straightened up and went on as if nothing had happened and
 I missed the left barrel as he topped the shoulder. As I
 fired two more birds flashed out ahead. Ray called that I had
 hit that bird



but neither of us could deny that he'd flown on perfectly normally.
 I'm sure the ~~gun~~ ^{pattern} was too far behind, striking the tail feathers
 but I like to think it didn't injure the bird. I either didn't
 swing fast enough (and I'm sure I didn't) or have got in the habit
 of pulling as I go thru the bird and not as I pass his head. I must
 check myself on that last for it makes a lot of difference.

We marked the grouse flight and climbed up over the top and
soon found Puff on point with feathers backing. I walked
up, hoping they had a dead bird for me but for a moment
nothing happened. Then a bird flushed with a great deal of
noise and bored out low, giving me no shot. Key saw the grouse
cut to the right and go over the cliff but I wasn't aware it had
changed direction. At any rate, tho it fluttered as it went out with
a lot of sound, it did fly straightly and we couldn't get over the
cliff to follow. The sun was dropping, behind the skyline
now and we were the exact furthest point of the day from the
station wagon. Added up, that meant we had to make time
out of them and we headed for a break in the cliff behind us.
Some worked our way toward a place I remembered I came
on Puff, doubled up in an interest point. It was getting
a bit on the ~~darkish~~ darkish but I walked up to him from
the side. As he moved a few steps the grouse flushed and
quartered low to the right. I pulled past, firing, and missed and
as he bored away I held to a lead ahead and fired again and
saw him tumble hard. Puff moved in and had him almost
immediately, retrieving him nicely.

bronz but about the head and leg. It had taken some
lot of shooting but when it comes you never mind too much,
just so you get that break. Killing it on Puff's point
was especially gratifying. We all did a bit of gloating and then



began a long, fast, weary walk that ran far into the dusk,
crossing the basin, heading north to the old road, and finally finding
it (flushing #12 on the way) and down it to the car at 6:30.

We stopped in at Home & Army to say hello and drink a cup of
coffee and found that Army had supper all ready and waiting for
us, so we changed into dry clothes and had a fine visit with
our good friends. My shooting was anything but solid! but the
bird is a beauty.

2:00 to 6:30 (4 1/2)

bronz yearling (large)
underband: cock
crop: two greenberries berries.

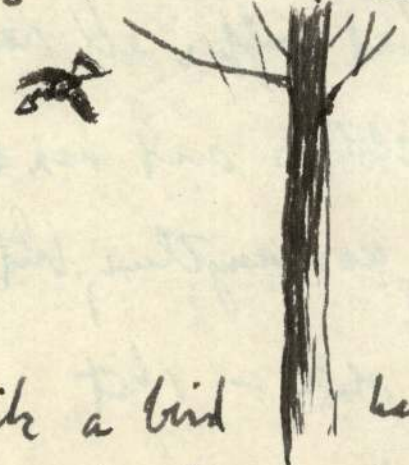
6 shots - 1 hit
meat 12 (9 new)
14 flushes

3 productives }
1 petrie } Puff
1 kill on point }

1 backpoint (productiv) }
1 kill on } feathers

Wednesday 9 December - The day was overcast and raining by spurts but I dressed for the situation, old Navy raincoat and wool socks outside my breeches to the knee (a fine system) and took Ruff & Wilda to the Hog Miller country, parking in the usual place. I waited in the station wagon until the rain took a breather, and then started out the old road toward the

"Tamarack Farm." We covered some excellent grapevines along the log road on the way but found no birds. Finally reaching the old homestead I began hunting the margins of the coverts, keeping just inside the woods. As I was walking near the edge on the lower side, I heard a grouse flush and turned in time to see it dive from an oak tree. I tried a fast swing on his way down and altho I think it was a possible shot, I didn't



We followed and got a flush about of Ruff about where this bird could have been but, soon after, I heard wings whistle

behind me and think a bird had flushed from Wilda who was coming in from out ahead and that the bird, probably #2, had cut back of me. I hunted the marginal woods rather well, circling around to the north of the house site and as I entered a neck of woods with good grapevines, I heard the grouse go out

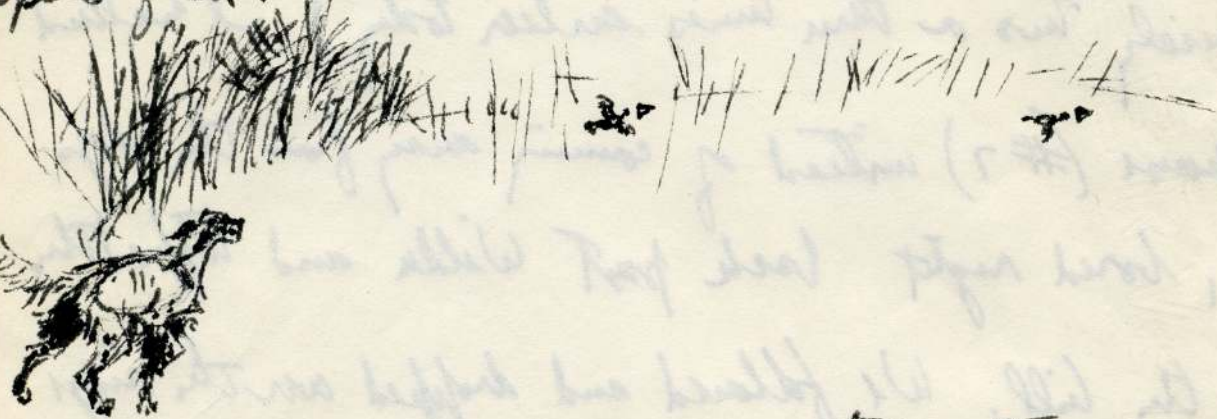
wild. The woods was damp, in fact there had been a light
 drizzle once or twice since I had started out, and I can't see
 why the birds weren't lying better unless it was the dogs'
 fault. As I moved on I saw a grouse flush from the
 edge of the woods to the right and cut back along the clearing.
 Following it back, I was moving along the very edge of the
 old fields near the ^{back} ground, ^{lane} when a grouse started out
 from under a log just seconds after Puff had swung onto
 a point. Nearly running into Puff, the bird did some fast
 thinking and maneuvered out of the tight spot, keeping behind
 trees all the way out of gunshot. It was a nice piece of work. We
 followed to the woods beyond, hoping to find either of the
 last two birds but tho I creiled all the way back to the
 corner of cover behind the house clearing we didn't see them.
 As a short cut back, I started out the old brush-choked lane,
 on the chance that one of the birds may have dropped in there. I
 hadn't gone many yards until he exploded out in front and
 took the edge - the most difficult one from my point of view -
 straight back to the original cover where the four had been.
 I didn't think it would be difficult to spot him since the
 neck of woods was limited, but we couldn't get any reaction.
 at a time like this, lunch is a good idea and I operated

accordingly. After eating, I followed the woods down the slope
expecting to find the bird somewhere in the lower neck of woods,
but we went all the way around to the point above Big & Little
Sandy and back up Little Sandy with no flushes or finds.

At the old springhouse (and it's fallen in now) I moved very
gingerly for it almost always produces a bird. I got around
and about it before we went out - from ^{under} a small hemlock - and
bored straight up the valley, holding about the same elevation.

I called Ruffin to show him what he had passed up and he
proceeded to walk into two more that flushed from ^{under or near} other small
hemlocks and flew directly over the top of the hill and back to
the neck of woods where I'd had the four flushes, crossing an
old clearing to get there. At first I felt these were new birds -
but I decided they had been the bird I'd been following - it
having crossed the clearing from the flush in the old lane. The
pair could easily have been the two I'd heard going out wild at first,
and since they'd gone back across the clearing, I counted them that
way. Taking back after the pair on the basis that two grouse
out ahead are twice as good as one, I followed them across the

clearing to the well-trodden neck of woods, this time watching the far edge carefully. Nothing happened until they stiffened into a rigor mortis point at the very mouth of the old lane. I moved around to his right and began walking into the field with one eye on the lane. The grouse flushed a long distance ahead of us but cut to the right, leaving the lane and going straight across the open field.



I should have had him, either time, there was no excuse I can think of for not. I know why I didn't, for I saw the brush cut off behind the bird on both ~~the~~ trees. I couldn't seem to make myself swing fast enough, feeling that the bird was so far away and that the swing would carry too far ahead. Actually that was just what was needed, I'm sure. We followed and got another nice productive on the next flush, with no shot, and another wild flush from the cover near the house clearing. After "pursuing" this grouse clear down the hillside below the clearing I gave up and ~~turned out~~ ^{headed out} the approach lane,

doubling over the ridge on top, to the hillside above Little Sandy,
hoping to reach the bird that had gone up the valley. He had
other notions evidently, for we creaked the cover carefully but
found nothing. Wilda and Puff had been working beautifully
together, now we got moving after lunch. Now I came on
Puff frozen again and Wilda moved in and backed (she had
been backing nicely two or three times earlier today). I walked
in and the grouse (#7) instead of coming away from the dogs
and toward me, bored right back past Wilda and topped the
woods and over the hill. We followed and dropped over the ridge
and then rather large hardwoods. I found Puff solid again,
pointing down to slope toward a nice log, his nostrils reaching.
Wilda was out ahead and couldn't join us so I walked in,
toward the log. Suddenly the grouse came out of nowhere and
I wheeled to the sound behind and above me, seeing him
come right over me. I turned clear around and swung to
a spot ^{firing} below him as he leveled off, but I didn't bring
it off properly. Maybe I should have pulled as I swung to
the lead, firing as I passed. His still this place.



We followed but didn't see him again. However, I'm convinced the settlers would have picked him up if he'd been grounded. It was a disconcerting

flush but a thrilling one, and a lovely point. We took the log road back to the car with Puff walking the cover nicely on either side. I was surprised to see Wilda prefer the path, very unlike her - but I couldn't drive her in the I tried. So I said "O.K. - heel" at the car, the thermos of coffee and a couple of cookies were exactly right.

1:30 to 6:00 (4 1/2)

4 shots - no hits
missed 7 (5 new) / 17 flashes

5 products } Puff
4 backshots, one to } Wilda
a product }

14

Friday 11 December - Yesterday began with high wind and rain and snow in horizontal streaks, canceling the date with Kinsey and Blanche Hill. Taking the opportunity to treat our spring with copper sulfate I pulled the neat trick of splashing some of the stuff in my left eye which ended in a trip to Umarton to an eye specialist. Fortunately it wasn't serious but it prevented my taking advantage of a nice about-face in weather that let the sun thru the clouds and would have provided an hour or so of hunting in the late part of

the day. By Friday, the eye was back to normal and tho' the weather man promised rain late in the day, I took Puff and Feathers and left Wilda with Kay who felt she couldn't take the day for hunting — silly girl. Starting for the forest, I changed my mind on approaching Hazel Run, and finding no car parked there, I left the station wagon under the big white pines and started my oranges down the hollow. We hadn't gone far until I heard a bird go out wild, low along the creek, but I worked higher on to the hillside and followed an upper log road. We rounded the point of the ridge and, instead of taking the old road to the Faulkner's farm, I cut up over the top of the clearings, near some good thickets, but moved no birds. Rather than cover all the edges, often unproductive, I singled out a neck of cover along a little spring run and worked it down to the woods on the lower side. ^{Not far beyond} another hedgerow of crab and thorn trees runs down across the old fields and where this joined the woods ahead of me I heard a grouse flush and go out the ridge. I waited, ready, for often there are more in this place, and in a moment a second bird bored up, climbing to top the trees and giving

me a nice chance at him as he soared against the sky. I tried to fire as I swung past him but he went on and I fired again and missed as he leveled off and took the hedgerow up over the hill. As I watched him go, a third bird flushed from the same spot and a fourth, rocketing straight up like the one I'd missed and across the opening ahead of me while I clanked at the shell loops of my coat, trying to reload. I was rather "shaken", I suppose is the word, at the



demure miss and I stood there trying to decide if I should go back to my old sustained lead on such shots as that. Still, the bird is moving nearly as rapidly as on a horizontal path so why shouldn't a fast swing, firing as you pass the bird's head, do the work. I feel it is inclined to give better alignment, other than lead, - being closer to the bird than a lead held out in front, and is brought off faster, as well. Still mulling it over, I sent the dogs after the bird I'd shot at, leaving the other three for later hunting. Up over the round of the hill, the bird flushed from the hedgerow, very chipper, thank you - and I saw him cut across to the right and glide into good hemlock mixed cover. We followed and got a fine

production by Puff but no shot. I'm not certain, but I believe
Feathers was backing on them. Doubling back to the scene of the
disgrace, we walked into two more flushes, just out the edge
and too close, I feel for any of the grouse to have landed. Puff
did an equable bump and chase on me for which I called
him to task with a slap on the rump. Hunting to the extent
of any possible flights, I doubled back and hunted lower in
the hummocks where Feathers flushed a bird and I heard another
go out from a tree I think. Later, I saw Puff roosting and I
sacrificed the chance to shoot by yelling him on when he
ignored my ^{double} whistle. Of course the bird went out but I felt it
with the loss. Finally, lower down, two birds flushed from
hummocks or beyond and went across the creek to the far ridge.
I followed and after some circling made one wild which we followed.
Out ahead and below me I saw a dozen point and saw that
it was Feathers, who rarely false alarms. As I moved down
the bird flushed, and of course Feathers broke at the flush
and chased, but it was a lovely point. I marked the direction
the grouse had taken and followed to the brink of the drop to

Sawed Burn - dense rhododendron among hemlocks. Puff was a few yards to the left and moved into the rhododendron, starting a commotion that evolved into a whirl of wings and a bird that showed itself not over ten feet away from me and for a few yards as it made a dive for the creek. I tried for him in the



shot space I saw him but it was a mere misshot and missed. This called for lunch and ~~the~~ quieting effect of food. After eating and cooling off, we moved

downstream on the ridge thru wonderful hemlock and rhododendron cover. In our dense mass of the stuff I heard three birds go out, from 7 o'clocks I guess, and Puff and I stood waiting for them to show but they didn't. It has seemed to me that for the past couple of days the birds' flight has been most erratic, being almost anything but the normal and as a result my shooting has suffered badly. I try not to remember how many shots I've been making but I know with many miss the average crashes lower and still I go on trying - and missing. As I moved on I heard a bird flash and ~~was~~ at the hemlock and

immediately takes off again, going at the hillside. It seemed a
slim chance but I hustled the dogs in and followed. Soon I
came on Ruff, pitched over on a point from where he'd hit the
scent and dipped low in an effort to stop, his rear much
higher than his head. Feathers spotted him and froze where he
was out ahead. It looked like business. I walked in to pass

Ruff on the right and heard
the bird take off and saw it
make some track come ahead.

Waiting for a second,
I saw the grouse
circle to swing
back above us and



RUFF DIPS OVER.

I make a swing past, firing as I "went thru" him and tumbled him
beautifully. I use the word particularly and deliberately, for to me
it was beautiful, even to the solid "plump" as the bird hit the
ground. After a long series of misses that sound is ethereal.

Ruff came in, pausing to listen for the bird and soon located it,
retrieving nicely. It was a rather large bird, a cock I believe, but
would seem to be a this-year's game judging by the pointed
first two primaries. Getting late to shooting - I am

frogs again and Feathers barked. As I walked in from the clearing the quail came out low and plunged into some dense oak and hemlock as he made the edge. I fired where he should have been with a fast swing, but all I got was leaves as I saw him turn and pitch back into the woods further ahead.



We followed down over the point of land into some good paper pines below rocks.

As I stepped ~~for~~ ^{toward} a tangle, a

bird flushed low and bored away, keeping a few feet off the ground. I found a spot after a split second pause and held a bit about him and fired, seeing him go down in a puff of feathers. I called the dogs, "Dead bird. No fetch," and they both



went into action. I saw Ruff sit next to a log below where the quail had fallen and I waved him in about. Then I looked even lower and saw Feathers with the quail in his mouth. He retrieved it nicely, stopping once to get the feathers out of his mouth then bringing it the rest of the way in and keeping it till I reached for it. It took eight shots to do it, but it made the day! This was an even larger quail, a

with more than half the tail missing when Feathers had caught him.
 We got both birds out and gloated a while at our good luck, even
 tho it was past 6:00 and getting dark, and a long way from the
 car. As we moved toward the edge to hit easier walking another
 grouse flushed - #12 for 26 flushes. Crossing the old fields we
 hit the point of the ridge and the road back and flushed
 #13. Got to the station wagon at nearly full dark about
 6:30

1:45 to 6:30 (4 3/4)

8 shots - 2 hits
 Waded 13 - 27 flushes

3 productive	} Ruff
1 retrieved	
1 kill over point	
1 kill over	} Feathers
2 productive backpoint	
1 productive	
1 retrieved	
1 kill over backpoint	
1 kill over	

1st: unbroken band, young large, coole
 crop: empty

2nd: unbroken band, adult (adult under down feathers)
 coole
 crop: full of grapes
 (Rain & fog on Saturday)
 in one place on thighs


Monday 14 December - Kay woke me early (10:00 am) to say
 the rain had stopped but the weather forecasts were for rough weather
 and snow, so foregoing exercises, we ate breakfast and got started,
 taking Ruff & Wilda and ~~starting~~ ^{leaving} with the intention of going to the
 Crab Orchard country. On the way, the blue patches of sky had left
 and the bad weather looked so imminent, that at Kay's suggestion
 we switched plans and stopped off at the Valley Point country
 I hunt. As we dropped over into the rain we spoke to a man
 making posts for a mine nearby.

very affably informed us he didn't know who owned it
and also that he had seen no birds. Leaving him and
hunting down the little run, full after the rain, we found
grapes on the ground almost everywhere. Crossing we climbed
the slope on the far side and doubled back upstream,
almost immediately flushing a grouse from a tree with
papernis entwined in it. This was near the large rocks.
We followed the bird up the hollow to the larger cutout timber
with brush heaps and turned to hunt back in a higher
stretch. As we entered the thick cover a bird I consider
our grouse flushed well ahead of us and flew diagonally up
the ridge. We followed, noticing now that it was beginning to
mist a bit. We walked into a second grouse the dogs avoided,
that flushed below me as I passed and quartered back
down the hill, offering a nice rising shot but too much in
line with my, who dropped to the ground to give me a shot,
as I didn't care to take. We continued after our #1 bird
and up under the strip mine bank I think we found him.
at any rate, Puff and Wilda hit scent and nosed in to
a tangle of papernis and bumped him, very clumsily. The
grouse rose and topped the bank of earth, going out of sight
to the care above, I suppose, and

I decided to move on out the ridge to the left to see if there might be another bird, before heading the opposite direction. By this time it was drizzling rather steadily. We hadn't gone very far before I heard a grouse go out in the distance and, soon after, another. This one I saw, heading back over my just above the low trees.



I swung thru him and fired just before he came opposite me and he folded completely and came down in an arc that carried him over Kay, who had crouched a few feet to the ground in order not to stop my swing, and landed behind her with a plop and in a shower of feathers. Puff and Wella came in to the shot but somehow couldn't imagine that the bird was so near us. For a while I had difficulty getting them to search in the right direction. At one time Wella had a fine opportunity to locate it before Puff and I tried to get her to, in order to see how she'd handle it. But she was upwind and didn't locate it. Finally Puff came in from the right direction, but the scent and nailed it. The retrieve was a bit sloppy, the bird was so hard clustered it was a limp mouthful and he dropped it once or twice, the second time laying it down without delivering it to me. I forced him to deliver it properly by walking away from him

this time he did the job correctly. It was a yearling bird,
very hard hit, with an almost unbroken tailband. We
rejoiced over our good luck in such a short time and considering
the weather, and decided to march out the edge below the
strip bank and then, in all likelihood, give up and head for
the car. We had gone a few yards when Puff made a
nice looking point, ^{with Willie backing,} and, as Kay said, I shouldn't pass up a shot
over a production. However nothing materialized and we moved
on. Not far ahead I saw a grouse heading back our way,
just outside the edge of covert and below the top of the bank
of earth. I didn't even level my gun, not caring to shoot
it so close to the first, but remarked, "What would have been
a shot." Kay had a plastic hood over her cap and didn't hear
me. A moment later another grouse came bounding back in
almost the exact path of the first, and since we were in
no hurry, this time I mounted my gun and swung past him,
firing as I did, and saw him crumple and hit the bank of
earth. Only then did Kay know what was happening. Puff was
on hand out of nowhere  and I saw that he had the
fluttering bird at the base of the bank, retrieving it very nicely and
stylishly, this time. Plus too ^{was a yearling with a nearly}
solid tail band, very much the same size as the first.

now, the rain was driving hard as if it had only wanted for us to get our quota. We put both birds in the game bag (Quas hunting in my Navy topcoat) and made a direct line for the station wagon. We had left the car at 12:00 and were back to it by 1:15, very wet but, also, feeling very fortunate with two fine grouse with two shots. Had no doubt there were a number of birds down the ridge but didn't make an approach.

12:00 to 1:15 (1 1/2)

2 shots - 2 hits
heard 6 - 8 flushes

2 retrievers } Puff
2 hills are }
2 hills are } Wills

#1 speaking almost solid band: coak
crop: 1 red haw, several dogwood berries
few grapes, some green small leaves.

#2 speaking almost solid band: coak
crop: couple dogwood berries, few grapes.

I wasn't too proud of the dog work which should have been good on such a damp day. However, it's possible Puff had a couple of productions I didn't witness



Thursday 17 December - Missed two days because of wind and snow - lots of it - and very cold. Today the snow let up and the sun even showed thru for a few minutes and tho there was five to six inches of snow everywhere, it meant one thing to me. I'd put chains on the station wagon yesterday. I bundled up in my new thermo-pacs, Kays the pants and my old faithful Navy raincoat and, with earflaps down and Puff and Feathers in the station wagon, headed back our road thru a world of ~~white~~ white. At Muddy Creek, beyond Centenary, I inquired at the ~~small~~ houses along the road and

learned that no one lived in the Wolf place anymore. The
 Livingoods were very nice about letting me leave my
 car at their house (the head of the creek now belongs to
 their father who lives up the hollow on the left and to someone
 named ~~James~~ Jenkins.) I walked up past the old
 Wolfhouse, half fallen-in, and entered the huckleberry
 rhododendron woods soon after, ^{about 2:45.} almost immediately I
 heard a quack flush and, whirling to the left, saw a
 large, light-colored bird just coming out of a tangle



I made an instinctive
 rapid swing and
 pulled as the bird
 went out of sight
 behind a tree and

as large boulder, not knowing how I did it or what had
 happened, but somehow sensing I had hit him. At least
 the quack didn't show itself on the far side of the rock
 nor could I hear it fly on. Ruff came in to the shot and
 I tried to head him below the large rock to fetch, but as I
 stopped that direction I saw that Feathers already had
 my bird, picking it up and retrieving it very proudly to
 me, holding it until I took it from him. It was a large
 quack, a beautiful bird that looked like a cock with very
 pronounced ruffs and long tail feathers - only there weren't

enough of them. Feathers often has bad luck with his birds, losing parts of the game in the process of retrieving. His grouse was hard hit in the rear parts, both legs and feet ground to pieces by the close pattern. I hate doing that, but it was an almost remarkable shot - getting it at all. Puff tries not to show that he's hurt by losing the retriever but I can tell it spoils the bird for him. After putting the grouse in the game bag - further muzzing it up respectably in spite of all the care I could show - we moved up the valley in a

Christmas card setting of pruned hemlocks loaded with snow. I expected to see other birds - all excellent cover - but saw no signs. At the first main tributary hollow, I topped the ridge to investigate some fine gaperines - lots of gaperines with gapes still hanging all thru this area - and came to a certain brier cove with gapes and hemlock margins, but no birds. Dropping down to avoid the dense briars, I had no choice but to go all the way to the creek, down a steep hillside where we all simply slid down, and then picked my way thru *Modoklundem* to the mouth of the tributary. On the far side I hit a log road that led up the valley to a good elevation

thru fine cover, grapevines, brush heaps and hemlocks. at one point Puff and Feathers made a stylish double foot into a steep hillside that I finally had to walk into (or up) but there was no bird there then. We had come to an extensive flat that ran along the creek and seemed to have run out of evergreen cover into a thick birch brush that didn't look so good. Across the creek I could see wonderful looking woods - hardwoods with dense hemlocks along the stream but I couldn't wade the deep water. Doubting back on myself, I took a steep log road up the side of the ridge into some perfect poplar and brush pile stuff along the crest. at the top I missed Puff and knew he was pointing. Feathers showed at my whistle but Puff stayed wherever he was - and I could picture him, frozen. There was a nice log road leading out the ridge at the crest and I took it, still trying to spot Puff.

Suddenly, with no warning sound or with one I missed because of the dangling earflaps on my cold-weather cap, a prong sailed past me on the left, low and just skimming the snow in the path - straightaway and wide open. at first, it seemed that he would land and then he lifted and sailed on - taking the curve of the path.

made for him. I hesitated another moment, feeling it
 wasn't safe to shoot so low because of the dogs and then, for
 some odd reason I can't explain, went ahead and did fire.
 holding above the bird a little. It wasn't enough. He zoomed
 on, disappearing out the path and leaving a wide, pattern
 in the mud on a log that must have caused him to
 lift to clear it. There was also a tuft of fur-like feather
 from the thigh regions. I was surprised at the area of the
 pattern, better than thirty inches. It hadn't seemed so far,
 and with a circle of shot that size, I wonder how you ever
 miss!



But you do. I doubted that the bird
 was hit, the tuft of feather somewhere
 clipped-off than anything else but I
 followed on out the path and came in sight

of a house. I have no idea how you reach this house unless
 from the far side of Muddy Creek - or maybe the Center School
 road. There was a flash above me, and I saw the bird go for the
 clearing on top and then settle into a hedge row or brush heap
 just beyond. I hurried up and both dog were working avidly,
 along a thick fence tangle of quince, Puff suddenly
 wheeled and froze in a brush heap. I went in and found the bird's
 head and neck.

the base of a scrub apple tree and some brush. It was a certain place for the bird and both Puff and I knew he was there. The main problem was to get a shot. I stepped to the fence - I couldn't get on the outside for it was too thick to cross - where I hoped to cover the field if the bird took off that way. The other way was back the inside edge where I felt I could take a fair shot - unless he came at my head, when I could turn and try for him. It was going to have to be fast shooting in any case. I waited for the flush, seeing that Feathers was exactly in line and cutting off a shot on the outside, but he soon moved closer and opened up that chance again.

Still the bird lay tight. I walked up another step, and another - and the grass tore out - - exactly in line with the brushy tree on the far side from me and stayed that way, giving me only a glimpse of him between two branches and in the distance as he set his wings and pitched down into the valley. My hat is off to him - a grand character and I'm happy he didn't seem hurt by the shot I'd thrown at him on the first rise. We followed part way down the ridge but didn't find him and I think we went all the way to the bottom. I walked back up the log wall and covered the top of the ridge ~~with~~ ^{and outside}



RUFF BRISTLES ON
A HOT ONE.

woods, mixed with grapes. I think this a fine covert for some day when there is no snow. Crossing a fence I came to where a coal bank had been, a was being, opened up, and while I stood on the

pile of waste clay, a grouse, #3, flushed wild ahead of the dogs and went out the ridge. We followed to within sight of the houses just about of Fannop but couldn't find the bird. That was the last of any feathers I saw. It was getting on toward five o'clock and beginning to snow and I made long way from my car with no path to take me back. Dropping down into the head of the hollow below me, I took time to eat my lunch and then moved rapidly toward home base. By keeping to the upper edge, I avoided the dense woods - passed again thru the good birch patch, poplar hillsides and finally came out above the old Wolf house. Just short of the new power line right-of-way I came on quail tracks in the snow - a pair. When looking down me, I saw Ruff

pointing at the base of a huge boulder with a vertical face. Feathers cocked up, snuff and stiffened into a lovely back point, paw drawn up. I could see the quail tracks in front of Puff and leading along the base of the rock and I expected them to flush any moment - tho of course, I had no intentions of shooting at them. As I moved in, with Puff facing me, there was only one place for the birds to be - between us; and as I closed and nothing happened, Puff ~~did~~ ^{went} his usual process of elimination - rolling his eyes from me, further and further, as each sector was ruled out. Finally, with no more area to consider, Puff rolled his eyes up about level to the top of the rock. It was wonderful, and he did it twice.

We didn't see the birds but it was a glorious point.

2 shots - 1 hit
 missed 3 - 5 flushes

2 productives } Puff
 1 kill air }

1 retrieve } Feathers
 1 kill air }



2:45 to 6:00 (3/4)

adult, large
 crop: green (fern)

George Bird Evans Papers


West Virginia and Regional History Center

Friday 18 December - More snow in the night and cold - 13°.

Took Buff & Willie back to the bridge at Little Sandy and hunted the Faulkenstein - Lower Spiker country. The wind was tearing at the top of the ridge but down under it was calm and perfectly quiet - so much, that the snow being in great chunks on every bush and proberins. I entered Faulkenstein's the usual way, working about the hemlocks to avoid the dense snow on their branches. It was slow going with my heavy clothes and the pull overhauling me so that my shooting glasses steamed. I had leveled off and was ~~looking~~ ^{picking} my way thru the overhanging snowy branches when some movement made me look up and I saw a grouse sail past overhead, cutting back the ridge in the opposite direction, and climbing higher toward the steep point. I turned and followed, surging the dogs around but soon heard the bird flush wild. The fire or six inches of muffling snow killed all other sound so that I don't know why the grouse went out. I kept on, assuming it had continued around the steep shoulder and soon found myself up under the crest of the slope, with the wind howling here and pushing all the snow out of the flat fields down into the woods. Wallowing thru snow drifts to my knees, I soon dropped down out of the bitterly cold wind. I hadn't gone far before I heard a flush about me to the right, and the grouse leveled off

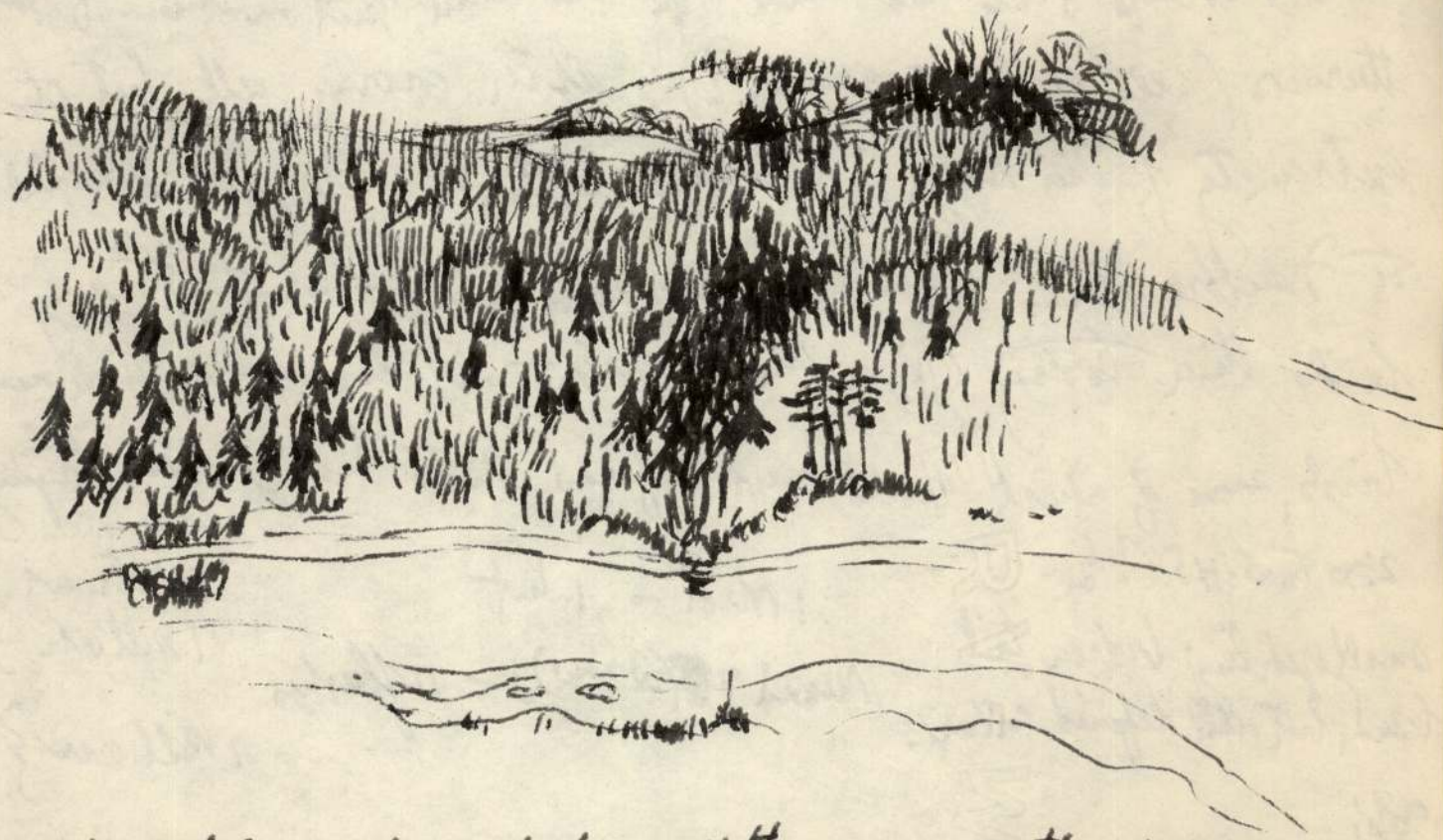
going away and a shade to the left. I pulled on a point
to one side of him, without even having to drop my face to the
stock, the flight was so nearly eye level, and saw him
go down as a cloud of feathers blow away to the left.

Puff came in to me at the shot, for directions, as he does
when he hasn't seen the bird fall, and I sent him out
ahead. He hit the scent almost immediately and picked
the bird up. Wilke came on the scene and Puff delivered
the grouse very beautifully. It was a small yearling with
the left wing hard hit and, I suspect, some shot in the
left side.



After putting the grouse in the game bag, I climbed to the top, preferring
to do no more shooting in this area today and, rather than
retrace my steps over the rough walking in the swampy woods, I
took the shortcut along the fields' edge with the wind trying to
drive me over the cliff. At about the line fence on lower Spiker
I dropped over and worked down thru swampy bushes into the quiet
of the hillside and took the log road around and down to
Little Sandy. On the way I had a wonderful view of our own

land across the valley with its hemlocks dotted thru the ^{hemlock} woods
 and massed into the hemlock ravine where the big ones grow,
 the old fields, the patches - mostly patches than fields - of
 woods, rising up the ridge to the shoulder with the pines and the
 low trees on the skyline and, nestled up there in this pattern of
 russet and hemlock green and snow, the house hemlocks -
 a beautiful and good sight and a full feeling to know us own all
 that.



We made no birds until we dropped all the way into the bottom and
 walked toward the edge of the creek. In the rhododendron and hemlock
 almost at the water's edge the dogs put three birds out, one of which went
 across to our woods I think. I suspect I would have found a lot more
 birds if I could have investigated the ^{area} ~~area~~ along the creek banks, but it

was impossible. Instead, I climbed the ridge by the other log
road and missed another bird, #5, halfway along the ridge. I
failed to miss any more in the lower end of this country, tho I
had counted as flushing birds in the bottom flat when I had
missed so many earlier in the season - probably all across the route.

I ate under a hemlock with a convenient hump on its trunk
tho made a nice seat and thoroughly relished the hot cream of
tomato soup (Ray had made for me and put in the half-pint
thermos (well worth carrying!). After covering all but the lower
extremity of this ridge, I crept up to the top and doubled back
to Faulkner's woods - deciding not to shoot at any more
birds there today. On the way out we did miss more than one
birds, none of which would have offered shots had I been trying.

2:30 to 5:45 (3 1/4
 small yearling; broken tail
 bird, but well defined collar:
 crop;

1 shot - 1 hit
 heard 7 (3 new) - 11 flushes

1 retrieval } Puff
 1 kill over }
 1 kill over } Wilda

Saturday 19 December - This day began in a burst of
sunshine on snow under a crystal blue sky. Ray didn't feel
like joining me but he started our first 8 mm. reel with our
new movie camera, taking the departure of Puff and Feathers

getting in the station canyon with the puppies seeing us off.
 If they had been along today we'd have spent the first part
 taking views of the Breckin Mountains from Contoury and again
 from Summit with, very likely, a shot of Summit and its frontier-
 days buildings against the scrub-dotted hill under the lacquer
 blue sky. As it was the sun lasted until I got started in the
 woods this side of Summers' house and then fizzled out ~~as the~~
 sky clouded over. We worked up the first branch of Hick Run to
 the tram road and followed the path above. A couple of hundred
 yards along I heard a bird flock and saw it coming down the
 slope, crossing to the left. It was rather far out, not too far for
 the left barrel but I used my right and I know I didn't
 swing fast enough or with my body. Then too, most of the
 pattern struck a tree, I am sure, so - adding all that up, I
 missed.



We followed to the area with
 a lot of brush and log piles
 where I was certain and locate him,
 but never did flush him, unless
 there was a wild flock on the

draw into the next hollow where I want sure feathers didn't hear
 one go out. Circling back to the gopher holes near the original flock,
 we hunted up the tributary where normally we'd have moved first a
 six birds. Today we didn't find a thing except some day-old

tracks of a pass in the snow. Climbing the mountain all the way to the top, it became apparent we were hunting the wrong places. However I continued to the point of rocks but found nothing there but magnificent views of Roaring Gap and the huckleb-dotted valley below with the road winding up far down. It was worth the walk for this view alone. We huddled between some huge boulders to get away from the wind and ate our lunch - hot soup in the small thermos and it was delicious. I had to share a cookie with my boys, having forgotten a snack for them. After eating and drinking in the views, I creaked and started down the shoulder of the mountain that runs parallel to the road and the creek. There were some excellent grapevines (worth looking into in normal weather) just over the brow that produced a wild flush that quartered below me, a bit obscure but I tried for him - a rising and quartering shot. For a moment the bird soared, fluttering and I was sure he was coming down but he righted himself and climbed to the tree tops and leveled off, but with no chance to use the left barrel on him. I followed, marking him by some large trees he passed out the ridge. Finally I got a very intense point by Ruffin just about the right location and as I walked around in fact I felt, with no flush, that the bird might be down.



Just then there was a flush well out ahead beyond Feathers and since the wind was blowing stiffly in our faces I count it a production for Puff. We had no further luck in making this bird nor did we make any others, all the way down the face of the mountain to the Terra Alta Pike. I had long since decided the Rhododendron along Roaring was probably loaded with grouse on a day like this with the ridges empty - and had no doubt they were there, but it was impossible to cover all of it. The footing was bad on the near side of the hollow so we crossed Roaring Creek and took the old tram road (what is left of it) trying to get the dogs to work the sides. This was Puff's third ~~consecutive~~ ^{consecutive} day and he had reached the point where he was stalling. I can understand why he didn't feel too good about it all for the snow and ice had balled on his haunches and feet and underparts to the extent that he had to stop constantly and chew it off. I did however insist that he make a few efforts to get off the tram road and Feathers did very well but we didn't make a feather. Below the cabin I left the tram and worked closer to the meadow cover along the creek. Finally a grouse flushed from some Rhododendron near Puff - I don't know if he had a point or not - and I went to top of the trees and

then cup its wings and drop like a great clay pigeon into
the creek hollow. I marked it and followed. As I approached
a dense fringe of rhododendron at the lip of a drop to the
creek I heard the quack taking off with a great commotion
as it bore out of the dense cover. I waited until I saw him
clear the fringe and ~~come~~ go out the far side, rising and
quartering a bit to the right, and then pulled to a point
above and ahead of him and fired. He folded in a cloud
of feathers and went down near a leaning tree. From the way
he tumbled I was certain he was going to stay in one spot. Both
boys came in at the shot and I directed Ruff to "go fetch,"
pointing into the tangle below me. He went in and so did
Feathers but after several trees they returned to me for
further direction. Repeatedly I sent them in and again
and again they came back empty-mouthed. At last, I took off



my glasses, ~~and~~ tightened my
collar around my neck and
plunged in amidst a shower of snow.
Once down in the rhododendron I
started to direct Ruff out ahead

again, only to look down and find Feathers bringing in
one of the largest quacks I've ever shot. Ruff was at the

making a great fuss over the snow on his feet — but Feathers was proud as punch and I made a great deal over him. The bird was hard hit with a broken right wing, very pronounced ruff and an enormous looking fan. I followed the tracks through to the creek and saw where Feathers had found him where he'd fallen just on the brink of the creek bank where the body heat had melted a depression with some blood and a few feathers in it. It was a dramatic fulfillment to a day that had been rather unproductive. Across the creek I caught tracks of a couple of men who might have been the origin of the double shot I'd heard. Again, they might have been after a Xmas tree for I saw signs of a sled and a tree having been dragged along the Rich Run road. While I hunted out this road both boys took a notion to quit for the day and since we were in wonderfully good cover, I couldn't permit it. I tapped them with the whistle, motioning them into the thick laurel and rhododendron.

Puff obeyed but Feathers felt he knew a better place — on the road.



FEATHERS BRINGS HIM IN.

I repeated the directions with no results ^{conceded} it is no uncertain words with no better results — so was forced

to take sterner measures in the form of a light switching
 and kinetic force passing from the toe of my boot to the
 pup's rear. He seemed to understand but when I returned
 to the road I found him following behind me. I repeated
 the treatment with further guidance on the loose side of
 the neck but he only went in the bushes and lay down.
 This time I went to him and talked to him and patted
 him and then we went together into the cover. I don't know
 what happens when I get too worn out to cuff the
 brush but as long as my dogs feel as they do I guess
 they'll keep me in trim thru experience. At the car I
 looked up toward the shoulder of the ~~mountain~~ ^{mountain} against
 the sky and realized that a short time before I'd been
 hunting down the crest of it. At home I found Ray and
 Wilda in the steps between the boxwood, waiting for us.

2:00 to 6:15 (4 1/4)

3 shots - 1 hit
 missed 3 ^(2 miss) - 5 flushes

1 production } Ruff
 1 kill over }
 1 retrieve } Feathers
 1 kill over }

Large adult unbred hen band:

Small length of bird: 19"
 jaw: 14 1/4"
 crop:

(On the way home I stopped at a logging operation and
 dugged and heard till I got a yule log into the car. It was
 oak, about 3 ft long
 and I think I got my first yule log here

Thursday 21 December - Kay & I took all three setters to

the Hoy Miller country, hoping to get some movies with our new 8 mm. The sun was breaking thru clouds when we started but it

soon closed over into a very dull cloudy day ("cloudy dull").

Kay took a shot as I started the three birds off just inside the gate beyond where we parked the station wagon. We followed the

log road, with a zigzag up the ravine with the hemlock tree that yielded nothing. Just short of the stone fence on the border of the

tamarack farm place, I noticed Puff below the road. I had passed him without seeing him and I thought he was looking for me. As

he moved in a few steps toward a brush heap a point flushed, quartering down the slope to the right, and rising. I tried to

push the safety off but fumbled, standing there with my gun half-mounted, watching the bird disappear. It would have been a

shot thru cover but I think there is a fair chance I might have made it. We moved on out the road toward the farm. Just as we

approached, I heard another flush below the road, well over the hillside and it seemed to go down into the hollow like the first

at the edge of the house clearing, we dropped down to follow the two flushes but we found nothing altho the cover down below

was very good, mixed hemlock & hardwood brush with Abies. We moved nothing was all around the margin of the clearing.

until in the woods opposite the lane entrance where #3 grouse
flushed wild from a tree I think, down over the ridge. We
ate lunch in the same neck of woods where I'd eaten last
time, and where I'd missed 4 birds. Today there were none.

The only other bird was in the cover on the crown above the steep
hillside with open grasses. I think it was the same bird Ruff &
Wald pointed last time. This time it flushed from a tree. We
got two or three reflexes - mostly from trees. The best part
of the day were the gorgeous views of the blue, dark ridge and the
hemlock studded sandy valley looking upstream - (too
dark to get in a movie. Ray did take a very interest-
looking point before lunch after we'd followed the two flocks down into
the valley. On the way up, we came on feathers intensely lacking.
Ruff and I felt sure it was business but nothing happened.

However Ray got it. Also got Ruff & Feathers ranging in the
clearing beyond our lunch spot, with the Chestnut ridge in the
distance and some hemlock in the cover edge. It had begun to
drizzle when we got back to the car.

2:00 to 6:00 (4)

No shots
(no new)
missed 4 - 7 reflexes

1 productive { Ruff

Tuesday 22 December - This was a perfect-looking grouse hunting day - warmer, partly cloudy after rain. I took Puff & Feathers to the forest and parked at the old place above ^{the} Scott Run country. I started in the opposite direction across the road to try to locate some of the seven grouse Williamson had flushed the day before. I followed his directions thru fair-looking coniferous (minus the berries) till I reached the high-tension line and recognized the place Kay & I had hunted several years ago. It had been fruitless then and it was fruitless today. I knew I was wasting time and swung back toward the car. I had started early today - 12:30 and it was ^{only} a little after 1:30 when I drove the car into the circle where the picnic area is located and started out fresh, hunting out the ridge from the McCollum place. I came onto the rhododendron ledge Bob Wingard and I had hunted and which I have never been able to locate since. Today it was unproductive - possibly because of the high wind. This is on the point of a short ridge that runs out below the McCollum place but does not extend down to Scott Run. I worked across the ridge where I shot my first bird this year and ate lunch in a mild hurricane. There were no birds here except one that flushed wild on the brink above the rocks but I couldn't relocate him. I crossed to the next shoulder where I've never birds always.

the point then boulders and *Abolobolobon*. Since before I tried
 this and had to retrace my steps and take the path. Today
 I kept going but there were times I thought I wouldn't get there.
 By crawling between crevices and then the minerals of the
 ledge I finally came out on top, but I don't think I'll
 do it that way again. On the crest of the shoulder
 among excellent grasses where there are always a couple of
 grouse I found nothing. I moved to the next shoulder and
 hunted up the side of the ridge, finally getting a good solid
 point and backpoint from Puff and Feathers. They were
 pointing below the path into a thick tangle of grasses and
 I had to walk into some tight places that didn't lend
 themselves to shooting. So I moved below the solid dogs a
 bird went out, quartering low to the left and I tried for
 him but missed, seeing any pattern - still bunched -
 but a piece of low branch. Whether that changed things I
 can't say, but the bird pitched down into the valley.



We followed, and even crossed the
 run and doubled over a tree but
 couldn't see him. Finally I decided to

make one more try before walking back toward the car. It was 4:30
 and I was miles away and had made only
 two birds in country that probably held

the settlers out the hillside, keeping to the steep slope myself and gradually working up toward the large boulders among grapevines when I'd missed a shot the other time in here this season. There are some fine grapevines along the base of this hill and I think there might be good cover up there hollow toward the administration building but I've never explored it.

As I approached the large rocks I moved higher and higher, coming up about level with the old path in the cove. Suddenly a quail flushed from the slope not far above me and went away, low, and a shade to the left, staying about a foot or so off the ground which kept it near my eye level. I held to a point above it and fired, seeing the bird collapse. At the sound



of the report a second quail flushed from the same spot and boreed straightaway, low. I swung the muggle to a spot above him and fired again. There was a second's delay and then I saw this bird tumble tail and head and hit the ground. I don't try for doubles, simply because I can't see ~~blasting~~

two ruffed grouse out of existence in so short a time. And
altho this wasn't a true double - both birds were not off the
ground simultaneously ~~but~~ ^{and} it was, rather, what I'd call a
modified double - today I operated purely on impulse.
I suppose it was the walking better than six miles and many
only two birds, also knowing my day was practically over.
Something made me do it and I'm not at all proud of the
little trick. Of course Puff and Feathers came running in at
the shot and went to work on command of "so fetch." Feathers
located the first bird immediately and, seeing him, Puff
dejectedly turned away, resigned to the thing. When I
ordered, "Puff, dead bird, so fetch." He looked incredulous,
hesitated but when I repeated the command, marched up
the slope. Feathers had the bird but carried it up toward
Puff who, about this time, hit the scent of the second
bird and moved into action, locating the grouse, still
alive but wing-broken, beside a log. Both dogs came in
with a grouse in their mouths, I took Feathers' bird first and
then ordered Puff to deliver his which he did, sitting. It
was, at least, a big moment for them and especially
Puff who felt the day had been ~~well~~ ^{well} ~~with~~ ^{with} his bird.



A DOUBLE RETRIEVE

Both birds were yearlings, the first, Feather's retriever, was a hen, the second, Puff, a cock. Both had interrupted tail bands but I spotted the cocks by very pronounced ruffs and throat band or collar.

I worked up to the head of road and paced off the mile back to the car in ~~about~~ twenty minutes or less.

12:30 to 5:15 (4 3/4)

3 shots - 2 hits

moved 4 (1 new) - 4 flushes

1 production } Puff
1 retriever }
2 kills }

yearling broken band - hen

traps: full of grapes & a few leaves

yearling broken band but pronounced ruff etc: cock

traps: full of grapes & few leaves.

1 backdrop production } Feather's
1 retriever }
2 kills }

Wednesday 23 December - Very cold and cloudy all later. Take

Puff and Willa (Puff's third successive day but I felt he'd miss the next two so gave him a Morley in addition to his one-a-day vitamin and never saw him work harder). I drove to the

Rockville road and parked the station wagon at the West Run old workings hunting out the dove tramroad. It was cold enough that I wanted my heavy gloves and in getting them out of my pocket, I unbuttoned the gate and put it to the right

side. I opened my coat and was fiddling with the button, my gun under my arm, when a grouse took shape, leaving the left bank of the tram road twenty yards ahead, and quartered out and turned, flying straightaway down the tram right-of-way. It would have been a good chance in the first few seconds. As it was, I got my gun up and tried for him in the distance but at my shot, the bird zoomed up and over the tree tops and away. I think I should have used the left bank, and I know I should have held about a bit more. We congratulated the bird and then moved on to follow. Possibly twenty more yards further along, a second bird flushed from the left bank but this



one went the upper route, keeping low and going out of my sight almost immediately. I hunted the area above and below the tram road, rather carefully for both birds but found neither. On around the ridge I came on Puff sitting on a rocky point, standing in the tram road and pointing down to the right.



I moved in below him, picking my steps carefully and trying to be ready for the flash when it came. I pushed clear around

since he was pointing directly into a stiff breeze, I felt the
 bird was below him. When it didn't flush at my approach,
 Puff evidently felt the same about it and moved in to
 reestablish his point. But after a moment, finding nothing,
 moved on, circling the area below me. As I returned to
 the tram road I nearly walked into the grouse which, even so,
 flushed from the very edge but without my getting a look at
 it. It had been lying tight, just to ~~the~~ Puff's left but
 the wind coming into his face had loosened him. We tried to
 find it for another flush but it is pretty hopeless in the dense
 hemlock even they pitch into. We saw no more bird today,
 up Laurel Run on the left. It came from up the ridge, flushing
 from under and sailing down the ridge across my path but
 too far out to shoot. I saw it land in a hemlock but it flushed
 too soon as I walked up, this time diving for the creek. I went
 Puff and Wilda in the general direction and they sawed
 a bird across the stream that could have been the same. At
 the upper end, across from Dwight Gibson's I climbed the
 steep ridge and ate lunch on the hillside, halfway up, in
 near-bitter cold. There were no exciting incidents on the way
 back - not even a flush - ~~except a double point~~

not productive — with Ruff below me and Wilda beyond
 in a perfect repeat of Ruff's position or posture. Why we didn't
 have more birds I can't say unless
 it is the weather.

March 4 - 6 flushes } 1 productive } Ruff
 1 shot - no hit } 1 back } Wilda



WILDA REPEATS RUFF'S POSITION.

2:00 to 6:00 (4)

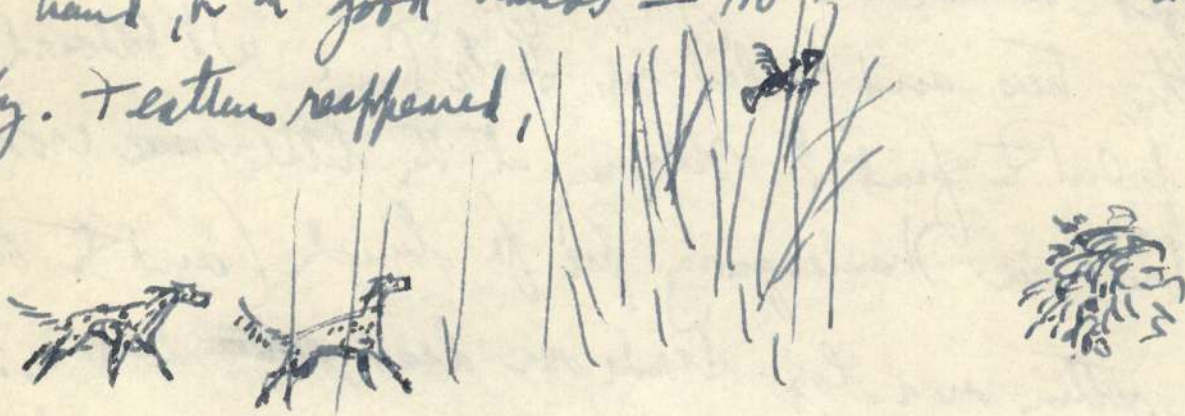
Saturday 26 December - I had given up the idea of hunting on the
 24th and of course didn't hunt Christmas, so today seemed a
 welcome outing tho the sun soon went under and it became
 cloudy and bitter cold with a high wind. I took Ruff and
 Feather (Ray stayed at home with Mother) and drove to the
 Lenoir country, taking the back road to Homer Mullin's horse
 woods. This road is a particular help for me. Today I got
 stuck for a moment on an exposure of ice but finally
 made it, ~~tho~~ tho I shudder to think what I may have
 done to the tires on the rocks. It isn't stoned, this road
 but rather is full of fist-size rocks that lie loosely
 and separately all along the tracks. at the first opportunity
 I parked (beyond the little creek on the left) and sent

#131

the boys into the nice looking cover. I call it Houser's woods tho
I suspect he owns only the upper stretch. We didn't meet a
thing tho I saw some grouse feathers and a lead shell that looked
like Kinnis's brand of 7's. I covered the woods and then
ward across to the upper side in the very brushy covert that
usually yields several. Today they went at home. After
crossing the little run I began working the hill above them fine
gropes and at last saw feathers flush a bird that he
took clear out of the country. Followed it but never did
near it, ending up near the old train road near Sick Run.
After a while I almost called on a bird that must have been
sitting inside a hollow snag for it flushed out the far side
and stayed behind the snag, giving me no view of it until it
topped the trees and headed up Sick Run. We followed, but
again failed to find it. Stopping at the little ~~run~~ crossing where
Ray built our Thanksgiving fire for lunch (and to dry me out)
I ate, sitting on a log beside our dead ~~tree~~ embers. It was
getting late and darker from lowering clouds and I didn't want
to get into the birds up on the high rocks because I want to
save them for my trip later with Ray. However, we circled the
rhododendron glades with no results and then headed down the

left side of lick, just as it began to snow. We hunted well down
the run, getting almost to the tram crossing. Out ahead Puff
and Feather were working like troopers, quartering the cover as if
they were determined to find a bird whether it was there or no.

I saw Puff make a sudden rush and a grouse cleared the
bush, crossing and rising well out ahead. I swung past
him, firing and saw him fold, hover a moment and then go down
in an arc into the rhododendron along the creek. Puff had
stopped at the shot, head high, watching the bird and as it fell, he
spotted the drop and moved in, one length ahead of Feather.
I felt the bird was only wing-tipped but did think the situation was
well in hand, in good hands — so reloaded and called
in slowly. Feather reappeared,



empty-mouthed but I saw Puff's tail in one place deep in the
rhododendron, wagging happily and I knew he had the grouse. When
I ordered him to fetch it he
and bringing it in fine style. It was retrieved straddling the stream
it looked like a quarry. But the 1st premium
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right leg and was dead. I would think the pattern had covered it rather well, but it had gone down as if the shot had only struck the wing. Odd. I decided to call it a day and head for the car since it was moving harder and we wanted to drive via the Inghams on our way back with Mother this evening.

I did decide to shoot only at birds on points, if any, and with that reservation set out across the stream. A short distance on the far side Puff stacked up on a point in some brushy cover, with 7 others, backing. I moved in but when there was no flush, 7 others moved in too. Puff wasn't so inclined to give up, and as he started under a log he flew again, and I knew there'd be action. 7 others hadn't seen the second stop and went on in, running into the bird out to the right. I tried for it as it came up and toward us, missing, and then another grouse came across against the open sky and low above me, crossing to the left. I moved again and fired as I passed and held my breath, waiting for him to



tumble but he went on flying a darkish chestnut mag vibrating in front of me when I saw it.

~~now~~ my left barrel patterns, scarcely larger than a silver
 dollar, completely absorbed by the dead wood, with a few
 stray pellets on the perimeter. I ~~honestly~~ believe the snow
 saved the birds life — or I like ^{it} that way. We turned
 and followed, hoping for another point but didn't find time.
 The walk down the side of the Bruey mountain shoulder
 was windy, not to mention the snow driving against my face.
 The boys gave me a good moment with a fine double point
 that didn't materialize, but I noticed a fine piece of cover
 that has come back and I should keep it in mind.

1:45 to 4:15 (2 1/2) 3 shots - 1 hit
 small 4^(2 new) - 4 flashes
 1 productive }
 1 retrieve } Ruff
 1 kill }

~~small~~
 small bird but blood primaries: adult hen
 crop: empty
 1 prod. back }
 1 kill } Father's

~~Monday~~
 Tuesday 29 December — Yesterday, my birthday, was a
 stinker for weather. It rained a little less hard about
 1:00 or later and I drove toward the Hoy Miller country, hoping to
 get out if only for a short hunt, just to carry out tradition
 and observe my birthday. But it all went with a vengeance.

soon after I left home and became a driving rain that continued all thru the day. Today, Tuesday, the Fifes came over and Blanche and Ray stayed home while Kinsy and I drove in his pickup to the shoulder above Dority. The weather was ideal tho still misting as we drove over, but it stopped by the time we got out of the truck and tho the woods was dripping, it was fine hunting weather. I wore my old Navy coat and did fine. We used Kinsy's Bang and Ruff and tho I felt Ruff hunted hard, both dogs passed up birds all day long. On the lip of the first little ravine beyond our truck, I walked into a grouse that took out low and away from me. I held to a spot above him and fired, dropping him in some brushy tangles ahead. ~~The dogs came in~~ at the report of my gun, a second grouse flushed from the same spot and went out low and quartering in front of Kinsy, who missed it with both barrels. After the ~~reports~~ ^{accounts} of his shooting I'd been treated to on the way over, I felt this was a rather bitter pill. + The dogs came in and Ruff was without a single tail feather as a result of his ~~tripping~~ ^{tripping} with the tail.



I suppose that was why Puff did not sit to deliver but laid it at my feet - the first time he has done that all season. The bird's left wing was broken and, on cleaning, was found to have been hit in the left leg and left side. I regretted the lack of feathers in the tail and after dispatching the bird, a yearling, I hunted until I found the missing feathers and saved a couple for my records (later proceeding to lose them from the game bag!)

We hunted across the little hollow, a fine place, cut over with grapevines, brush heaps and rhododendron down the middle. Beyond on the far side from it I saw a #3 bird wild. Not far beyond I walked into #4 - with no indication that the dogs knew it was there - and missed it both barrels as it rose and went away from me. The first shot was too hurried and the second, more deliberate, knocked out more feathers than the one I'd got, but the bird went on.

coiled back, never moved sign other than a very hot air, it would produce a

saw a #5 grouse, large and posed on a log before taking off with no offer of a shot. Kinsey had gone ahead of me while I doubled back and I came to the gas pipe line before I caught sight of him climbing it up the ridge. I indicated that I'd take the cover to the left and blinged in with



We followed and then I the grouse or found any point by Puff that seemed crippled. On the way, I tan-colored, feather up and

Puff working it intensely. We soon got a flush, #6, and in following Puff made a production on #7 that went out well ahead, giving me no shot. I soon heard Kingy shoot, but I went up the steep ridge, when Puff made another point on #8. I tried a shot at it as it rose well ahead but didn't connect.



I feel I stopped my barrels as I fired whereas it should have been a swing past. The greatest weakness of my corrected-snap shots or intercepted leads is that I feel my ~~barrels~~ ^{muzzle} to be at the right spot and then hold it stationary when firing - and I always miss such shots. We followed this bird and soon put out one that I count a reflex on #7 and saw it pitch over the Rhododendron ledge to the left. That would probably be good cover to hunt if you could get below it after moving these birds "down over." I finally got back in touch with Kury at the top but tho he said he'd fired at and killed a hawk, I suspect it was a grouse he'd missed. He admitted flushing #9. After lunch we decided not to work higher (tho I believe the top area, which appears extensive from the pipe line, might be productive) and we hunted south and down the ridge, coming out at a ~~quarry~~ ^{quarry} out-cave area that

we tried to avoid by doubling north along the margin. We flushed #10, being shooting and missing, and after coming back to the pipe line lower down, hunted down the ridge. #11 grouse flushed from our rocks after I'd passed and dodged over a boulder with no opportunity to shoot. Puff was there but I don't think he did any work on it. I am at a loss to know why he didn't pin a few of these birds. He made a lot of false points that he seemed serious about but only made four productive all day, the only ones made. Back at the first little ravine where we'd flushed the first two, we decided to hunt below the road in a hope of moving some new birds.

Almost immediately, being flushed a grouse, #12, from a path edge and missed a shot at it. If he'd been killing as many grouse as he'd been talking about, he must have been off his shooting today. We went thru the motions of hunting for this bird since he that he'd hit it but it wasn't around. Following, we got a nice point by Puff and I heard the bird go out ahead of Bang who was working a bit above us. I count it a new one since I was too close. Later, while I was working the left side of this very excellent ravine, with lots of grapes, huckleberries and ~~strawberries~~, Puff made an

exciting-looking point on a steep slope. I walked up and
 felt certain there'd be a bird but nothing materialized. Then
 after Puff was in, I walked into the gully in a bunch
 and saw it flush across the valley, straight at the spot I
 that King was in. I pulled my gun off it and reset the
 safety, only to hear King answer me from further down the
 hollow. It would have been a nice straightaway - absolutely
 eye-level - chance. There had been another reflex, going
 in the same general direction up over the shoulder, and since it
 was late, I suggested that we double back. I climbed the
 hog-back ridge, hearing Dority's truck roaring far below and
 made along the rhododendron, finally getting a flush from one of
 the birds that I merely heard. Back at the road, after numerous
 false points by Puff that puzzled me, I took a coil up
 into the original ravine where I'd shot my bird while King
 took the road to the truck. When I approached the spot
 of the first shot, Puff stopped on a point and I walked up a
 bird, that I have to count as ^{one of} the first two, that flushed too far
 out for me to get a crack at. It was nearly dark but I
 followed and got another point that did yield a flush.
 It was 6:30 when I rejoined King at the truck. We came

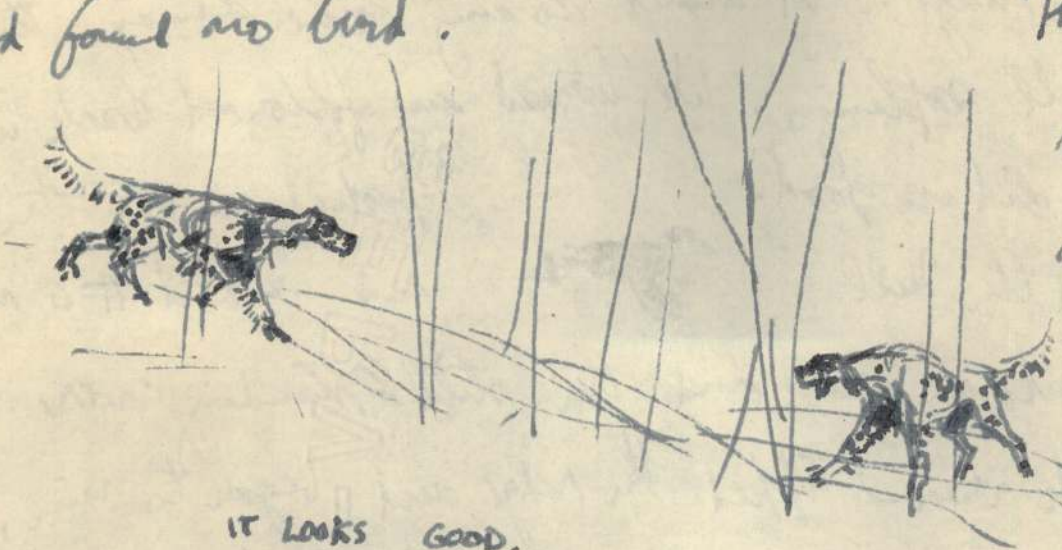
how to a pleasant dinner and sitting before our fire. This
covert would do with further exploration, and I hope to do it
some day this winter on a training-mail trip.

12:30 to 6:30 (6) 4 shots - 1 hit 5 productions } Ruff
1 retriever }
1 kill }
missed 13 - 18 flushes

yearling with broken tail band: hen
crop: grapes and dogwood berries

Wednesday 30 December - This was a cloudy day and
quite windy but I decided to try the Hog Hunter country, not
having got to hunt it Monday. I took Ruff and Feathers, leaving
Ray, who had got a bad break after missing the pre-Christmas
hunting, to ~~get a best treatment~~ ^{see Dr. White} for her beritis in her shoulder as
I went thru Bruneton. We parked in the usual place and hunted out
the log road, moving a bird wild on the right of the path near
the log loading platform. The second bird went out ahead of Feathers
as he ran up near the old tamarack house. I got a reflexion
on this bird, and then covered the rest of the margin coverts around
the old farm without moving a single feather. I finally dropped
down the far side from the woods on the crown of the shoulder
and Ruff made a nice point in the thin cane below. Feathers
came in and froze, honoring Ruff's point & saving his. At


made a beautiful double point, the two of them headed into each other, and it gave me a good moment, till I walked in and found no bird.



IT LOOKS GOOD.

Puff moved in and below in the woods. Stopped again. There was no bird still and after he'd moved on I heard it flush as he came

on it out ahead. I can't get it - these false points and then a flush when the bird is really there. It would appear to be pottering on foot scent but Puff usually does much better work than that. After failing to find this #3 again, I made a drastic decision and plunged down into the creek hollow after 5:00. On the way we got another double false point and then in the bottom got a wild flush from #4 out of a hemlock. We hunted the lower path all the way up the valley to the cutting below Roy Miller's house where we were stopped by the dense mass of hemlock tops that choked the hillside. Chisling to avoid these, I approached the upper margin of the woods. Hearing a grouse flushing somewhere, I turned to see it coasting low and

morning below me. I was able to wheel in time to make a
fast swing as the bird crossed behind me, firing as he
zoomed down the ridge. It didn't do any more damage than
cut off two small saplings. We turned and followed back into
the cuttings but it did no good. I pushed on into the
far woods around the hill  and moved #6 on
the edge of the cutover area and the still-standing cover.
It was getting dark when I topped the ridge and began to rain,
coming down hard as I crossed the long open field to the
station wagon.

1 shot - no hit

moved 6 (3 new) 7 flushes

2:30 to 6:15 (3 3/4)

Thursday 31 December - Today I left Ray at Dr. White's office
for a treatment of her shoulder and drove on out to the Hazel
Run - Old Farm covert, parking at the White Pine on Hazel Run.
I left Puff at home after two days' hunting and to meet him for
the last two days which I hoped would be good weather. I took
Feathers and Wilda, hunting the bottom tram road along Hazel -
new to me, following it well down to Big Sandy. As I walked the
tram road, both dogs working very well, on the ridge a pair


flushed, ^{piping,} behind me from above the bank, having allowed me to pass him. I wheeled as he crossed the narrow opening and fired as I "went thru" him, but even as I pulled I saw him dip below my muzzle and I knew I was missing him. He pitched down toward the creek without offering me a second try.



We hunted to below the point of land where I shot my second bird in this cove last time and I climbed up a steep pull to the top, wearing nothing crossing to the far side of the clearing I hunted the area where I'd

moved the six before. Today they weren't at home. I covered the ridge down to the point above Laurel Run, up Laurel then the lower Rhododendron where we'd flushed several and if they were going out wild today I couldn't be certain enough to my old head them. Eating lunch sitting with my back to a tree trunk to avoid the wind which was very high, I decided to hunt around the first ridge to the sandy side and hit the mixed hemlock hardwood flat. I covered the entire lower corner ^{George Bird Evans Papers} ^{West Virginia and Regional History Center} climbing to the flat on the ^{find a bird. Finally,} ^{I began working}

toward the upper edge along the clearing. ~~Part way~~ Part way
along, I walked into a grouse that roared up, rising and crossing
to the left, like a jato takeoff. I tried to be deliberate and
take him just as he reached the
upper part of his rise, firing and
passed him, but he went on and
changed direction as he ~~skipped~~ ~~off~~
and ignored ~~the~~ left barrel I



shot under him. I noticed enough pattern from both
shots lodged in saplings to have dropped him either time but
I can't use that as an alibi. I think I should have made the
shot. I got a wild reflex from him as I followed and then
lost him. I decided to cross to the far side again and this time
saw a grouse make out ahead of me with no dogs near him and I
suspect this has been going on today. I hunted up the ridge this
time with no further flush till I crossed a little ravine to the
next shoulder. Here, among red brush cover, I came on Testters
on a nice point ^{below} and when he points, there's usually business.
As I walked up, I saw him move in as if a grouse had flushed
and at this moment another bird ^{below} me
climbing thru the thick cover. I tried to aim as he rose and

again as he seemed to hover, but I stopped my mungyle and actually saw the pattern cut out a circle of leaves behind the bird. It's hard to realize they aren't standing still, even when they hover as they level off and it's easy to shoot behind.



FEATHERS COMES THRU.



DONT STOP THAT SWING!

I followed the bird I shot at and soon got another flush and, following, another. This time he left me for good, and I doubled back and hit the top of the shoulder above Feather's point, finding the cover excellent but without birds. At the car, I was quite ready to quit, having made no more birds all the way along the ridge above Hazel Run, and being tired enough for one day. My shooting didn't make me happy.

5 shots - no hits

1 production } Feathers

12:45 to 6:15 (5 1/2 hrs) ^{from} ~~Monday~~ 5 (1 new). 8 flushes.

Friday, ^{New Year's Day} January 1. New Year's Day and Kay still unable to hunt because of her shoulder. I dropped her off at the Homer Millers' to spend the afternoon with Amy and I parked up at the corner of the roads. It was nice to have

an old-time hunt along with Ruff, much as I enjoy shooting
over the other setters, but this season I've hunted him alone
on very few days. I felt the day was just right - sunny
and clear, except for a high wind that is bad medicine for
quail. I covered the right side of the path, most nothing,
and then hit the grapevine corner. There, for the first time I
can remember in years, we found no birds. I covered it
rather well and then hunted up the ridge above the rocks
where Ray and I had stopped for lunch on our hunt in here
the last day we came in 1952. This area is good bird
cover, I find, having developed into logs and brush heaps
and fair-size growth. The first bird we moved flushed
ahead of Ruff and offered no shot. I followed but failed
to miss it so climbed higher. Ruff made a nice point
and when I walked in I saw the quail take off low and
go out of the ~~brush~~ pile of brush and logs, giving me
no chance at him. I count this #2 for it acted unlike
a bird that has been flushed and went back toward the place
I'd moved #1, which I think would have been unlikely. I
marked him the best I could and followed and again was
unable to locate the bird for a refly. Once more I began
hunting up the slope and ~~once~~ ^{once} I marked a bird in a dot

distance. Again I count it a new bird for it flushed
 the wrong ~~the~~ direction, in my opinion, if the bird had
 been following. Either I don't know how a grouse thinks
or I had mixed three separate birds. I followed, still having
 had no shot and did not locate the bird, but continued on
 up the side of the mountain. The cover became less promising
 but I soon came into fair conditions on the top of the
 shoulder. I had expected to be at the old fields by now, and
 looking around, I decided I was too far north on the ridge.
 I checked my compass and swung south and in a few hundred
 yards came in sight of the edge of the old clearing. As I worked
 along the west margin I heard #4 go out wild and in a moment
 Ruff hit the spot and pointed, but there ~~was~~ ^{were} no more birds. We
 followed the probable flight and, just across the path that
 leads down the mountain, Ruff pointed again. After a
 false point he moved on and then re-pointed, this time with the
 bird ahead, that flushed as I walked in. We got another
 flush ~~at the same location~~ and followed again, feeling that
 the bird wasn't flushing exactly normally. The next flush
 was after a considerable bit of walking and I walked into
 the point in some rocks among ~~them~~ ^{them} (a more I think)

(before) and with no help from Ruff. I couldn't help try a shot over Ruff's head as the bird showed tail ahead but it was turning and I don't think I had much chance, tho' I did feel the pattern on some brush or something, not too far off the correct spot. We followed, after making certain the



quons hadn't dropped and after a bit of quartering Ruff pointed again and again the quons flushed and this time I was fairly sure he wasn't flying normally for he fluttered up and then seemed to drop to the ground not at all far ahead.

I followed, on the alert for a crippled rise and after a while walked straight into a flush that materialized above my head from a chestnut snag. I was unprepared for this situation and made a too-quick try, missing, and tried again, and again missed. It was a really possible shot and I should have made it.

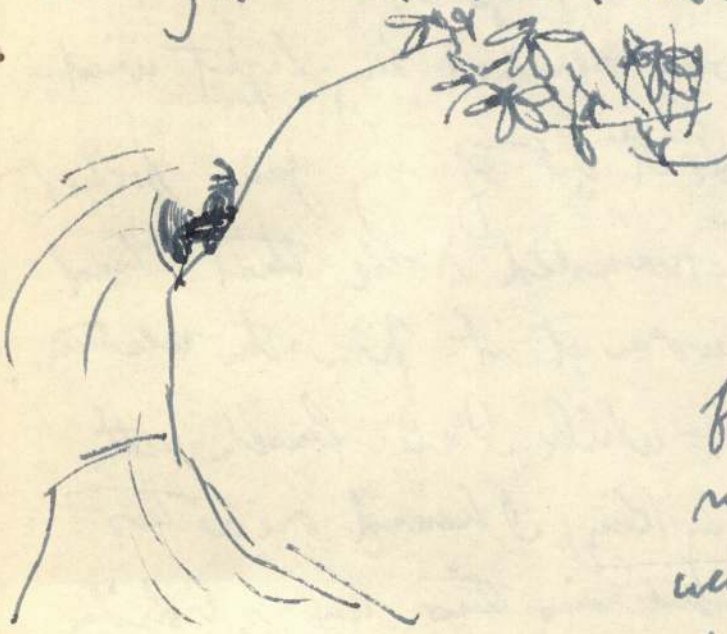


I did see a sapling splattered with the bulk of the second pattern but, as so often before this season, I can't claim that alibi.

The shot could have been made with just swings.

I made a rather forceful comment to the effect that this
 bird certainly didn't seem impaired in any way on this flesh,
 then, taking several steps ahead, I heard another flush that
 I think was # 4. I had no luck locating either of these grouse
 again and I think I got a bit turned around as far as their
 line of flight was concerned. I came out, at last, on some of the
 rocks above the headwater basin of Lick Run with a
 magnificent view of this wild sweep of the mountain. The sun
 was shining and the bare, dead-looking twigs of the sassafras
 stand below me glistened like small bones. There were a few
 pitch pines directly under me, a clear enamel blue sky above
 and no sound anywhere except a very stiff wind pushing
 at me from the west. I had it all to myself. I'd been
 hunting in my shooting jacket, having removed my light wind-
 jacket underneath and now I took it out of my game pocket
 and used it as a cushion on the rounded rock that had
 several bowl-like declivities worn it from the weather,
 one of them still full of water. While I ate lunch with
 Buff at my feet, both of us missing Kay, I heard one or two
 distant, very distant, shots. Considering this was a holiday
 I felt very lucky to be so much alone. After lunch, we
 made up the ledge to a good spring and left the rocks.

crossed the basin and up the far slope, keeping to the shoulder of
boulders and rhododendron, we'd discovered last trip in. Puff
made a lovely point on the ledge and I walked in and
flushed a grouse that bored out too low to give me a shot.
I marked the bird as headed for the far shoulder, hunted around
and, once upon the big rocks, got another point from Puff.
It looked good but didn't develop into anything and he moved
on after I'd checked the area ahead of him. After he'd gone,
I turned a corner around a boulder and almost walked on a
bird (the one I'd been following, I think) that literally hugged
the contour of the rock as he flushed from me. It left me
nothing to shoot at but stone so I didn't try. It was beautifully
done.



I called Puff in and had him take
note of what he'd missed, then
sent him up in the direction of the
flush. On top, above where I shot
my bird the last time Day and I
were here, Puff made a point and we
got another flush from the grouse.

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making a flush and a bird that
bird - a good substitute for shooting.

That was the end of action in this area this dropping and the
 shoulder on the way down we got a series of false points that
 baffle me. No grouse could run as fast and far as a bird
 would have to in this circumstance. We hunted down into the
 gables along the forks of Lick, crossing at the spot where
 Kay & I had our Thanksgiving lunch fire, and then topping the
 rocks beyond and sidling down the mountain, slightly
 more to the right than straight down. We were in poor
 cover most of the way (too open). Once in sight of the
 tram road, Puff made a point in a nice spot where I've
 moved birds before. He was too far from the tram road for me to
 walk it in front of the point and so I climbed back toward
 him. The bird went out on the very edge of the tram road and
 would have offered a fine chance had I been there! He didn't seem
 to go far and so I followed down on the side below the road
 but we didn't nail him. It was getting on toward 6:00 now and
 the sun was near the horizon. So were my hopes of a bird. I
 had been somehow feeling about this day as if it were the
 last one of the season and I guess I'd been tightening up
 all along. Puff always senses this and works less keenly,
 and then I begin criticizing him which makes it worse. We

were in the bottom now getting the living parts torn off us
by the greenberries, with only the slope ahead to produce
another chance at a bird and it didn't look too promising. I
remembered times when I had found, and shot, birds in here
and I wondered what had changed it all and why some seasons
they were in one place in numbers and the next would be gone.
We were up on the last flat, within sight of the edge ahead
and Ruff was loafing. I yelled at him to get in there and
shoot and my voice put up a bird that rose and leveled off
into the dusk. I was in that insane frame of mind that
comes to me at a time like this and I turned and started
Ruff in the direction of the flight, as though it were even
remotely possible to follow the bird. Almost at once, there
was the sound of another flush and I found the bird over
my gun barrels, fumbling stupidly
with my gloved thumb for the safety.
I finally got it shoved forward and
fired as I passed him, silhouetted against
the fading sky above the haze of tree branches.
He faltered, leveled off and then after a few yards of flight,
settled out ahead, side slipping to earth like a woodcock. I
called to Ruff and ran up, marking the spot by a dead



may against the sky. Puff came in, got my waist of
 direction, and went to work. He wheeled to the right in
 front of me, head low, stopped on point and then made a
 downward move with his head and picked up the fluttering
 grouse at his very feet. He retrieved it carefully and
 delivered it to me, sitting, with the bird still alive. I examined
 it and found neither wing broken, and neither leg. For a
 moment I considered taking it home alive if it wasn't badly
 shot with the idea of releasing it after it recovered, but in
 a few seconds I saw its head droop and I knew it wouldn't
 live. I dispatched it then. It was a ^{small adult} yearling with an
 interrupted billand. The shooting had been ragged, and this
 shot not centered but, for what it was worth, it meant a
 great deal to me, coming after two barren days and
 especially at this final moment of the day. As Kay and I
 so often feel - it can all happen in a split second - in either
 grouse shooting or trout fishing and when it does you always
 come out of it feeling - what a day! I came out of the woods
 and was surprised to find I was on the path to the car and
 not in the field above the woods.

4 shots - 1 hit

6 protractors
 1 retriever } Puff
 1 kill

1:40 to 6:15 (4 1/2)

~~grouse~~ grouse
 brown bird
 new leaves
 small adult
 head
 3 birds

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Saturday 2 January - The last day. I had been undecided as to where to hunt this final day, with the decision resting between returning to the Dority country where Kuisy Tife and I had made 13, and my old coverts in the Brieries above Muddy Creek around Clint Reckert's place. It was a sunny day, perfectly clear and moderately cold - fine grouse weather after a week of windy or rainy days. Miss Kay couldn't hunt because of her shoulder, I dropped her off at Dr. White's and then drove with Ruff and Feathers to Cuygart and down to Muddy Creek, parking at the old road to Clint Reckert's country. I couldn't resist taking the new 8 mm. movie camera along, carrying it in its case slung over my shoulder under my shooting jacket. I took a scene of Ruff & Feathers as I started them off (~~98~~⁹⁵) and then followed up the mountain, keeping along the little rhododendron stream. I took another shot of both boys in action in the woods (94) but wasn't too impressed with their speed. Both dogs seemed stiff and tired while I was here and raring to go. I guess I could hunt forever. I saw grouse tracks in a trace of nearly week-old snow in the rhododendron but we didn't make a feather. We hunted up the left side of the river till we reached the tram road (completely obliterated now and apparent only when you know it) and then looked,

hunting up the right to below Clint Reckert's place. There, where I
 used to often, more birds I turned south and followed a log road
 along the edge of good cut-over covert. Reaching the end of good
 country, I swung the dogs down the ridge and picked my way
 thru tangles of speurbriers, dragging my feet thru their
 tendrils all the way. Still we saw no birds. At last, I came to
 some excellent grapevines and started toward them, Puff and
 Feathers working in front of me. With no warning from either of
~~them~~ ^{the dogs}, a grouse flushed ahead and as I called to Puff to
 watch himself, he stopped and a second bird went out, too far
 out among the trees for me to try for him as he cut back and
 down the hill. Feathers was further ahead and in a moment
 he flushed #3, a big bird that also went down and
 back, sailing with set wings like a hawk. Why they didn't
 nail the other of them, I cannot say. Hearing the others down
 the slope, I set ^{out} after the two birds that went in the same
 general direction. We made a fair circle with no results.
 I doubled back to the right and still found nothing. Letting
 the dogs go their own way, I made a turn to the right
 again, approaching a good-looking pile of branches and
 logs and got a flash that went out the far side without
 much of a view of him. It was the big bird, I am sure,
 and as he appeared in an open place I took a try at

him, holding to the left side, but he went on. I possibly should
have made a fast moving fast line on
this shot. Whatever I did, was
wrong. I marked his direction by
the sun and called the others on
to follow him. We hunted all the
way to the tram road again, coming



out, to my surprise, among the large boulders that border
it on the upper side. I had imagined them to be well to the
left of us. I hunted out the tram road, turned and doubled
back below, crossed and hunted out above it and still
found no bird. He had to be somewhere around here. I
checked the direction of the sun again and decided he
must be still further below the road. This time I went
well out the tram road and then cut deeply below,
doubling back in the opposite direction ^{to} of the bird's flight
from me. I had reached the little basin below the rocks
and was dropping over when the grass flushed - the big
one, and rose from a spot below me, rising acutely and
nearly straight away. I swung past and fired as I
went thru him, before he leveled off, and saw him flutter
a split second and then go down. I remembered the
mories and, laying my gun down without reloading,
unfastened the camera and got out ^{the camera}

Just then I remembered my gun and, checking, found I had laid it down with the safety off, still loaded with one shell. I put it on safe and then turned, focussing Ruff as he picked up the quonss and started in with it. I got him all the way till he approached me, when I ordered him to sit, but he felt he had to come closer to do that and kept moving up as I backed away.

Finally he sat and held the bird, giving me a small chance at him with the camera at f4. ~~There~~ when that was over he got up and brought the bird up to me. Next, I put Ruff & Feathers by an old log and got a shot of the hunters with the quonss, a beautiful



big rock with
and a grayish

shining black ruffs
cast to the feathers.

I shot this at f8 and also Ruff beside the quonss lying stumps. It was a beautiful bird for a beautiful hot day and all we needed was Kay there with us.



RUFF HOLDS THE POSE.

a sequence of
on a sunny old

I ate lunch on this same log which was on a sort of flat rock that formed a platform in a sunny spot. It was after 3:00 and we hunted out the ~~train~~ road toward the run again.

As we neared the town of the ridge I stepped about the road, instinctively I guess, and flushed a bird wild ahead of me that headed for the little stream. As I followed it, #5 went out and I saw it pitch for the far side of the run, as I thought it did. I followed it as the most certain flight and walked into it on the edge of the rhododendron near the bridge, seeing it burst out and over the thick foliage but getting no shot. I'm not sure if we missed him again but I have that impression as the dogs unbed ahead of me. I returned to the train road and the bridge, working up the right bank again, as I had done earlier. At the fence below Clint Reckert's place I ~~went to the left~~ crossed and was continuing up the path when a bird flushed from the hill to the right, cutting back downstream some little distance out thru the trees. It was a poor chance but I took it, trying for him as he crossed — and missed. As I reloaded, a second bird flushed when the dogs moved in, having come in at the shot, and I saw it top the ridge away from me. I called to Feathers and Puff and my voice put up a third that held low and quartered a bit to the right. It was a fine chance and I found the spot



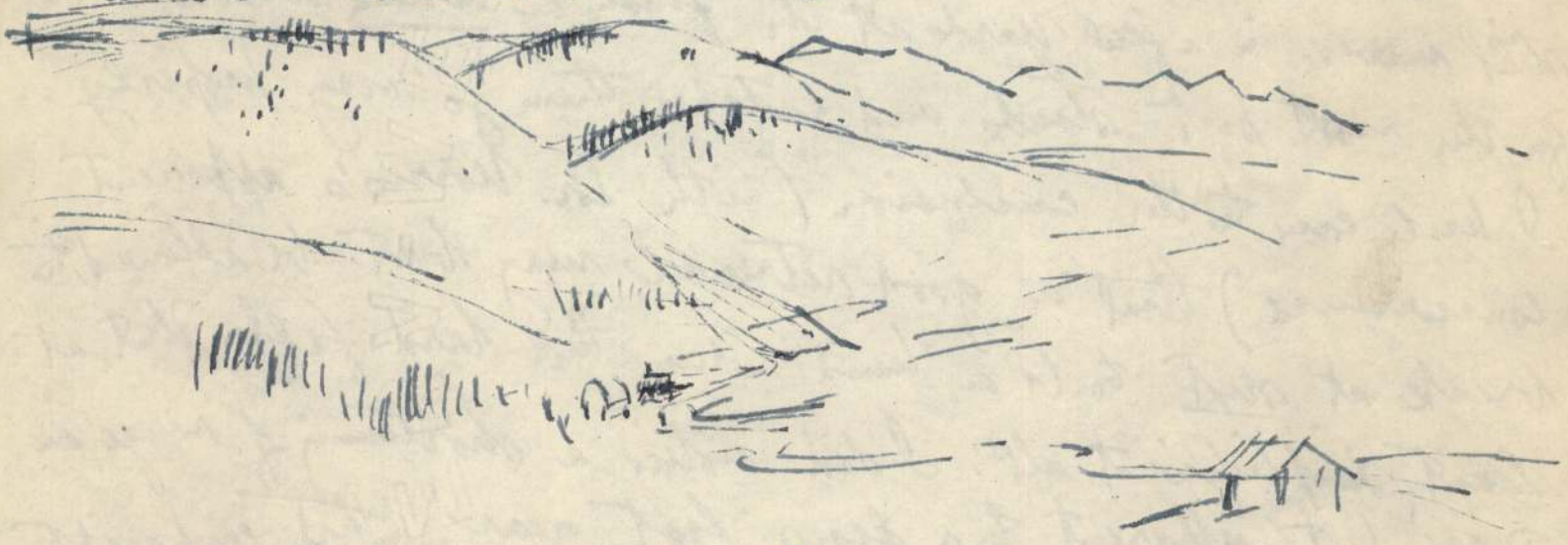


a bit above and to the right, pulling hard on a trigger that wouldn't give. By the time I got my safety off, the bird was gone. It might not have

been a hit, I'd never know. But I do know I'd have been more likely to have remembered the safety if I hadn't been gapping at Ruff & Feathers. Now that it's over, I'm just as happy the bird is still there alive. At the moment, my blood lust was running hot and I followed the two grouse that went over the hill, hoping for a point. We carried the probable cover with no result, then turned and cut back below the fence. ^{There} I came on Feathers, solid. Looking below, I saw Ruff on the "lead point" with Feathers doing harmony. It was along another wire fence that ran thru woods and grapevines tangled along the ground and hanging from the trees - a perfect place for the birds to have dropped into. I threw a leg over the fence and walked in past Feathers, giving him a tap as I passed. I saw that Ruff was almost under the wire and so I had to straddle the fence again and walk in. The bird flushed without giving me more than a hint that he pitched down the hill, and I sent the boys after him. A short grouse flight down the ridge, still in these fine ^{George Bird Evans Papers} ^{West Virginia and Regional History Center} Ruff jacked up again. Feathers, however, was working further out and I

me him casting back below us. As he approached
the line of direction of Puff's point, the grouse flushed on
the far side of him, fifty or sixty yards ahead of Puff
and myself. It was the last bird of the day. We hunted
back to the stream to find the remaining bird of the two but
failed to see it. It was getting late but I wanted to
hunt the farm road north toward Muddy Creek. I did
work out, well beyond the road that leads down the
mountain but made nothing but a large owl that
soiled out ahead of me - probably a horned owl. The
cove here was fair, with some grouse but utterly
unproductive. Doubling back to the old road, I hunted
along it till I approached the bottom of the ridge - then
held to the little run and its Rhododendron margin but
made no more birds. The sun was down behind the hills
now but the sky was still bright and translucent. I
got the loop in the station wagon and hurriedly drove
onto the road toward the Center School hoping for a more
shot of the Brierley before it was too dark. I got two,
one as I climbed the hill, entering the wooded mountain
with the cove I had been hunting this afternoon.

lot of excellent cover along the base that I'd like to
 explore again. Then I drove on and caught the wonderful
 sweep of ridge from above Samoy with the Briery Mountains
 piling up into the south. (shot at 2.5). It was a
 fine day with all the charm of the Brieries, the best
 day of the season, and a wonderful grouse. I stopped on the
 road past Samoy to drink my coffee and watch the
 final golden glow of the sunset beyond the hills to the west.
 It had been fun hunting this old covert again and an inspiration
 when I decided to go back.



12:40-6:10 (5 1/2)	3 shots - 1 hit	2 productives	} Ruff
large adult	heard 8 - 12 flocks	1 retriever	
almost solid land: coals		1 kill	
asp: full of grapes.		1 back (prod.)	} Feathers
		1 kill	

Summary

This has been a strange season, outstanding in many ways - less than that in others. The excessively dry weather almost repeated last years situation with unpredictable reactions on the part of the grouse. That had its effect on the dog work, especially early in the year. Shooting in Pennsylvania helped overcome the loss of hunting both dogs and man would have faced during the West Virginia closed period and was well worth doing.

Ruff did his own wonderful brand of bird work with even more commendable performance on steadiness to wing. He still moves in a few yards at the flush, on certain occasions, but for the most part stands and catches them so very properly. I had come to the conclusion (with Dr. Norris's apparent concurrence) that a good retriever may best be allowed to break at shot to be on hand when the bird falls. That, at least, simplifies it all. I did notice a shortening of range on Ruff's part (apparent to a degree last year) that, compared to his former range, is a little less spectacular. He still reaches out at times, a hundred yards in open woods, but it seems to me that he works most of the time less than fifty yards ahead of me. Perhaps he has found he can handle his birds better that way, perhaps it is that I hunt denser cover than I used to. ~~Whatever the cause, he~~

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seems usually to be working at a logical distance, so who am I to my?). I just hope it isn't that he is slowing because of age. Six and a half years surely can't show on him. And his speed has not changed a bit from his lovely, looping gait, so I can't think he is feeling the years. I have one chief fault to admit to in Ruff: too great a tendency to check with me instead of ranging independently. I can overcome that somewhat by blowing him on the moment he shows and before he actually stops. I prefer not to do that much handling while shooting but, after all, it is his desire to please and his devotion to me, as the gun, and I can't fault him for the incentive. This year I felt a certain tendency to produce false points but that may have been conditions. Overbalancing these two details ~~is~~ ^{is} all the brilliant character of his work — his inspired bird sense, his nose, his beautiful gait and style, both moving and on point and, above any of them — his being the handsome, lovable Ruff that he is. His retrieving alone would make him outstanding. His record of productive points suffered this year, as it did last, and largely because young Teathers is taking over the initiative to an extent. In 1951 Ruff's 114 productives were possibly because he worked mostly solo. Last year, 1952, I shot with young Teathers. This year I used both Wilder and Teathers more, hunting Ruff solo

less than ever. New Year's Day alone with him added up my
productives that probably wouldn't have happened with Wilda,
especially, ranging out ahead. I wish I could hunt Ruff
alone more often - it's the way to build up points, but I
have Father to consider and, next year there'll be young
Arthur. Anyway, there'll never be another Ruff.

Feathers came out beautifully this year, as if in answer
to our decision to keep him - or more nearly as if to hold
a mute accusation over us for thinking of letting him go.
He ranges beautifully - again that word - wider than
Ruff at present, tracks consummately and absolutely
stanchly, retrieves with a zest that is a pleasure to behold
and too often to suit Ruff. His points are a bit gangly,
somewhat piled-up in effect but when he points you
can nearly count on action ahead. He rarely misses. His
pace is a long-gaited lope, not as pretty as Ruff's but
very graceful for all of that and he carries a nice tail-
higher than his pointing position. He is dead serious and
is going to be a honey.

Wilda hasn't developed as fast as I had hoped. The best
I can say for her is that she has loads of range, Stamina,
a merry tail, and an intense ~~outlook~~ ^{love of hunting}. She

will backpoint beautifully but is very slow about establishing the pointing instinct. This year made fewer points than last. I think if I hunted her alone she'd come along faster but Puff and Teathers are so stimulating to work with I can't get around to hunting her solo. I doubt if I ever make a retriever out of her. Maybe she's seen Puff & Teathers take on the honors too often, maybe she was too old before I tried to teach her, but she just doesn't seem to care. With young shadows to develop, I'll not likely get to find out what could be achieved in that line. Willa would be better off with someone who would hunt her consistently alone, but she's such a character and Puff loves her - and so do I!

As for the shooting, I set aside my practice of holding all record bird tries for points, simply because I was suspicious for some uninitiated grouse shooting once again. My average performance had suffered definitely from mental blocks caused by the necessary restraint and once I abandoned that, the shooting picked up. The chief regret I have is that I think it cut down on the number of points and kills over points I could have credited Puff. It also accounts for a reduction in flushes as shown in the records. When you kill a bird, he

init them to flush or point again.

The chief improvement I felt in my gunning, tho my average wasnt as high as some former years, came from the use of the fast swing as described in Dr. Morris's book. In spite of what I so profoundly wrote on the subject at the end of last season's notes, I am now convinced, for the present at least, that I do much better with the fast swing, pivoting the body turret-fashion, and firing as the muzzle goes thru or passes the bird's head. This with a well forward position of the left hand — straighter arm — and a good fast swing. It doesnt do the trick if you too nearly approximate the bird's speed. Altho you can kill birds with the sustained lead or intercepted lead, this offers shots you have no time to bring off in any other way. It offers less error in vertical alignment and is a more instructive method. For a while this year I got into a rut and found myself doing it too hurriedly, simply because I had pulled me a two rather spectacular shots. But by taking a split-second of time, which in some cases gives the bird time to stop dodging and also makes your own performance more accurate, it is badly all shots that

have enough movement across your plane of vision to give you the proper opportunity to swing these barrels. I did find that straightaway or near-straightaway, the less acutely rising and less acutely quartering shots, ^{and some distant quartering shots} handle best with the intercepted or slightly sustained lead, as formerly - simply because they do not offer enough travel across the plane of vision to swing ~~with~~ part. The greatest danger with these is the stopping of the muzzle. Again, with these as with the fast swing, that moment of hesitation that seems to settle your reflexes and gives your pattern more distance to spread is the critical factor. I now carry my gun on safe at all times and even walk into a point that way. I find the act of pushing that safety up a valuable restraint to nervous shooting. It cost me two good ~~shots~~ chances (they all seem possible when the trigger is locked) this year but probably did much more good than that for my other shots.

The accompanying chart of shots at pause may or may not show something about my faults if kept over a period. I intend to do it anyway. From this year's observations of it, it would appear that:

- 1) Birds offer ^{a few} more crossing shots left or right, at their various heights than any other category and that I shot 11.6%.

on these, doing slightly better on the left-going birds (42.1) than right (41.1)

2) On closer examination, I find that ~~35~~³⁵ shots were in the quartering category, almost the same and that I shot only ^{25.7} ~~24.4~~% on these, doing 29.4 on left-wiss and 22.2 on right-wiss.

I do not include the only slightly quartering shots which I ~~include~~^{class} as "away" shots, taking intercepted lead instead of fast swing. Neither do I include out-of-trees shots or in-comers.

3) On "away" shots I did 38%, better than I imagined for I consider them my greatest weakness. On ~~the~~ "away, low" and "away" with slight left or right directions I did better on the left than the right (50% on the left and 0 on the rights).

I still have to perfect the fast swing on acutely rising shots (killed the last bird of the year on an ^{acutely} rising away shot that way), out-of-trees shots, in-comers, and overhead leveling off shots.

I am sold on the #8 - 3 dram - $1\frac{1}{8}$ of load (with #7 $\frac{1}{2}$ as second choice and use of a ^{#8} 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ dram in left barrel). Also am sold on the large ivory bead. It's small. Almost all am "gone" on my old load, the 7 of which I shot for the 27th consecutive year this season.

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The movies added greatly to both Kay's enjoyment and interest in the sport and to mine and we look forward to building up, or storing up, a lot of wonderful days with gun and the others, capturing especially Puff and his work with grouse for all time.

I hope someday to try a combination gun-camera that will permit "dry-killing" birds on film. I think it could be done with a stock-and-barrel length-and-weight that duplicates my Top so that it would all be so much extra experience. It could be carried as often the winter with all the thrill of shooting and do no harm to the birds. There'd have to be some actual shooting to provide experience for the boys in retrieving but I see wonderful possibilities. I think Bernie Gubble might be the man to make the "gun."

Vital statistics for 1953:

GEORGE: 35 DAYS, 23 COVERTS, 142½ HOURS 9. bird/went WV
(17 W.V.A. 6 PA.)
97 SHOTS - 32 HITS (ONE LOST) 32.98%
206 BIRDS MOVED (5.86 PER DAY, 1.44 PER HOUR) 344 FLUSHES
(153 W.V.A. 53 PA.) (271 W.V.A. - 73 PA.)

RUFF: 31 DAYS 52 PRODUCTIVES (1.67 PER DAY)
27 KILLED OVER (6 KILLS OVER POINTS)
22 RETRIEVES

LIFETIME RECORD: 392 PRODUCTIVES
('47 - '53) 141 KILLED OVER (37 KILLS OVER POINTS)
105 RETRIEVES

FEATHERS: 21 DAYS 4 PRODUCTIVES, 6 PRODUCTIVE BACK POINTS
21 KILLED OVER (1 KILL OVER BACK POINT)
9 RETRIEVES

LIFETIME RECORD: 4 PRODUCTIVES, 6 PRODUCTIVE BACK POINTS
('52 - '53) 27 KILLED OVER (1 OVER BACK POINT)
10 RETRIEVES

WILDA: 16 DAYS 1 PRODUCTIVE BACK POINT
9 KILLED OVER

LIFETIME RECORD: 4 PRODUCTIVES, 1 PRODUCTIVE BACK POINT
('51 - '53) 19 KILLED OVER

This year 1953 of the 31 quans brought home, the distribution of adults and yearlings as well as cooles and hens ran as follows, compared with 1952:

1953

14 adults, 17 yearlings

18 cooles, 13 hens

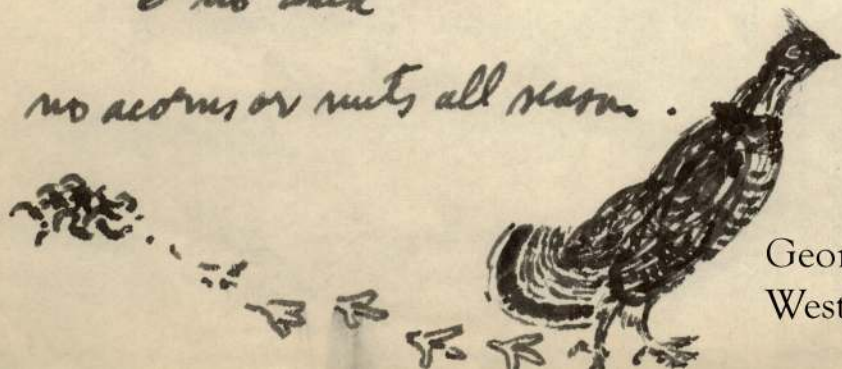
12 adult cooles { 6 solid tailband
5 nearly-solid "
1 missing center feathers

6 yearling cooles { 3 solid tailbands
2 nearly solid "
1 interrupted "

2 adult hens (both interrupted tailbands)
11 yearling hens (all " " "

Crops: 8 empty
15 grapes or grapes & leaves
1 leaves & buds alone
1 greenberry berries
6 no data

no acorns or nuts all season.



1952

7 adults, 8 yearlings.

6 cooles, 9 hens

adult
~~6~~ 1 cooles { 2 solid tailbands
2 nearly solid "
2 interrupted "

1 adult hen (interrupted tailband)
8 yearling hens { 6 interrupted "
2 nearly solid "

crops: 3 empty
5 grapes or grapes & leaves
2 beechnuts with other leaves
4 leaves or buds alone
greenberry berries in 2
no acorns all season.

1953

- ✓ CADELL
- ★ ✓ WHETZEL SETTLEMENT
- ★ DORITY COUNTRY (POSSUM HOLLOW
- " " (GAS LINE 13.18.1
- ELSEY

- 12/14 CRAB ORCHARD
- ✓ HAZELTON (ABOVE, ETC)
- ✓ BABCOCK GRADE (DAVIS)
- ✓ CABIN MT. (COSNER SCHOOL)
- ✓ STONY RIVER (MT. STORM)
- ✓ HORTON, ETC.
- ✓ DOLLY SODS (BLACKBIRD KNOB)
- ✓ COSNER SETTLEMENT (MT. STORM)
- UPPER BEAVER

★ PARK OF MASON TOWN

GLOVER PLACE
 ✓ CHRISTOPHER RUN 10/30 12/22
 FOREST: SCOTT RUN: 15.18.1 (4(1)-4.2

- 14/30 ENCHANTED VALLEY ETC.
- 10/31 FIRE TOWER RIDGE & GAS LINE 4.7.0
- GLADE (PARALLEL ROAD?)
- ★ - MUDDY CREEK (MRS. WOLF'S) 3.5.1
- WYMP'S GAP (LAUREL HEAD WATERS)

- ★ SUGAR VALLEY (DENNETT)
- LAUREL RUN: EAST N
- WEST (TOWARD ROCKVILLE) 4.6.0

- ★ - BEYOND PLEASANT VALLEY (TOWARD ROCKVILLE) 8.13.1

- HOMER MILLER (ALSO OLD COUNTRY, BIG BLOW) MT. DAVIS
- 7.10.0 (12.2) 14.1 (4.2) 4.1 (9.5) 16.1 CUCUMBER RUN (BELLE GROVE)
- LICK RUN 7.8.1 (3.2) 5.1 ABOVE GORLLES
- ✓ HUDSON ROAD PENNA:
- HOY MILLERS 6.7.2 (7.5) 17.0 (4.1) 0

- JUNE'S 6(3) 7.0
- ROARING GAP 3.4.2
- x PINEY RUN (BACK OF WALKERS) 9.9.1

- ✓ CLIFTON (CONNELLY'S) 1.2.0
- x PINEY RUN HEADWATERS 1.1.0
- HAZEL RUN & OLD FARM 13.27.2
- x x TUB RUN 7.10.0 (11) (5) 6.1

- BENSON FARM (5) 8.0
- x x RIDGE (RIGHT AT FLANIGAN SCHOOL) 7.9.1
- LOWER SPIKER 4 FAULKENSTIDE (SUGARLOAF ROAD (BOWER) 9.12.1
- " " RAMCAT

- PIZ GAH CAL RECKNER'S
- RIGHT AT MARKLEYBURG
- BEAVER CREEK ROAD (HUMBERTSON)

- VALLEY PT. 6.8.2
- x " " AT BRIDGE 11.17.1
- LAUREL (SPITTALS)

- MT. ZION 9.10.2
- LITTLE SANDY 9.14.1 (CHARLES KELLY)
- FLAT (NORTH OF SMITH SCHOOL)

- MT. NEBO (HIGH BRIDGE)
- BEECH RUN ROAD
- LAUREL (WALKERS) 3.3.1
- WILHELMS (WHITE CREEK) 5.6.2

1953

- 12/11 Hazel Run (long creek up - 8-2-13(27))
12/14 Valley Pt. - 2-2-6(8) - low water.
12/17 - Muddy Creek. (hand of John's) 2-1-3(5)
12/18 L. Sandy 1-1-7(11)
12/19 Little Run 3-1-3(5)
12/21 Haykiller 0-0-4(7)
12/22 Scall Run 3-2-4(4)
12/23 Rockville 1-0-4(6)
12/26 Horner's woods 3-1-4(4)
12/29 Dorely (with Russey) 4-1-13(18)
12/30 Haykiller 1-0-6(7)
12/31 Hazel Run 5-0-5(8)
1/1 Horner's Camp 4-1-9(16)
1/2 - (Muddy/Clear R) 3-1-8(13)

shots - hits - birds - (flocks)

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