

Shooting Season 1959

Monday 19 October

Ruffo 13th, the Fox doubles 33rd.
Dixie's 2nd.

The legal season opened October 3rd, with the leaves and dry weather like early September, the load of house work begun after the book (The Pink Carrara) and my own good common sense holding me in until today. Ray and I decided to try for woodcock since it is still far too dense to shoot grouse. We began in the Willett swamps with Ruff and Dixie. The cover even there was too lush — chest-high weeds difficult for Ruff who cannot see me well but keeps in touch by the tinkle of a sleighbell I carry in my pants pocket instead of making the usual clucking sound of former years to guide him.

The first action came with a woodcock flushed ahead of Dixie — no sign of scent by her — which I was fortunate enough to drop on a straight-away. Dixie located it but would not retrieve and Ruff, too, refused as usual. A nice large hen.



Ray took a movie of the bird and within minutes I walked into a second one that climbed up before I could get focused on it. We followed and at the fence that crosses the swamp flushed 3 grouse separately and with no shot.

another woodcock that we count #3 flushed twice from Dixie who put it out with no indication of a point. at the upper end of the cove, after I had left Day & Ruff. Dixie and I missed one of the grouse, a rising quarter that I missed - not too easy a shot.



We returned to the car and moved to the big swamp or Handlen's (not Haulen) place near Hazelton, using Feathers and Marlow - a mistake together. They swept all before them, including a cock pheasant that rose, unseen and cackling far away from Day and me.

2:00 - 4:15	Wallett:	3 woodcock - 4 flushes	Ruff
		1 woodcock shot - 1 hit	Dixie
		3 grouse - 4 flushes	
		1 shot - no hit	

5:00 - 6:15	Handlen's:	1 cock pheasant	Feathers
		no hits	Marlow

Thursday 22 October ^{B/C #7} With Herman and Helen Hindman to the Davis area, driving into rain that intensified by Aurora. Phoned ahead to learn it was raining in Davis but "not so hard," and

we decided to go on, and glad we were for it had cleared
when we reached Guann Valley. We could see the low cloud
cap over Calvin Mt. (familiar sight) but wanted to try it anyway
and up we went. Just at the top we entered a cold rain mist,
much like the one we took less. Crawl into a Dolly Robo. The
girls remained in the car and Herman & I hunted out the trail
road with Dixie & Marlowe (had left Puffy & Trappers home).
Herd one bird from the open low cover that went out behind
the dogs and me. Turned back and soon heard a flash of
wings and saw shadows bringing in a nice big cock, still
struggling. I think it a cripple someone left. (gave it to H. & H.)
No more birds tho Herman heard a number in here
two weeks ago. Both soaked to the legs, we gave up and drove
down out of the gorge into clear weather in the valley.

Just short of Davis we parked at Devils Run and
hunted to the ridge when I moved a bird. Altogether we
moved eleven for 17 flashes in this area around a strip
operation (finished) and the ^(2 groups of 3) Reservoir. On the edge of a
clearing ~~at~~ the reservoir Herman moved a bird that came
out low and cut back through an opening where I got a
nice away shot, dropping it.

Kay had no time to get a movie. She did take the retrieved, a beauty by Miss Dixie, who fought her way thru quambies (the birds were in quambies here) to run to me with the grouse.



DIXIE BRINGS IN #1 FOR THE YEAR.

Some time later we left Kay and Helen to walk to the car while we hunted along the ridge. On their path they moved a trio of grouse that we

tried to follow - eventually moving all of them. One flush came over me, high, before I was aware and I took a quick try, unfortunately not with the choke barrel. The grouse fell ^{then} ~~and~~ regaled itself but went on with a leg dangling. I felt I'd pick it up but there was a high wind on top and the dogs could not find it.

Dixie had made a lovely production as one of three grouse K. & H. had moved behind us. She held until the bird started, then broke.



(First production after moving) My crippling the grouse I missed was the only flaw of a day that turned out



wonderfully. We ate dinner at the Blackhawk Inn and later dropped in on Walt Lessor and his party in their cabin. Walt & Hanson had got into lots of woodcock, indicating that the flight is on. John had made 2 prod. a woodcock, 2 on grouse boxes much thinner than

2:00 - 3:15

Calvin Mt.

mowed 1 - 1 flush
no shots

4:00 - 6:45

Devils Run

mowed 11 - 17 flashes
2 shots - 1 hit

Dixie: 1 prod.
1 kill
1 retriever

Meadows: 1 kill

yearling cock: solid; collar, with
crop: quince berries, indef. leaves

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Friday 23 October: Took an afternoon hunt with Feathers,  
this I was scarcely hindered from yesterday and last night's late ride  
home. Day stayed at home. Tried for woodcock (woods too thick for  
grouse up here) in Worley Wrights swamp, going in back way. No  
woodcock but mowed two separate grouse, the last one near the  
car. Took a try at a rising left-cross shot that was too fast.



Had been backing Feathers constantly to get him in  
close but he persists in coming out. As he was  
coming back from a while I was thinking about  
him and flushed the grouse a second time - a fine rising  
shot but I was unprepared and couldn't get the gun to my  
shoulder in time. Once mounted, I couldn't hold off the shot  
that was, as I pulled and knew it, yards behind. Mowed the tree  
from a tree near the road. Took the car back to the shell out



and made an hour's turn with no action at all until I was starting back and walked onto a woodcock. It bore up in front, nearly fanning my face and I turned and had to beat down on the thick whip-size saplings with my gun barrel but could not get low enough as the bird dropped in perspective and missed it clean, bagging only a shower of leaves.



A FALL OF LEAVES.

2:30 - 4:30      Worley Wrights Comings swamp:      7 feathers  
                      moved 2 grouse - 5 flushes  
                                          2 shots - no hits

5:00 - 6:00      Willett's : 1 woodcock moved - 1 flush  
                                          1 shot (woodcock) no hit

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Monday 26 October: "Cabin 22" — one of the most pleasant  
in glorious color <sup>B/C #8</sup> shooting traps (three days in the Carson  
Vally), because it was entirely new, left in lovely weather and  
in face of bad forecasts, but good woodcock day. <sup>snow on trees as we topped Backbone.</sup> Reserved cabin at  
Blackwater on way thru Davis, checked with Ben Thompson (nice person)  
and began hunting in original covert along river, using Ruff & Dixie.  
Moved two or three 'cove' near aspen clumps and missed a couple of  
trios. Ruff made a lovely point on river side of road that should have  
given me a kill. I dropped the next flush (left-quartering) and  
neither Ruff nor Dixie would pick it up. Back in main covert Ruff  
was gone for a period before I found him on interest point. Dixie came  
in and <sup>he</sup> ~~he~~ had to be checked really and still the bird lay.  
 She moved closer and the 'cove' flushed two feet from

Ruff's nose and I shot off a few twigs.

Unfortunately, this covert is a bad one for Ruff.

Moving well out and very confident, he  
must have had another bird for us lost

him and for the third time in this very area, he became confused — barking  
until we could reach him. We had given him a dilatant that a.m. and  
the preceding night and the effect was not extreme but on the way to  
the station wagon he could not see well and had to be led. It  
was a shame, for he had been doing so nicely.

Leaving Ruff and <sup>lay</sup> with Dixie and Tatters I took Shadow for  
a big circle. He moves too fast and <sup>George Bird Evans Papers</sup> ~~and~~ had no  
bonds that I saw. He did put a big bird across left and high



RUFF NAILS  
A TIGHT BIRD.



enough about the thicket to give me a wonderful chance that I utilized. Meadows found and promptly retrieved - a big hen <sup>woodcock</sup>.



The difference between missing and hitting these birds is the moment's wait - the "focus" - before mounting the gun.

It means passing up some of the quick trees I seem to insist upon and it doesn't mean I can make myself do it consistently but it is as simple as that, and it applies to all wing shooting.

The third lot was a left-quartering with Dixie and the fourth was a two-barrel try, dropping it with the left after a too-quick right barrel. It was getting late and Kay was with me, using Dixie for the covert near the river at the second gate. The light was poor, I had missed a lovely try on a high left-crosser, Dixie was working the cover well but not pointing and I was edgy. The bird flushed from me (left-away).

and as I shot it the rain began to fall as if from the report.

It was a lovely four hour shoot and we seemed to have been in the flight. Went back to a delightful cabin, a fine dinner before the fire and sleep to the sound of rain dripping all night long.

March 16 woodcock - 21 flushes. Puff: 2 prowl  
(cock) 10 shots - 4 hits } 1 kill  
Dixie: 3 kills } all  
Meadows: 1 ret } cock  
1 kill

2:00 - 6:00



Tuesday 27 Oct B/C #9 Woke in #22 to a foggy raw rain that seemed  
improving. Ruff was as good as new (a dilatation of routine at bedtime. A  
routine in Tues. a.m.) Got a late start, waiting for the weather to  
ease. One of exciting moments at cabin was sight of a big cock grouse  
cropping blades of grass in the clearing outside kitchen window as  
calmly as a pheasant in a pen. He saw us thru the window but other



than to keep an eye <sup>in</sup> our direction, ignored  
us. Each time he swallowed a blade of grass  
his tongue flashed light tan. I slipped  
out with Dixie hoping to get some work on the bird and saw a second  
grouse move off into dense rhododendron at edge. #1 soon cocked  
his topknot and slunk off very erect and alert now. Dixie hit the  
scent and the bird flushed.

The rain stopped (off and on) enough for us to explore the  
"gas well" road, stopping at a farm and talking to Mr. Beall who told me  
how to reach the main river about a mile further (at Yolkum Run).  
The cover here is typical river edge, unlike Ben Thompson's, with  
narrow fringe of alders soon blending into hemlock and hardwoods and  
with steep hillsides, limiting woodcock protection. The rains had  
raised the river and the bottom was soggy. Dixie bounded a woodcock  
almost at once and made #2 not fifty yards ahead. Can't see  
why she is not pointing these birds. To keep in possible cover we  
turned and hunted upstream. Ruff was doing well again but  
watching to keep me located. I was wearing a slight hold extending my



pants pocket or hanging to belt and he finds it helpful. It  
saw much whistling and "chucking" on my part. I saw Dixie  
but scent at mouth of Yokeum Run and instead of freezing,  
but he was down and root out a 'cock that crossed the high  
tributary. We couldn't follow and so returned to car, leaving R & D  
and taking Feathers who had not had a turn yesterday. Hunted  
up right side, making a grouse that came back and almost gave  
me a chance. Later heard the woodcock go out. My dogs work too  
wild and fast except for Ruff who is more valuable than any of  
them in this case. Doubling back downstream, Feathers heard the  
grouse from out ahead. It came high and toward us, on its way  
to cross the river. I took it as a high right-meiner and it  
folded (and for a moment I thought would fall in the water). It did



land in a puddle, face-down. Feathers came  
in to retrieve, hit the scent, and did everything  
but step on the bird. Apparently he could not  
accept the idea that it would be in the water. At last he located it  
and retrieved nicely - a big cock but I guess it a yearling.

We made on to hunt the woodcock coverts around the  
river and adjacent to the original Thompson (the two-gate covert)  
but more rain interfered. Spent a pleasant couple of hours  
exploring the Cortland Road (right back to Ball's) and in a visit



with the Thompsons. at 5 o'clock the rain stopped and we hurried to the "gates" rather than try a new place. The thickset was dripping (my plastic knee pads did well) and Kay stayed in the car while I worked Dixie.

That young lady was doing better. I came on one nice intense point that produced a cock that flushed "up and over". My moment of focus was effective and the bird dropped. Kay got a movie of it later when I reached the road. I went on to the far side and again got a lovely point from Dixie on the edge of the big aspens. She is not, as yet, even staunch, and she moved in. The bird rose in



REACHING FOR IT.

a right-quartering chance that seemed excellent until I tried to pull the trigger with the safety on.

On a last circle far out into the low thick growth on my way back to the road I walked into the bird in a wet spot that did not look remotely good. It flushed almost at my feet and in the darkly fading light I snapped at the flash of its under parts - once, twice, and it went on, the tweet-tweet of its wings mocking the echo of my shots. A quarter mile away, Kay heard my "Damn!"

Yokum Run (cock: missed 4 - 4 flushes no shots) (Dixie & Ruff) Drove to cabin in snowy rain.

grouse: missed 1 - 2 flushes 1 shot - 1 hit

Thompson's gates: (cock: missed 4 not new - 5 flushes. 3 shots - 1 hit) (over) →



adult  
~~yearling~~ grouse cock: inter. wide. collar  
crop: leaves, bud.

Wednesday 28 October <sup>B/C #10</sup> Full scope of weather. Today flawlessly  
clear and sunny with 50° weather warming as the day progressed.  
Said goodbye to our nice little cabin 22, took a last look at  
Blackwater Gorge in flaming color (had seen it at dusk on  
Monday, coming in) and headed for the balsam stand that  
Ben Thompson had suggested for grouse, parking at his entrance  
and walking the mile across the flat to "Cone Run." Used  
Dixie and Ruff, feeling it wise to give Ruff his turn in the first  
part of the day. Incidentally, he had been fine after his first touch  
of confusion in the woodcock cove. Had given him delirium each  
nite and routine - phenobarb in a.m.

Once at the balsam; spruce, - hemlock woods - a nice limited  
area that lies at the base of Canaan Mt. we tried the upper  
end for want of an idea where to go. Moved nothing and started in  
the lower portion where things began to happen. Dixie was out  
in the heavy woods and we heard three grouse go, separately,  
accompanied by low bark indicating birds in trees. Unable to  
penetrate the woods we worked to the left edge and I walked  
into a bird that flushed from a dead spruce top dying from  
old cuttings. The flush was a low ~~left coming with~~ <sup>left coming with</sup> song



13  
little view of it. A quick swing, firing as I passed ahead,



caused the bird to almost tumble, then roost along the ground and soar up into the dense timber. Ray said we'd find it dead and I fervently hoped so. But after several circles all the way to the far edge with no sign of it, I began to think I'd merely penetrated the tail fan. We hunted the others and moved one at a time back to the original flush area. As we skirted the far edge I saw both Ruff & Dixie noses down, at something on the edge of the woods. Then Dixie picked up the dead grouse and retrieved it to me, corroborating Ray. It was a nice yearling cock, still warm and very dead. We took time for lunch and a short gloat. The situation seemed about as good as situations can get — a crystal Indian Summer day in this spectacular valley in full color with the big mountains on either side. And our grouse brought to hand.

As we moved back down the arm of woods toward the tip, we wondered where the rest of Ben Thompson's twelve grouse were, but we didn't quarrel with the four we had moved. Then we began to count flushes as Dixie entered the last few yards of woods — ten in all. One came back and landed a few yards from me, took off, and ignored my pattern of 8's that by all means ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~perforated~~ <sup>perforated</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~too~~ <sup>too</sup>



quick a shot. Two young grouse sat through it till the last, watching from low saplings as I waited for them to flush and finally walked up under them. By that time I had looked too deeply into their eyes and I couldn't shoot. We followed one bird that sailed out to some single spruce beyond the edge where I did my best to work the dogs in for a point, but Dixie only ran into it and bounced it beyond shot and then chased. I've never, that I can remember, put a dog into a bird I have seen land and had it successfully handle the situation. Why?

I summoned Miss Dixie in, warmed her badly bottom and made myself clear to her and after that noticed an improvement. Flushed more of the birds - mostly heard them go from trees - and missed a likely chance as one flushed away after leaving a low spruce.

Back on the far edge and very near the site of my first shot, I saw Dixie point, then was on. As I walked up she pointed again into a pile of spruce tops, circles and pointed from the other side.

Dixie moved up and crouched low, ready with the camera.

Dixie seemed certain and I began to consider another bird wounded.

Finally I kicked the tangle and it exploded, a big grouse fighting clear and then clinking back over my head. I got it a





CHAIN REACTION.

short moment and caught it climbing - a rising right-quartering. The quack fell on top of moss spruce cuttings and Dixie found and retrieved it, as Kay, who had sat in a puddle at the flush as she tried for a picture, took a more of the delivery. A big adult cock, a semi-red, <sup>the first grouse I ever shot over Dixie's point</sup> that made our day on grouse in this cover, leaving at least ten. The Cansan Valley had at last been vindicated! At once I gave Feathers a turn while Kay changed film and we talked to Ben Thompson and, later, two men from Masontown (Cornell and Beery).

It was nearly 4:30 when we started in to try the Cooper side of the woodcock cover along Blackwater. It seemed, somehow, not quite right, with spruces dotted among it. We used vehicles who moved entirely too wide and bumped 3 grouse but no cock.

Rather than try further at this late point we switched over to Thompson's "Gale's" cove, using Dixie alone. Kay took the car on in (Ruff seemed perfectly normal) after a fairly long walk) with



began with the large open clump. In the exact spot where  
Dixie had pointed the cock last evening, I flushed two. The  
second one looked good - low and sunny than the other but I  
found too much air around it. Following to the right side of  
the road Dixie moved a bird that gave me little view but did  
offer that split moment and, almost sure it was too late, I went for  
it and dropped it solidly thru the alders. Dixie seemed to  
find it at the base of an alder clump, (one of thousands here) then  
landed it. To my surprise I couldn't see it nor could I  
get her to go back - one of the evils of their attitude  
toward woodcock. Calling to Ray who sent Mollars in.  
I looked again and found the bird, back up and nearly invisible, just  
before he arrived. I tossed it out and let him retrieve. ~~at the same~~ <sup>later</sup>,  
Ray took a movie of it against Cabin Mountain, red in the sunset.

We moved in all, 6 for 10 flushes - four of them after Ray  
joined me to finish up with Dixie alone, but no more shots. As we  
hunted the area before the second gate we saw eleven <sup>geese</sup> ~~will geese~~  
winging back and forth in evening flight. It had turned very cold  
and walking back to the car Ray saw a big planet-like object in  
the east above Cabin Mt. and we could almost imagine that it moved.  
Blaming it on our fatigued vision we forgot about it and let it pass



unable to locate it. Puzzled, we learned the next day that we had seen a government missile balloon sent up on the Virginia coast, visible for only ten minutes. We had seen it for nearly that long as we walked down the long straight road toward the car. We ate, driving home, and wound up a fine three-day shoot with 3 grouse and six woodcock, all in a period that was still too full of leaf at home, enriched with the most intense autumn color we'll ever see. Good.

12:45-3:10 (balsam woods, Cove Run) moved <sup>14</sup> grouse - 27 flushes  
 4 shots - 2 hits  
 yearling cock grouse: solid, collar, with crop: lumpy (6 round worms in viscera) new seeds in  
 adult cock grouse: semi-interrupted, collar, wide crop: leaves, haws. Dixie: 1 prod (R.O.)  
2 kills  
2 ret.  
Ruff: 2 kills

4:20-5:00 (Coppers) moved 3 grouse, 3 flushes Thunders  
 5:00-6:30 (Gates Cove) moved 6 woodcock (not new?) - 10 flushes  
 (woodcock 2 shots - 1 hit)  
 20 fairly certain separate woodcocks for 30 flushes in Dixie  
 All 6 woodcock seemed to be new when cleaned. Thunders: 1 ret (cock)  
all 3 days.

Friday 30 October: Skipped yesterday (lovely day) for we were a bit fatigued from the Davis trip. Today beautiful in spite of "possible showers" forecast, and we went to the Whitsell country. Ray dropped me off with Dixie just below Mrs. Craig's and drove on with Ruff and the two boys to wait there for me. The



cover was thick (as I knew it would be from appearances last winter when we discovered the groups of birds while training) and the foliage very dense. Dixie worked nicely, good range, speed and coverage but did not bring that I could see. I saw a bird and saw a second one on the ground, running ahead of me. Dixie hit the scent but moved in too precipitously and flushed, not one, but two more. I refocused one of these from a sapling. There are grapes hanging on some vines here and later it will be good, today was much too hot and very dry.

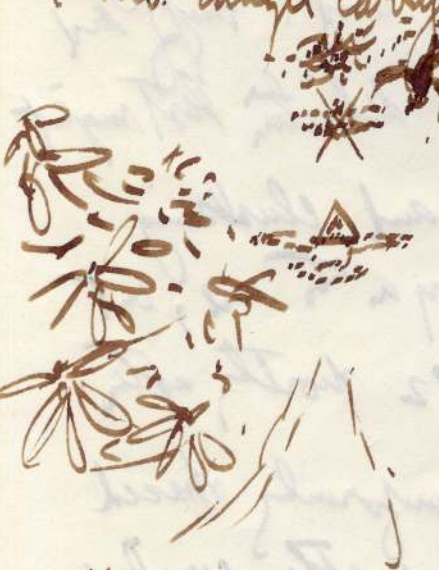
The fourth grouse flushed ahead (not too wide and only for a short piece) as I hunted toward Craig. I think Dixie got some wind of where it had run at one time, stopping for a moment. But I flushed the bird from myself — a right wide-angle quartering shot that dropped it into a bushy thicket. Dixie ran to me and, hearing the wings beating, located the bird. But it was too hot a day for good retrieving work and I refused, as Ruff used to do in dry, hot weather. The grouse was a yearling cock.



Joining Kay at Craig, we proceeded toward Calvert's, pausing to eat lunch on the tailgate in the road near a mass of burning maples. Ruff seemed in excellent mood and we remarked at his liveliness. But when Kay and I took Ruff and Phantom up Calvert's hollow we soon noticed Ruff tagging behind and recognized signs of confusion. Going back, Kay took Ruff to the car (he was not ~~so~~ extreme, probably because he had had a dilatation of the ~~stomach~~ <sup>intestine</sup> after the trip to the bank).



this a.m.) and I hunted Meadows down and around the slopes into the valley below Calverts. Meadows came toward me and stopped behind intervening thickets and at first I didn't realize he was pointing. Then a grouse flushed away from me — no shot — and I credit it a production of Meadows. Followed and put the bird out of rhododendron on the crest of the knob. Dropped to the path below and the bird (a another, if not the same) flushed from the thick rho. on the left of the path. I let it straighten out away from me but must have jerked the gun up in mounting, for the right barrel missed, settling myself I covered the bird and tumbled it solidly with the left, dropping off a shower of red maple leaves simultaneously. I let Meadows search the area I saw the grouse fell in but to my astonishment he finally circled below the path and came out of a rho. tangle carrying the grouse. Another cock — all 6 birds so far have been. Returned to Calverts and gave them grouse #2, just shot. On way out of woods saw that this lower hollow area (some of the best) has been posted by a Thomas Ward of Baltimore who has recently purchased it but is not a hunter. Have written asking permission to go on. We shall see what he says. saved 5-9 flushes



adult RIGHT, LEFT.

yearling cock: solid. wide. collar, crop; acorns  
adult cock: inter. wide. collar, crop. ? (to Calverts) felt acorns

2 1/2 hrs.

3 shots = 2 hits

Dixie: 1 bull  
Shakers: 1 prod.  
1 bull



So far: 13 shots on grouse - 6 hits  
(thru 30 Oct) 17 shots on woodcock - 7 hits

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Plan to put Ruff on steady dieting with 4 a.m. for a few days. His two episodes have not been extreme. The first was getting separated in the dense woodcock cover, the second was the fading light, I am sure, that makes him uneasy. Early parts of the day in ~~clear~~ cold weather with frequent rests will do the trick along with medication I am sure.

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Tuesday 10 November: No shooting since a week ago last Friday - 8 days in the house with another damned cold like last season (the last time I postponed - and intensify - one with vitamin C therapy).

Today was a treat. Ray and I took Ruff and Dixie to the Houdersfield corner. Weather was perfect clear and fair with temperatures around 50 or better. We made single birds entirely, hunting out the usual way. First bird at power line. In bottom along little sandy a flock of cedar waxwings hovering in the wind. Ruff did beautifully with rests every 15 minutes. Since dieting last night and this morning. Famed that whistle to "go on" and clucking signals kept him from doubling all the way on to me, but also used the squeal on my belt. Grouse #2 shortly after crossing Cupper Run and thereafter almost uniformly paced along path and in bottom flat. Churning ridge, after crawling back on trail, we hunted out path in strip mines back of



Cypress farm. On the way Ruff climbed back on the night<sup>21</sup>  
and gave into a fine point. We heard the bird go beyond  
him just before Dixie came in and backed at my insistence.



DIXIE BACKS RUFF AT COMMAND.

On our way back  
higher up I saw Dixie  
on a lovely stretched-out  
point well ahead. Working  
day (I use a whistle  
signal to steady Dixie, also  
a 2-ton "go-in" when I

think she does not have a bird, and I find she responds consistently)  
I moved up as fast as possible. She held well and the bird  
flushed about her, quartering down toward the valley. It was a  
long shot but I tried and stopped the grouse in a vertical  
fluttering fall.



STRETCHED OUT.

Dixie made the find and retrieve,  
a nice <sup>adult</sup> ~~yearling~~ cock go near red  
with red tail band, interrupted  
with the most distinctly broken  
center feathers I've ever seen —

a gray break in the ginger band. Breast collar and throat also golden.  
Every one of the seven birds so far this year has been a cock. I  
tossed the grouse out and let Ruff find it — a convincing experience  
for him. The bird still fluttered



he delivered and sat proudly, Kay holding Dixie all the while.  
 We hunted back along the upper margin all the way to  
 the ar and made no other bird. Wonderful to have Puff  
 enjoy himself so much, with productions by both dogs and  
 especially the kill over Dixie. Lots of birds in here.

2:15 - 5:15 (3 hrs.)

Mixed 9 - 10 flocks

1 shot - 1 hit

Puff: 1 prod.  
 1 kill  
 1 ret.

Dixie: 1 prod.  
 1 kill over point  
 1 ret.

adult  
~~yearling~~ cock: near red, inter., collar  
 crop: grapes.

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~~Thursday~~ Wednesday 11 Nov. : Armistice Day. Twenty-four years ago last
 Monday night since Speck died. The weather today cold, windy
 and increasing overcast - in 45° - 47° bracket. Drove to
 the Pine Swamp to try for woodcock (last day), grouse, and
 even - who knows? - pheasants. Rather disappointing. Used Dixie and
 Shadows on the first sortie behind Burnside's cabin - lovely
 woodcock cover, beautiful looking for grouse in wingstem
 cover. Minkers was running wild after long lay-off and bumped
 2 grouse - only grouse we saw there. I felt it necessary to call him in
 and whip him after a series of rollings that did no good.
 The whole thing was unpleasant and spoiled the trip. Furthermore, it
 made him worse. From then on he was almost totally out of sight

and control. I did get the idea that my next attempt will not
be for. Simply # gr. of phenobarb. more, if necessary ("indicated", I
believe, is the term.)

Went Pine Swamp with these two geese almost the moment we
reached the big "pine" stand suggests that a hunt up the $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{3}{4}$ mile
edge with a good dog might yield shooting. And certainly when
the woodcock are in flight earlier in year this would be worth a try.

Back at car, I left Ray with D & O and I took Ruff and
Feathers up the little hollow above the road. Moved nothing but was glad
that Ruff got along all night of $\frac{3}{4}$ hour and averaged 6 haw feathers
hunt in range all the time. I wonder if shadows yelps scared
Feathers from the Swamp.

About 4:00 we drove to Taylors (arrived at house) and while Ray
who wasn't feeling pert, waited in car I took Dixie alone. Moved 2
with no action. The day was one of those that have to occur now & then.

around 3 hrs altogether. Pine Swamp : moved 2.2 flocks
Taylors : moved 2.2 flocks
Did see two groups of ducks in flight over swamp.
No shots

Dixie
Shadows
Ruff
Feathers

(Turkey open in Preston for 4 days.)
Thursday 12 November: Sunny and cold (44°) turning cloudy.

Kay & I took Dixie down to the Forest - Scott Run area, parking near point of rocks on Cypress Rock road in my personal spot.

Dixie was very keen but a bit too wild. She hit scent and bumped the first grouse at foot of the large rocks and cliff after we had climbed down. I walked into the bird as we followed along the path on the second flush. It was lying tight at the base of a huge boulder when I had glanced at the sky on the top. I dropped it - left-quarterning - but not an outright kill. Dixie retrieved and I had the unhappy duty of dispatching it, an adult hen. Kay took a

movie of the shot (I hope the sun did not wash it out) and of the retrieval.

On next slope further out ridge Dixie bumped first one grouse. Then coming back in ran into a pair and then went wild. While she was gone out of handling Kay and I walked into 3 just below the path. Waiting until Dixie came back in I rodded her and applied ~~the~~ flat-of-hand-to-bottom. It helps that young lady for shortly after she swung into the most solid of points in a tangle to the right of the path and held beautifully while I tried to get in for a shot, but only heard the bird go out. In bottom along the run we ran

woodcock whistlings. At lunch on the low spur of the
next ridge and afterwards moved #8 below a moderate hill
in that draw (please note, K) but Dixie was not on the call.
Later in the very nice gorges on the shoulder of the ridge above
the main branch of North Run Dixie came on point ahead,
turned on wing, a nice high standing point. He moved in
just before the bird flushed away from us. No shot. Was
unable to move anywhere here, but on the way back to the
intermediate ridge we decided to hunt up the old path and
a grouse flushed on the left of the path, in front of me and
just yards from Dixie. I was never more deliberate on the
sluggish climbing bird and waited for the fall as I lost sight at
the shot. Instead, the grouse cleared the trees and moved on up the
hollow.



a second one flushed above us. We followed and reflected
the one I had shot at. This area could be worth
trying. But there was a long flat barren section
before we dropped over to the North Run branch like
the one. Would have waited we were back at the original cliff when a
bird went out wild from spot the first one had flushed from before I shot
it a flush. The unpleasant action struck me it might be the survivor

of a pair. 2:00-5:30
Wood 12-15 flocks
2 shots - 1 hit
Dixie: 2 mod.
1 kill
1 ret
(3 mod. 2 kills)
George Bird Evans Papers
West Virginia and Regional History Center
yearling
hen: inter, narrow
crop: ferns, grapes

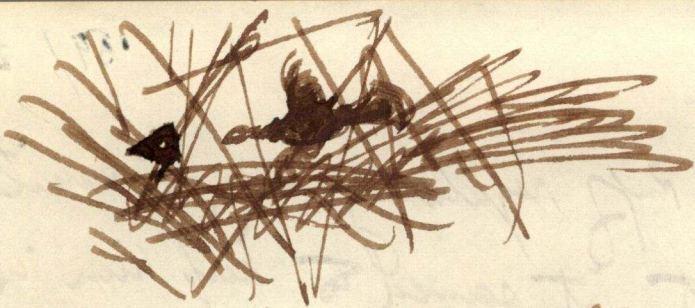
Friday 13 November: Ray remained at home to get ready for the
Blackwater trip next week. I took Puff and Shadow to the Hazel Run
"Old Farm" country ~~for~~ administering a delantol^{to Puff} and a quarter phantol-
respectively. The former worked nicely, the latter did not. Leave it
to Shadow to respond inversely. He drove himself to a froth,
running madly at wide range and ignoring any birds he encountered
on the way (perhaps the drug affects scenting?) and mostly went
about with a yard of tongue and his jaws spread to his eyes.
None again. I moved four grouse on the upper slope above
Hazel just off the old log road and had 9 flushes from them.
The day was in the sixties, sunny and dry with some wind -
difficult work for the dogs. But the birds lay tightly - I
was worried of the sleightbell. I work for Puffs benefit is a
factor. My first opportunity came when, doubling back along a
path, one of the grouse flushed toward me and, unable to shoot
before he had come on me, I turned and tried for him as a
left-away - missed - and tried again as he reached the
edge of an old clearing - unsuccessfully. I saw him bank and
go for the hollow below. I followed
~~and~~ and while both dogs milled about
I finally located the bird and heard him come out from under a small
hemlock - no shot. I reprimanded the dogs and Puff bays

in the hot spot after the fact.

I made a point of resting Ruff regularly every 15 minutes and while the day was too hot, it seemed to keep him in good shape. But while I cooked the entire old form after lunch we moved but one bird from the edge on the lower side. What has become of the birds that used to always be here? Cover is excellent though I did not see food nearly but know there are papers in the hollows. Perhaps that's where the birds are.

No sign of the four on the way back the Hazel valley, taking the upper margin more to our Ruff than in hope of finding birds.

I had given up any notion of further action and was crossing the grassy little draw between woods (crabapple thorns, etc) with some wet land in the gallery when Nedra moved a bird out of a hemlock gnawing entanglement just in the woods ahead. I saw it almost lose in a tree and then felt it go on. I had passed the site of flush about a couple of yards when a bird (I think a second) flushed above me and cut back. It was about 6:00 and I had no view other than its silhouette against the sky above but had to shoot through thick cover - a fast, instinctive aviator and - moving fast - and saw it tumble. If I may say so, it was a good shot. The bird fell in the clearing I had just left and fluttered a yard or so down the slope. I saw



determined Puff should have ¹⁵⁹ the
find but I need not have worried.
He came bounding back and soon

was searching the spot, faltering for a while on the scattering of
feathers where the bird had struck. The sound of the wings had
stopped and while Shadows dashed excitedly about above us, Puff
made several small circles and then hit scent and located.
He prolonged the pleasure, stopping to glare at Shadows when he
approached, then brought it to me and delivered, sitting — not
easy on the steep hillside. A large yearling cock with the most narrow wing
band I have ever seen.

The day made perfect in the
last few moments — as can
always happen grouse shooting.



DIFFICULT SITTING.

(Note: Shadows' bill had worn off
about the last half hour.)

2:15 - 6:15

Mixed 7-12 flocks (not enough for this covert)
3 shots - 1 hit

4 hrs for Puff!

adult

yearling cock: semi-inter, collar, very narrow
crop: grapes

Puff: 1 kill
1 net

Shadows: 1 kill

Monday 16 November: Crows & Leaks joined us yesterday and drove down to Blackwater Cabin in perfect weather. Today drizzle that increased to steady rain, but Les, Dad and I hunted the Club Run area beyond Corner School. 2 woodcock in swamps but only 2 grouse mowed in beech cover on short ridge. Disappointing. Returned to cabin in cold rain.

2 hrs. Hunt 2 - 2 flushes.
no shots

Dixie
Mell & Jimmy

^{B/C #4}
Tuesday 17 November: Cold, snow drifting on ground, clearing to cold and sunny but very windy. Parked at Pumping station on Devils Run and hunted Cassan Mt. where Jim Allen found so many birds. They are here. Cover unlike any grouse shooting I have experienced - birds in open, low ~~broken~~ ^{broken} and briars. First bird came across from Les to Dad and high incoming to me. I had to turn and try as it went away, overhead left. Missed.

Followed ^{Dad missed} and on third find - a beautiful point by Dixie headed back into wind with grouse pinned under a hemlock - I had a fine right-crossing low shot that connected, with a perfect retrieval by the young lady. One of life's better moments with only Ray's presence lacking. One of the finest points Dixie has made.



MY GIRL.

The next bird flushed from patch of bracken at my feet - low away - right and a solid hit. I tried to get Puff to the bird but Dixie ran in, but the scent and yeroed in on the grouse and retrieved at a fast run like the first. I did toss the grouse out for Puff to find and he retrieved sitting nicely.

— altogether we made 17 birds, mostly in the open in spite of high wind. Sam walked into swamp in a clump of aspen.

After lunch along a tributary of Blackwater River we hunted down the far side and I left Dad and Les to follow a bird up on the cliff. On the third flush I walked into it - again in open from and birds and dropped it on a rising left quarter shot. The assurance of hitting birds breeds more hits. Again Dixie retrieved.



But separated from Dad and Les (Dad had shot a grouse before lunch, retrieved by shell) and I hunted alone down to the pumping house, moving four more without trying further shots as I was waiting for a point to rest over. Last two birds were at my feet in grass and weeds in sight of pump station. Wonderful day.

Made 17 - 21 flushes
4 shots - 3 hits

Dixie: 1 prod (kill)
3 kills
3 ret.

Puff: 3 kills
1 ret.

12:15 - 4:15 (4 hrs)

yearling cock: solid, collar, narrow

crop: ferns

yearling cock: inter., collar, wide

crop: haws, buds.

yearling hen: semi-inter., medium

crop: summer

Wednesday 18 November

Repeated yesterday's cover, so large we could not cover it in five days. Cold with sun. This time we used shadows and shell. Less shot 2 grouse today. Dad and I had no shots. While less waited in car, Dad & I hunted the reservoir area the last hour and missed a group of 6 on edge of strip mine. Count these the birds Herman & I found.

12:00 - 6:00 (5 1/2 hrs hunting) ¹⁴ missed (8 (new)) - 18 flocks Meadows
no shots

Thursday 19 November

Dad and Mary left early this a.m. Less and I drove up the ~~Blackwater~~ ^{Beaver Creek} to Yellow Creek country, hunted wrong way first, went well up along coal loading siding and hunted promising looking cover on right slope. Think we made mistake of hunting too high. The grouse seem to hold to low open area, about 50 yards out from edge of woods. Missed 2 birds, one of which Dixie roared into, along with feathers. I decided too late to try and missed a long left quarter rising shot in the open. Failed to focus. Drove back to Yellow Creek [?], stopping to try cover on low ridge that proved unproductive. (There is no food here). At Yellow Creek [?] - a narrow golden colored stream flowing thru a spruce & hemlock swamp - I left Less in car and took Dixie & feathers down the wide valley. Dixie chased a grouse that she might or might not have pointed. I returned from a long shot to

reprimand her, shaking and rodding her on her return. Shortly beyond
 she made an intense point that had no reason to prove empty.
 later, in the same bracken-brier cover below the woods both
 she and feathers made a "poor man's point", very intense but
 not frozen. The bird flushed close to me and went away left
 and low. I moved the right barrel and dropped it with the left.
 Dixie got there first and retrieved - a fine adult cock, the only
 large bird of the trip. (Mr. Cleaver had said they were big
 "yellow" birds up there.) I find this a new concept of grouse shooting
 and believe it offers a potential promise of much new country.
 Cold, clear, sunny.



First miss.

made 4-5 flushes

3 shots - 1 hit

adult cock: solid, collar, wide

crop: chuck full of leaf assortment (cinquefoil, swamp holly, ground brier, smooth water leaf)

Friday 20

~~Wednesday~~ November: Geo. Pay, Kay, & I tried the Belcoch grade
 out at Lundy Run. Very disappointing this promising cover. Ward 2 grouse.
 Saw birds along the road where all of them appeared to be. Returned to
 cabin for lunch and out to area to left of Canaan Mt. road, parking
 at upper log road. We found this excellent cover, making a lot of
 new birds, especially along the power line. I missed 2 double try

Dixie: 1 prod (kill)

1 kill
 1 ret.

Feathers: 1 prod (kill)
 1 kill

as a bird Dixie had been pointing - rather too long for right hand.
 Was using Feather & Dixie and Less used Shell, having sunny action.
 Shell made a lovely solid point in lower line right-of-way - as
 pretty as any could be. Less missed, probably from sheer excitement
 and delight. Followed and about the aspen clump where Less had
 made 7 first time in how Dixie pointed and had 3. On way
 back down mountain Less walked into 2 at greenish clump
 and a short piece to the left I made 5 from Rhododendron. I
 tried for the best one then cover and missed. Real bird country.
 Cold, sunny, clear.

1 1/2 hrs	Balcoch grade 2 - 2 flushes	Dixie, Puff, Shrike
3:30 - 5:30	Canaan Mt. 15 (9 new) - 17 flushes	Dixie: 2 prod.
total 3 1/2	3 shots - no hits	Feather

Saturday ²¹ November: ^{B/c #12} Last day of trip. Another good day but
 it began with clouds and sprinkles that consolidated. Less
 went out the Balcoch grade alone about 9 a.m., arranging to
 meet me at 3:30 on Canaan Mt. Ray and I (Ray's first
 day) took Puff and Dixie to the upper road on Canaan Mts
 and started up the same cover where Less & I had been yesterday.
 The rain gradually decreased to nothing and the sun eventually
 came out. Got an early start at 10:30 (all the times in
 this trip are standard). The first action came in the
 low Wacken and rocks on the bank of the first fork of

the tributary to left of power line. Dixie had been working
recent, not bothering but unraveling what was obviously grouse
smell. A bird flushed, going away low and I fired, dropping
it but only crippled into some rocks in front of me.



#2



#1

As I reloaded a second
bird flushed from the
same spot and I dropped

it going away left and low. I say got a picture of the first shot and
so as soon as I had I say but Puff on the first bird and I

said Dixie after #2. I saw feathers at the edge of a hole under
a rock and Dixie soon located the bird, crawling under
to try to reach it. Uncertain that it was dead I didn't want for her
to try again for fear the grouse might go beyond reach but I found
it dead. Hurrying to I say I



DIXIE GOES SPIELUNKING.

Found that Puff had
located the bird deep
down between some
large boulders. When

were a couple of small feathers and Puff unwedged between the
rocks trying to dig it out. I got him out and I began a
long attempt to find the bird poking with sticks and probing
with my hands. But it was impossible to either reach the bird
or to move any of the rocks. After half an hour we had to

just it up — one of those unpleasant aspects of the sport.

On the brink of the ridge Dixie and Puff again went out. Both pointing. Working around among the boulders Dixie came to an intense point and a grouse exploded in her face, cutting down around the ledge with no opportunity to shoot. Refraining from following that bird I stepped thru the rocks and almost at once another grouse flushed quartering left and low. I



focused on it and fired going ahead or merely thru and it fell. This time I managed

to have Ray hold Dixie and let Puff make the find and delivery. Puff prolonged the act to the point that I had to interfere, for altho the bird was hit solidly with broken wings it was still alive and I couldn't let him have as long as he seemed so important. This one was a yearling cock that I at first thought a *Togata* sub-species with gray tail. After dispatching it



I saw that the inner gray band

was irregular, angling down into the ^{unders} draft of the feathers giving the general gray effect when folded. The only one I have seen like that. Ray and I ate lunch on that bit of shooting and at only

12:30 decided I drive down to Club Run swamp and look for woodcock before meeting Les & Peg at 3:30. We found no game in the swamp, using Dixie and Shadows, but heard a heavy barrage on the low ridge near the houses. Later a local hunter (2 of them came in a jeep) said it was probably shooting at turkeys.

The day cleared to perfect warm ~~and~~ sunny weather with a chime. Blue sky over Cabin Mt. and the broad valley. In the swamp I had seen more balsam than any place I've been, with all my's from a foot or less to tall trees. Best area here to try for woodcock next October.

at 3:15 we were waiting when Les & Peg arrived. Ray & Peg went back in the Crow's car and Les and I took Shell, Dixie and Feather into the area I had been. Dixie made another production and Feather ran into a bird that would have been a good chance if I had had the time to swing with it. As it was "poked" and missed - a left-cross shot. Total figures in the Cane Run Mt. for the two sessions:



5 1/2 hrs for the day.

yearling hen: inter, narrow
crop: leaves, buds

yearling? lost

yearling cock: solid (peach band) collar
crop: leaves

Mixed 11 (2 new) - 11 flushes
4 shots - 3 hits (1 lost)

Dixie: 2 prod.
3 kills
1 ret.
Ruff: 3 kills
1 prod
1 ret.

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West Virginia and Regional History Center

Feather
hunters

(Total for trip with Canals: moved 44 - 76 flocks
 on Canaan Mt. above Davis 36 - 67
 14 shots - 7 hits

Dial: 6 mod (2 kill over) 7 kills, 5 ret.

Rufz: 6 kills, 2 ret.

Feathers: 1 mod (kill over) 1 kill



YEARLING COCK
 VERY DARK.

Tuesday 24 November: Rain all day yesterday (to Dumont). Today moderate with light drizzle gradually subsiding. Left after two and hunted (at Day's suggestion) the old Scott place. It was a good thought. Heard the first bird on the edge at far border of woods on my way down to gulley where I heard a group of grouse last season. I never got there. Dial, whom I was hunting solo, went in to site of flock and went on point and a moment later I heard grouse flushed several yards to one side of her. I had a fleeting look at it, straightaway, and fired ~~not~~ dropping it. I saw that it was winged and as Dial ran in for the retrieved I caught a flashing movement that looked like the bird getting off the ground. It

Turned out to be the white flay of a deer sprung from the same spot.
Dixie brought the bird to me still alive with both wings broken —
a very small yearling hen.



Leaving the first grouse to its own life I decided to hunt out the
ridge and explore this entire grouse area. But as I approached the
old farm site a bird flushed from a tangle of grapes on the right
and I missed a very good chance — why, I can't say. Probably I
dwelt a moment too long. A second bird on the ground moved without
flushing up into the dense mass of weeds, piping.



I sent Dixie in after some effort to quiet her
and while she did not point in my range of vision I suspect she
located the bird. For as I moved in with her despairing of getting a
shot from the path, the bird went up and cut back across where I
would have had a perfect par shot if I had remained. (Object lesson.)
Following the bird I had missed I went down the old road and turned to
see Dixie on intense point just below the path under the old apple
trees of the root homeplace.



The bird boiled up and I
fired through trees as it
wheel'd down and back the ridge.

Some of my pattern lodged in the tree. I felt that the grouse was in

the same general area on the hillside - short whiff north 59/39
 and birds out with gulls and dove paths. Walking back and lower
 I at last saw Dixie hit scent and work in and out of sight. There
 was a moment I am sure she was on point, then the flush - a
 rising left crossing just that I swung through and folded. The
 bird dropped leaving a pattern of feathers floating down and I knew it
 was going to stay there for as long as Dixie cared to take. She made the
 retreat gayly, but dropped the grouse twice in
 her oft-moment eagerness and I had to seek her
 back in for the last time - another yearling hen.



Eating lunch (peanut butter on biscuits - a good combination)
 I dropped to the bottom along Barnes Run and canvassed it for woodcock.
 There were none but I discovered a vast section that looked good. I moved
 four more grouse (one more productive) and hunted all the way up to
 the Willett coast, then to the car. This ridge is a wonderful potential
 grouse coast if I ever get all the way back. Dixie: 4 prod. (2 Killdeer)
 Ward 8. 10 flushes

2:30-4:30 (2 hrs.) 4 shots - 2 hits. 2 kills
 yearling hen: inter, narrow; crop: full of grapes. 2 ret.
 yearling hen: semi-inter, med. crop: full of grapes.

(Dixie's record on grouse to date this season: 15 prod. (6 kills on points)
 15 kills.
 12 retrievals.)

Thursday 26 November: Thanksgiving snow, cloudy, warming.
No precipitation until end of afternoon when slight suggestion of rain began.
We took Ruff & Dixie to Sells and hunted the Clint Reckert country.
(On the way thru Cuygart we saw a white-bearded man walking toward
the general store — a man who must have been Clint Reckert, if
Clint Reckert is still living.)

On the way up the ridge we moved 3 birds, pumped, that went
up singly. Reaching the tramroad unexpectedly soon we hunted south
along it moving them more (one flushed from above the big rocks
by Dixie) all spaced singly. No more contacts all the way back
the "upper" path, down Reckert Run and, crossing, along the
basin and up over to the road from Muddy Creek. On the far side
we hunted north along the tram and Dixie, working the cover below,
found #7. Ray saw her work up, stop on flash point and hold as
the grouse flushed, climbing for the tramroad behind us. I turned
and fired — an acutely rising left-cross — and the bird went down,
obviously winged. Dixie went in, spotting the bird on the ground, and
soon had it — running back toward me.



It was a red cock (at first I thought a yearling but I believe now an adult).
Ruff took it from me, carrying it around and finally "delivering" sitting in style.
Covered the area up and back to the lower Reckert place and all the
way down the Muddy Creek road to where we crossed the run, but no birds. Think
the weather may have them covered up. Another kill on Dixie's point!

1:30-5:00 (3 1/2 hrs.)
adult red cock: solid, collar, wide crop.
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Dixie: 1st (kill)
Ruff: 1st (kill)

Revising my standard of "yearling" vs. "adult" cocks. The obviously young cocks measure less than $6\frac{1}{2}$ " on center tail feather, the adults $6\frac{3}{4}$ " and plus. Distinction as to 1st & 2nd primaries vague.

Tuesday 8 December: Rough weather two days after above - then a nearly perfect week for the deer season and again snow. About 9 inches dumped on us and drifted. Today still unable to drive out lane to the road and clots of snow clinging to twigs and shrubs. However, had to try something and so broke my past resolve to not shoot birds on home land. Used Feathers and wore my new plastic-fronted shooting pants (present of birthday). Walking back old road a grouse flushed from bank above me. It was out and going away before I could go into action. But I tried for it as it disappeared in the dense "now thicket" of the old cow lane. A shot I have made - and often missed, which I did today.



A moment later I thought I saw a second grouse flush down the old main road with no sound. That I was going to find the "seven grouse" the squirrel hunter Decimus talked about but the rest failed to materialize, either in the vicinity or any place else on the two-hour hunt I took. Did not reflect on the birds and I

began to think they were products of my fevered brain after
so much time indoors.

The cover was like early October only the foliage was white,
there seems to be a ^{blue} canopy of wild grapes hanging over most
of our land, with a lot of greenbrier berries in the back field and
acres of dogwood. The game technicians say all we need is
cover and food and the birds will materialize. They and the
birds have not read the same book.

2:35-4:15 (2) March 2 - 2 flushes
1 shot - no hit

Fathurs

~~~~~

Wednesday 9 December: Weather sunny, blue sky, about 40° but  
lots of snow underfoot and still on shrubs on shaded slopes. Involved  
with load of slabs and did not get out until 3:00. Tried the old test  
place with Meadows. Heard nothing until about 4:00 and starting back.  
Birds in dense brush and apparently where they had wintered out the  
storm the past few days (only one set of tracks). Flushed 4,  
all singles, and none offered a shot. Meadows made one fine point (a  
rabbit) and later a solid point on the <sup>still</sup> hot point of departure of  
the second grouse. All birds were on high ground, not near  
grapes. Covered the bottom where last year I missed the grouse.  
None today. Meadows worked beautifully.

March 4 (3 new)  
no shots

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Thursday 10 December: Return trip to the Forest (Scott Run)<sup>43</sup>  
but this third day after the storm the birds were still covered up in  
white of a lovely day (40°) and clear sunny sky. Ray and I took  
Ruff & Dixie (first time for all 4 since Thanksgiving). In  
cover where we found 8 last time we found none. In fact we  
went all the way around the second shoulder or main branch of  
Scott Run and not until we were hunting back into the first tributary  
did we move a bird from the rhododendron ledge. No flush. Dixie  
seemed to have the nest as along the creek. No flush. #3 went  
at rhododendron and rocks on point of bend below the boulders  
and grapes where we had started in. No flush. All very  
tiring pushing thru deep snow with no shooting or dog work to  
stimulate us. Dixie hunted hard but couldn't find birds where  
no birds were. At last returned to car at 4:30 and as we drove  
back I saw a grouse run out of a tree on edge of road near the  
sharp curve. It landed in another tree and sat a few moments  
before it flushed from us. Ruff held up well. Dixie  
Heard 3 (1 new) - 3 flushes  
No shots  
Ruff

1:30 - 4:30 (3 hr.)



Friday 11 December: Ray, Dixie, Feathers and I tried the  
 area near Dave Morgan's in hope of finding the birds he had  
 mentioned. The snow is still with us tho the temperature is high  
 enough to soften it. But the walk held consistent - a bitter dose  
 with few chances. I did get to shoot today - the first a fleeting  
 rather longish shot sailing downhill from the dogs. Missed, and  
 probably should not have tried it. Next chance in thick briars on hill  
 above Hoy Miller - Kelly farms - a bird we'd been following.  
 No sound of flush - merely movement that identified  
 itself as not as songbird and I felt I had it. Both Ray and I  
 thought the bird might have fallen (why would it have turned at the shot?)  
 Followed and at last Feathers made it - can't tell  
 if he pointed - and I tried a thin chance going out the far side of  
 thick cane. No sale. ~~Missed~~ Hunted but could not contact  
 the bird after it crossed a clearing into wide choice of cover. Rain set in  
 on our way back to Morgan house. This walk will be well put behind me.

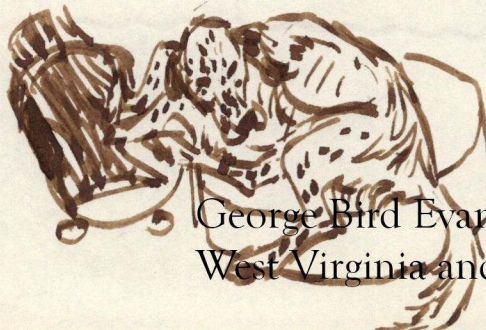
1:00 - 4:30 (3 1/2)

Made 4-7 flashes

3 shots - no hits

Dixie  
Feathers

Dogs worked hard.





Monday 14 December: <sup>William Evans</sup> Saturday's rain dissolved most of the snow<sup>75</sup>  
(as went to Huntington) but it turned to snow Saturday night and covered  
all day Sunday in small quantity (as went to Huntington again) and  
by today it had dumped more of the God damned stuff which  
clung to every twig. We noticed returning home yesterday that the  
low valley around the Bovernoster bridge was free of snow on the  
brush & up to the 1600 ft. contour.

And so today it was our only possibility. Ray & I took  
Ruff & Dixie. The day was lovely - blue sky, sun, and not over  
40° - scenting should have been ideal in the damp, cool air.  
But we made only two birds - the first well above the power line,  
a flash I did not see a hear but Ray spotted it. Further, on  
returning down a small ravine - the snow and ice on bushes shut us  
out of any penetration above a few yards up the hill - a grouse flushed  
from the brink of a rhododendron cliff above Sams and my reflex  
was such that I could not refrain from a shot that missed.

We followed up the valley and as I dropped down the steep  
hill I saw Dixie first react and work into a bird. It flushed  
and came back below me - a rising left quartering shot that  
I should have made (and that I would). I fired a first left  
as it bore three trees but it went on.

We ate lunch along the creek road - to settle down before  
following but did not make the bird. Dixie could well have been



the one I missed on top - the why would it have flushed back?  
No birds on the way back. Encountered a Fike chap who said  
he had heard "hells of birds" deer hunting on the Williamson place.

Kay and I receded the car and drove up the road  
beyond Mason Run bridge, parked, and hunted up to the  
lower line. No birds on the way up, but moved 2  
coming back just above the road. This is an exasperating period of  
eagerness for shooting after the deer season and hot muggy hot  
weather. When I miss 7 shots in a string there is something  
not quite normal. True, 7 of those shots would have proved  
a much better shot than I am had they connected, but two  
of them would have been good bets if I were in usual form.

1:40 - 5:40 (4) Missed 4 - 5 flaps Dixie  
3 shots - no hits Puff

Tuesday 15 December: Weather perfect, sunny, 45°, mow gone  
from brush and ground on exposed slopes.  
Took all four setters to Whitesell, using Puff & Shadows in covert  
below Craig. Ward large cock from near humlock on sunny point  
after almost an hour's barren hunting. Early high left crossing  
shot still rising against blue sky. It fell and stayed there.  
I hoped to get Puff in to the retriever first, and nearly managed but  
at the last moment Shadows found the bird and retrieved it  
beautifully. Without letting Puff see it I sent him out to  
continue searching and pleased it when he eventually found it.





and took his sweet time before he brought it in and delivered, setting a large adult cock. Ray left later to walk to Mrs. Craig's and I heard another two birds together near the road, reflecting one of them up into the steep cliff on the far side. Picked Ray up and we drove to Calvert and parked, using Dixie and Fathens for this last turn. Both too wide and fast, bumping a bird that sailed down across the road in a devil-may-care manner to show its opinion of settlers. We hunted about the road to stay off Ward's land, but find his notices on both sides of road and far from limited to his property, according to Mrs. Craig. No way to install respect. We failed to move any other birds up the crest of Calvert's valley until we turned north - I heard two, reflecting both. Altogether we moved 8 for 11 flocks up to the upper run and back - most in the margin above the main road. Only the one set, but what a wonderful difference in outlook it can make!

2:00 - 3:30 }  
 4:15 - 5:45 } 3 hrs 1 part - 1 hit  
 adult cock: red, blue, med  
 heard 11 (8 new) - 15 flocks  
 Shadows: 1 hill, 1 ret.  
 Puff: 1 hill, 1 ret.  
 Fathens



Wednesday 16 December: at last, back to Blackwater! Weather

warmer, snow gone here but traces in the high altitudes. We left home at 12:10 and began hunting on Canaan Mountain above Davis at 2:00. Cool but mild and some wind and mostly overcast. Made our first contact with birds in a big greenbrier patch near brink of rocks and about due north of where Les found the 7 grouse. We were using Dixie and Shadows - both dogs working hard but a bit too far out. I don't know if Shadows was into them but the birds started, singly, while we were well distant, the first grouse taking away toward the south, as it flushed I saw a second movement of wings and a large Cooper's hawk rose and settled in a tree nearby. Just then #2 grouse flushed (Shadows was on land by then) and I was aware it was coming over my head. I tried to take it as a low incomer, missed (a disturbing effect) and wheeling around that again, too soon, as it was over my right shoulder so-to-speak. A poor start for the trip, and from there on, nothing really came off just right. As I learned



A POOR BEGINNING



from my sorry performance a third

grouse took flight and headed for the brink of the valley - too far off for a shot. We moved on to the briars and after some several minutes Shadows who was in the center of the tangle put out #4 - also to the valley.



With the three birds scattered somewhere in the distant bottom land I felt we were <sup>not</sup> in action but we scoured the area and did not, I think, <sup>but one</sup> miss any of these birds again. Working up the rock ledge we put out one I count as the bird I shot at; - later, Malvern trapped a new one that went into western cover. It is much too wild and when he flushes, does not have the grace to stop even there. I don't think he'll ever be any use on grouse, his chief interest being merely in stirring them up. Worse yet, his influence is bad for Dixie -

We all lunch along the little run and then began hunting downstream, keeping to the base of the rocks. The next bird - Kay says there were two, came at me and I whistled and fired and as I did it, realized it was much, much too close to Kay's position behind me. It was about the most unpleasant experience I've ever had and the less I think of it the better. The rest of the day was spoiled as far as I am concerned.

I did change dogs and Kay drove to the pump house at the foot of the ridge and met me ~~while~~ after I worked down the mountain with Puff & Feathers

Moved (now I can be sure of as new) 12 flushes  
Dixie  
Malvern  
Puff  
Feathers  
3 shots - no hits

2:00 - 6:00 (4



Thursday 17 December: We got cabin 22 at the Blackwater Park and had a nice dinner before the fire. As we had pulled in we jumped a deer from behind the cabin, and there were grouse tracks all over the snow in the yard and up to the front door. Inside, we opened the boxes cards and picked up that a.m. and had them on the mantel. Very cozy.

This morning we awoke to a pea soup fog (typical second-day awakening at Blackwater) but by the time we finished breakfast before a wood fire the fog had cleared and there were signs that the rain was over and promise of a day.

We decided to first hunt the Balsam Grass coast and then come back for an afternoon on the Devil's Run ridge. We took Rufus & Dixie and left the other two in the car on the Canyon Valley Road (first, detouring the muzzles of my right barrel on the car door. I think I got it straight) <sup>in</sup> walking the edge of the woods rather than across the barren <sup>mountain</sup> <sup>spine</sup>. Most of the snow was gone, even from the slopes of Cabin Mountain. As we approached the balsams I could sense that Dixie was much too keen - a lot more anxious. The bait was too far out, but each time, I called her in.

The lower point proved empty (unless they were sitting over our heads in trees). There had been other - large balsams cut merely for their tops - and I assumed the birds might have been moved out.



We matched to the upper end of the woods but it is too dense to penetrate and we could only hope we had canvassed it. Finally we reached the margin of evergreen and beech woods, with a few hawthorns and scattered spruces. I saw Dixie go past an isolated large spruce, wheel and, without stopping, actually plunge at the bird. It was warning, but not enough, and as the grouse bore out, low, straight across, in wide open and the prettiest opportunity I could have ~~had been~~ asked for, had been yearning for, I waited, I thought, then fired the right barrel - shocked incredulity, fired the left and again missed. That sick feeling in the stomach. What can you think? I know I must have stopped the barrels. I should have refrained from mounting, then eyes glued to the bird, overtakes, so then and fire. I'll tell myself over and over in the night but it won't bring back that chance - ever.



HOW CAN IT BE?

While I tried to rationalize, Dixie ran into another bird and flushed it, chased it clear out of sight and a moment later



a third one.

When at last she came in, covering, I nodded her, prompted her and then mounted up the mountain slope where the two seemed to have gone. Well up the back hillside I saw Dixie not scent, ground trail and then stiffen into as lovely a point as I could desire. I whistled ~~to~~ <sup>at</sup> steady ~~her~~ and then before I could take a step she was into the bird, chasing it to infinity. This time she got a fine trimming and shaking when I got her back. I made her stand and hold position for a prolonged period (I wonder if I'll ever succeed in training a dog like Ruff again?) before letting her go ~~on~~. We moved no more, nor found any sign of any of the three. The rain had begun to drizzle on us by the time we reached the car (we broke balsam branches for our fireside) - and as we drove back over Canyon Mountain, hoping to find it clearer over there - it began to rain like hell. We gave up, returning to the cabin to pack up. As we pulled in, a grouse was cropping grass in the lawn - a big fellow - and the dogs moved two more from the rhododendrons (count on them to move them, not point). <sup>14</sup> George Bird Evans Papers  
West Virginia and Regional History Center



head - it landed nearby - and the third flew into a tall birch tree where it perched while the dogs ran around and I tried to move it with ~~loud roars~~. It was still there ten or fifteen minutes later, relaxed and settled for the day (the game technicians are so sure that protection does nothing to increase grouse population).



STICKS AND STONES . . . .

We checked out and drove home - all the way - in a nasty rainy fog. We had missed nothing here. Moral: don't count on Blackwater in December.

1:00 - 3:30 (2 1/2) moved 3 (not new) 4 flocks  
 2 shots - no hits  
 Dixie: 1 prod. and some poor work.  
 Ruff:

It is amazing how a bad run of shooting can hold.

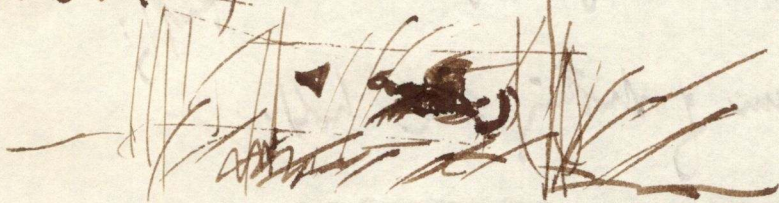
Saturday 19 December: Bad weather (rain & fog) yesterday sent us to Unimtown. Today was lovely - cold, partly sunny, some wind. Day insisted upon staying home (I have my own idea it was to try to settle my shooting jitters) and I took Dixie alone to the Homer Muller's corner, parking at the usual place.

I hunted out the area back of the rhododendron rocks - along the base - back down to the stream - out to the road



and all the way out the tram road to Rickert Run and beyond,  
covering the basin and back up the Run to the Rickert house,  
and then out the road to the old fields where we season  
we had a wonderful shot recorded on Kay's movie. Today, not  
a single bird where I should have made 10. It is true that  
Dixie was not working well — perhaps the reeling down at  
Blackwater? She moved only in short spurts, turning always and  
looking back — never really hunting.

As I was hunting out a little masspaw thickset I  
worked to an edge with low pearbrier and berries down along the  
open field beyond. A sudden flush, low and left-crossing out on  
the field side and I fumbled with the safety but managed to  
shoot thru the edge and saw the grouse go down. What a feeling!



Dixie was out and to the  
bird beyond my view and  
then retrieved, very pleased.

It was a young bird and at first I thought it was a cock — the ruffage seemed to  
show and there was a distinct collar, but there was also the  
characteristic hen brown-orange at the breast and neck rather than  
the golden color of the cocks. Still the complete collar puzzles me  
tho I think it is a hen. We'll see.



Stopping, as I was about to cross the fields to the upper areas above Smith's house I decided, since my bird was a yearling, that there might be a group nearby and so I hunted down the old lane and edge toward Smith's main lane. As I approached it, Dixie turned and pointed not too certainly — toward a grove on her right. A bird flushed and she started to chase and stopped at my admonishment. As she did, a second bird flushed close at hand and when she ran back she flushed a third — none with a shot offered. I followed the pair, and later heard one, and I think the last single flush that had gone a lone direction and still no shots.

After lunch below Smith's house I tried to get my fingers warm and pushed on up the ridge, having lost contact with my birds. I at last heard a large one, wild, that pitched over into the "Foot Valley" and, following, I got into a long drill that took me well up the hollow. It was after 5:00 and bitter cold and I <sup>upper</sup> ~~missed~~ the large, rocks) ~~that~~ crossed a crest unluckily looking over (missed the large, rocks) and finally came to the "path to Orr" and took it down the mountain — barren cover. At the corners I took the ~~down~~ to the left of the path and moved a bird wild — two flushes — no shots. A very discouraging day over miles of range cover that has no



business being so empty of birds. I doubt the success of hunting  
this again — tho by covering the lower area from Belts I  
might find them lower down.

Dixie: 1 kill.  
1 ret.  
1 prod.

Mixed 6 (all new) 9 flyers

1:15 - 5:45 (4½)

1 shot — 1 hit

It was a hen  
yearling hen: Inters, collar, narrow  
teaberry leaves, 1 greenish berry  
Crop: ~~nothing~~

Tuesday 22 December: Yesterday impossible with loads more of that  
stinking snow — four inches and clinging  
to everything. Today sunny but very cold and the snow still  
everywhere. To the Roaring Gap in spite of it, Ray staying home.  
I used Ruff, Mulous and Dixie. Came the usual from the car  
parked on the hill, up the left valley parallel with road (no birds  
here) to house at head of run, then up and over top field. Along  
upper margin of hillside where I always find birds (none today) and  
around shoulder, then back and down to snowfield site — no  
birds or any tracks. After lunch in sunshine, hunted up  
the ~~left~~ path and Ruff pointed — a productive, for the bird  
came out of hemlocks, soundlessly, and across path so fast I  
couldn't mount the gun. ~~Found it~~ <sup>George Bird Evans Papers</sup> many cars below.  
Hunted up the left path ~~before~~ <sup>West Virginia and Regional History Center</sup> I had carried before



lunch. No birds. Made to man cutting Xmas trees, from  
house at head of hollow — o.k. to hunt — so on up to new  
cutting into cliff of rocks and up over to flat where I have never  
been. This looked like birds — brush heaps and open log roots,  
no food other than witch hazel cones and yet promising.

Shadows indicated game in a tangle that did not  
materialize but I saw tracks leading ahead of me, and  
shortly saw a grouse flush wild. I tried for it and could see  
my pattern strike a sapling, knocking out dust. Never noticed  
the pattern so distinctly before and it seemed to cover the bird —  
yet it obviously was not touched.



As I moved up I studied the tracks and  
saw two sets. Within a few moments a second  
ahead (I was close now) and cut across to the right. I  
sawing them (I suppose) and the bird dropped, with shadows coming  
in so fast for the retreat he had to shut to a stop. It was a nice large  
yearling cock.

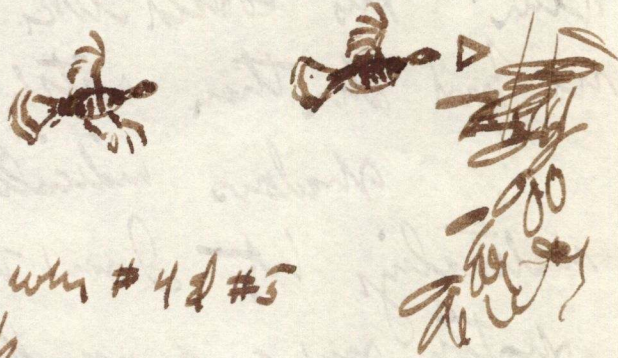


Before moving after the first bird to be certain it was not but I creaked  
the covert, too good-looking not to explore. Some flushed a bird wild  
from under a little hemlock and followed it toward the far end of  
the flat. Working up into some rhododendron and laurel among  
scrubby cut-are growth, I heard a popping and a grouse flushed



from Paulownia, crossing back to my right. As it was disappearing from the short glimpses I had of it, I fired in a desperate impulse and saw it fall — just as a second bird came barreling along the same trajectory.

Dixie was on for the retriever, bringing it to me — a yearling hen. I feel there was #4 & #5 since they were together and flushing back.



Abandoning any further hunting after a short while I started back the ridge as it was late and getting very cold with the sun dropping low and I had mules to go. I walked in the general direction of the first bird but did not meet any more. Found it difficult to get out of the cover due to lack of paths and very dense growth with snow sifting down at every move. Puff was showing signs of tiring and I was anxious to avoid complications there. At last got over the west slope and down to a log road but it wound back upstream in the valley.

On the way down it I saw a grouse flutter along below me and not certain it wouldn't flush I went down. But it was a winged bird somebody had dropped and lost and Dixie retrieved. I dispatched it, but I am never quite sure if it is the thing to do. Would it have been a wing tip broken —



or would it have spent out a slow death? I brought Tim with my two.

Deciding against taking the low road I took a climbing path to the top of the far ridge thru heavy snow-laden cover and found I was doing it the hard way. But at last we dragged ourselves up and down and over and up and finally down the road near the Kelly farms to the car -  $5\frac{1}{4}$  hours of rugged work. But when you is had shooting you are willing,

1:00- 6:15 ( $5\frac{1}{4}$  hours) (not counting the uphill)  
 Moved 6 - 6 flocks  
 3 shots - 2 hits  
 Dixie: 2 kills  
 1 ret.  
 yearling cock: inter. collar, med.  
 yearling hen: quail, berries & teaberry leaves  
 decided this is adult  
 Ruf: 2 kills  
 1 prod.  
 hen: inter. collar  
 crop: birch buds & teaberry leaves  
 (no grapes lately!)

Wednesday 23 December: More snow, a at least enough left over to make me never want to see more.

Took Feather & Dixie to James, and immediately Feather began working too wide and dumped a bird back toward me that I never did refuse. No more went beyond James' house when I tracked up into the thick cover close the road (to avoid the tracks in the path that I took to be a hunter's - Turned out to be James' the day before) But I did get into birds, singles, up higher than usual but the cover too dense for shooting. One came back with my hand in its mouth.



that I tried for but could not swing with, and missed. My only  
 shot of the day. March eight - then when I talked to  
John at the house he said there were a lot of birds

down along the creek below him. I walked into a double flush  
from a tangle of brush in the cutting below Summers' house. This  
will all be improved by the cutting. But the day was disappointing  
with no good work by either dog except the ground work. And  
cold as hell itself.

1:00-6:30 (5 hrs  
actual hunting)

March 8-8 flushes  
1 shot - no hit

Dixie  
Puffin

Thursday 24 December: For a short hunt before going for Mother for Xmas,  
I tried the Wilkinson place. March birds almost  
immediately above the rhododendron. Soon walked into a grouse that came  
up in my face and back over my left shoulder. I should have had it  
on the first shot - the second was an impossible try too late.

 Another try - too far out - at a going-away shot -  
one of these birds moved in the corner cover below  
the Wilkinson house. Wonderful covert - here - actually "hells of birds."  
Some snow left, cool.

1:00-3:30 (2 1/2 hrs)

March 9 (all new) - 17 flushes  
3 shots - no hits

Dixie  
Puffin



Saturday 26 December : Post-Christmas hunt. Left early at home with Mother and took Ruff & Dixie back to the Wallerison Place, parking at the same place on the paved road. There had been two cars near Mason Run bridge and during the afternoon I heard more shooting than I can remember on both sides of Sandy and up Mason. But fortunately, no one was near where I wanted to go, altho I felt at first that the birds had been moved.

The snow was gone and the day warm - 50° - with a light mist from time to time, ideal orienting conditions. I moved no grouse in the area <sup>where</sup> I had found them Thursday and not until I reached the corner of graphwines at the upper far end did we contact birds. Dixie was working scent ahead of me but I didn't see her point. I heard the grouse flush and, waiting, saw it come back low and left-crossing. I had prematurely mounted my gun but swung them and fired and the bird folded, fluttering. Dixie ran in for the retrieval and found



the bird, but after nosing it, refused. I saw that she was panting and overheard and did not insist; really I was glad of the opportunity for a find and retrieval for Ruff. That gentleman came in and after a lot of searching found the bird. Then began a long full-flavoured ritual with much laying-down-of-bird and turning it over, until at last I had to demand service and delivery, which he performed. It was a large adult cock - a surprise, for I had thought the birds in here were yearlings. Furthermore, it was a break in a long spell of rough trails.



On the way along the edge after covering the thicket beyond the woods, I saw a grouse flush wild from exactly the spot it had flushed Thursday and I was certain I'd miss it next along the path below. Just above the place I heard the bird flush from Dixie who might well have pointed it for me.

Doubling back after crossing the power line from Brandomville I walked into what I consider the same grouse - a flush in thick cover that I missed quartering right. as the bird made the open right - of - way I tried the left barrel and saw it pitch down into the scrub-growth. I called the dogs and went after it and shortly saw



Dixie came in behind me (as I tried to spot it) carrying the grouse as if to say:

"Is this what you might be looking for?"

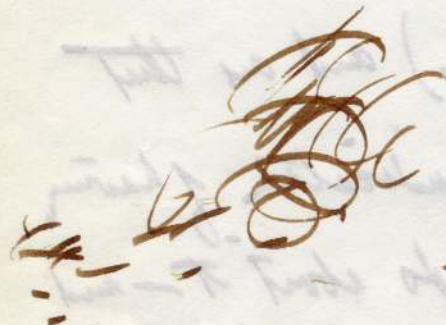
It was a hen - an adult. I would say from the tail feather length, tho it is a difficult distinction for me.

after lunch in a slight drizzle - not objectionable now! we started hunting back the ridge lower down. In some thicket I heard and saw a grouse go out ahead and in a moment Ruff pointed. Dixie also pointed some yards ahead and #2 flushed, out of gunshot.

I was unable to locate either of these birds but I creaked and creaked higher up the ridge along the path that leads to the hill.



a grouse flushed from Dixie and went back around the ridge in  
the direction I had come from. Following, I marked two more  
singly, all going the same way. And then I saw him.  
 He was pointing below me, like the old days — solid  
and intense, stretched out and I knew he had one. I walked around



and came in from the left and below. The bird, when it exploded, went  
straight up, as it seemed, and I took ~~shot~~ <sup>just</sup> before it leveled, folding  
it. Dixie ran up for the retriever but I caught and held her. This  
was going to be Ruff's bird all the way. While Dixie resisted, Ruff  
went about his retrieving, struck the scent of the bird and followed  
it in to where the grouse lay inert. The retriever, again, was  
reluctant but eventually delivered to hand, sitting — a big cock,  
even larger looking than the first. That made it perfect, and I  
returned to the car moving ~~to~~ down along the lower margin. The  
day had been ideal for dog work and the birds really out again.  
And about all, Ruff's solo was a lovely thing — his point out of



the best of his career, and he knew it.

This grouse of 'Puffo', which Ray prepared for my birthday dinner, was outstanding for flavor. But there was an odd circumstance associated with it. At dinner we came across a number of shot, (it was hard hit) but the curious part was that there were both size eight and size six shot (several of each) and one that was about size five. The bird showed no indication of having been shot, nor were there any signs of wounds about it - and one or two of the larger shot were deeply imbedded. My only conclusion is that my so-called #8 shell was a fresh loading with assorted shot size by some error.

1:30 - 4:30 (3) Heard 9 (no new) - 11 flushes  
4 shots - 3 hits

adult cock: solid, collar, wide

crop: grapes

adult hen: inter., narrow

crop: grapes

adult cock: solid, collar, med.

crop: grapes

Puff: 2 prod. (1 kill and  
3 kills  
2 retrievers

Dixie: 1 prod  
3 kills  
1 ret.

~~~~~


Monday 28 December: Fifty-three years old. It would be fine if it didn't rain! And yet this turned out one of the best days! Decided to try it when the rain let up and so Ray and I took Ruff & Dixie for my birthday hunt. Drove to Houdershall place, waited out a shower, and set out at 3:30. It was warm - about 50° - but damp and muggy - wet. Both dogs worked beautifully - Ruff conscientiously working cover on sides of paths.

Made nothing (waiting out another shower under a hemlock, as we did from time to time) until we had crossed Cupp Run, when Dixie began moving birds about us. Could not see her but feel she made a point a two judging from her later work. Three singles somewhere ahead of us, we climbed the ridge and before long Ruff went solid. Dixie ran in, wheeled and poys.



DOUBLE PRODUCTIVE.

The grouse went out low and scoting thru the vertical strips of trees but I had to "honor" the

point and spent a shell. Later we think we heard it flush down over the ridge.

In the area above the path at the far end of the covert, Dixie went on point, moved up and solidified. I walked up, behind as she held beautifully. I had two choices, take the wrong one, and the grouse went out the other - a big red fellow that seemed to flush.

Following, we moved it wild from me, taking the upper slope
back toward Cuffs Run to go after it. We had two more
double productivis, a couple of wild fowls and we ended,
going up over the ledge of rocks thru a pass I did not remember.
On top one of the birds flushed almost immediately, later a second
and then a third, new, bird.

Following two I had seen go toward the edge of the Cuffs fields.
(Ray later said Dine also pointed)
I came on Ruff pointing into a tangle of quembrices. I stepped around
to a road on the left, heard the flush and saw the grouse bore
across the clearing. I shot a bit too quickly, and the bird faltered,
 climbed, striking the branches of a tree. As
it came free it fluttered but kept going
in a vertical position. I tried to drop it with the left barrel
but it went on, then suddenly towered. Running to keep it in
sight I reloaded and made the mistake of looking down to
pick up a shell I dropped and in that moment lost sight of
the grouse.

 When I looked up I saw a shape
taking off to the right high above the trees and decided it was the
last I'd see of my grouse.

Kay ran up and said she felt the bird was somewhere in the ground in front of me and we'd likely find it dead. I began to hope what I had seen was one of the robins darting about us, and put the dogs to work. Both searched industriously but altho they seemed to cover the area, found nothing.

Having given up I made one last concession to Kay and started climbing over the tumbled boulders on the edge of the covert. Suddenly in a space below me I saw the shape of the grouse, flattened with tail spread, head raised but dazed. Dixie came in below with Ruff up on the boulder beside me. I couldn't get Ruff into it without pushing him off the rock and there was the chance the bird might take off.

Dixie struck the next, came onto the bird and



picked it up, carrying it around to where I could take it from her, a big adult, cock I had to dispatch. (kept shot) but clear shooting but a big end to a day of excellent dog work - a wonderful birthday present. Ruff did beautifully and Dixie performed like a finished grouse dog. Four double productions and a fifth production by Dixie. Dixie: 5 kills

~~5:30 - 6:30 / 3 kills~~
~~adult cock: 1 kill, 10 (5 kills) - 15~~
~~up: 3 shots - 1 kill~~
George Bird Evans Papers
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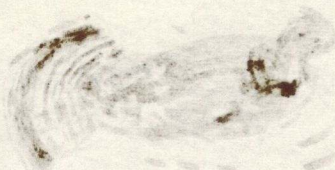
3:30-6:30 (3 hr.)

March 10 (5 new) 18 flocks
3 nests - 1 lit

adult cock: solid, collar, narrow
crop: paper

Dove: 5 prod (1 kill and
1 kill
1 ret.)

Puff: 4 prod (1 kill and
1 kill



Tuesday 29 December: Snow squalls, nearly rain at times. One white
flurry turned us back at the garage but seeing how intermittent it was
(like yesterday's rain) we set out for Upper Beaver. Used Shadows and
Dixie along the road, starting at 3:45. Hunted all the way to the rock
ledge, getting one overhead left-crossing shot that crossed the path
high and fast. I failed to swing fast enough (or at all) and missed.
 (should go there, not just pull ahead). Hunted
higher up the first ridge on the way down with Dixie doing some nice
work on meat, later a solid point by Shadows that did not
produce. At the car bay  I switched to Puff & Feathers at 5:30.
It was getting dusky and cloudy and I had little real hope but
we hunted down the Beaver Creek log road to the lower road and into
the thick cover on the Ezra Kelly place. It is growing up with dense
whip growth and mixed hemlock. Feathers moved a bird about us.
I heard it coming and waited, trying to get a glimpse of the grouse
against the darkening sky. It came over us, high and incoming.
I took it straight up, turning to fire as at a left-crossing overhead,
and it folded and pitched into dense rhododendron, leaving a trail
of feathers floating down. For a moment 
I shot of getting Puff in for the retriever ahead of Feathers, but Feathers
settled that promptly. In a moment he was bringing the grouse to
hand, a yearling hen. (Why never an adult hen?) Puff wanted to

hold it and while we were indulging him Feather, who had left us, began barking forty yards or so above us. Seeing a grouse tree I left Ray to deal with Ruff and hurried toward Feather.

Instead of a bird I saw him worrying a large snake that seemed to almost drag him down into a small declivity. It was a medium-size dog with feathers pulling out mouthfuls of white flanks him in an effort to hold it back (some notion that he had to retrieve it to me). I got him off and saw that the dog had a broken leg - dangling and doubled wrong-way on itself. One of those incidents that jolt. The dog helpless - frightened and, how can I say whether she felt pain? Ray came at my call,

accompanied by Ruff still carrying my grouse. The dog let me touch her, even pat her head as she watched me with those eyes. To be able to help. We left her there as she was. To shoot her is dubious kindness, the worst we can do is do, perhaps lingering, but there is always that feeling of hope that they might get thru it. There have been three-legged survivors. No one aspect of hunting that points up the cruelty. And yet what can you do unless you accuse all shooting. On the way back we flushed grouse #3 from the edge of the strip-mine roadway. Moved 3-3 flushes

Dirie. Shadows
Feathers: 1 kill
Ruff: 1 net

George Bird Evans Papers

West Virginia and Regional History Center

3:45-6:15 (2 1/2)

yearling
adult? hen: inter, narrow
crops: full paper -

Wednesday 30 December: An afternoon with Art Thomas for pheasants 71/59

TUSL and Dixie & Meadows on the Big Sandy Wildlife Club as guests - Ray and I. It was somewhat less than hoped for. We did not see a single pheasant nor did we see a track in the inch or more of new snow. Parked at the St. Peters Church above the White School, which is not a school. On the hill above the church and among scrub-open-growth we made two single grouse, one past Art who could not find the safety on his gun, the other straight ahead.

Following this, we were on a steep slope with ~~patches~~ patches of thorn, Ray and I went up, Art across the hollow, when Dixie pointed into a small clump around a spring just below. Certain it was our bird I alerted, ^{Art} and the grouse flushed - a low right-crossing flight that is my weakness. In wild gun case, looking down, I somehow managed to miss both barrels (I suppose I did not wait for the full focus and then avert). As I stood with gun open and unloaded, five more birds came out singly - two or three fine chances. I jammed in a shell and tried for one but achieved only a chick as I pulled the wrong trigger.



THE END OF GEORGE.

We later moved five birds from the thicket on top and art shot one, which Dixie retrieved nicely - to me. Covered all the places art felt could hold pheasants but didn't find a trace (they had released 70 old cocks and a couple of dozen hens in the fall).

On the way back we parked and hunted up a hollow near the Smith farm. I tried for a bird in the gathering darkness and chalked up two more misses - the second barrel rather too far out. Dixie: 1 prod.

Meadows hunted beautifully, as did Dixie and put in a big afternoon. Very cold and intermittent snow.



Meadows

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

march 9. 18 pheasants
4 shots - no hits

Thursday 31 December: Last day of 1959 and it is still snowing. About four inches on the ground and ~~about~~ temperature like yesterday - perhaps milder - but today the "intermittent" snow almost never stopped, but came down like a bleeding Xmas card - at times even when the sun shone thru and in big clots that obscured my shooting glasses. Miserable. Day and I took Ruff and Dixie back to the Houdershelts place (I've seen the notice) and hunted the rocks above Cupps Run as the first circle. altho we covered every good place where we'd moved birds the last time. found none

(except one we heard Dixie follow near the power line) until we dropped down to the base of the ridge where we began flushing grouse from snow-heavy hemlocks. Only one decent look at a bird - crossing to pitch for the creek too abruptly for me to swing on. On the lower path both Dixie & Ruff had a double production but the bird was only a sound. More birds on the lower area near the power line



and a last flush and reflex between the power line and the end of the woods. Both dogs worked wonderfully.

Dixie : 1 prod.

Ruff : 1 prod.

RUFF (WITH SNOW BALLS)
DIXIE (ONE ^{HIND} FOOT RAISED)

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

Moved 12 (3 new) 15 flushes
No shots

Ruff averages 10 with the voice and stamina he shows on these days. (A dilantin capsule and a geriatric vitamin capsule in the a.m.) Rests every 20 to 30 min.

Friday, 1 January: Still snow on ground but sunny and clear. A lovely day for the New Year. But my compulsion to end the season with some good shooting was still driving me. We went to the Whetzel country, parking at Mrs. Craig and starting with Ruff and 7 others in the court below her house.

contact in the ravine near the small hemlock where I shot the large cock the last trip — two birds that flushed low from a dense path along the little run. The first went out wild and as feathers ran in, not having seen the bird, he threw into a lovely point to the left. The second grouse flushed from behind him and went straight away in the same direction as the first. It was rather too far out but I couldn't resist a try at a straight-away but it did not stop the grouse. Possibly the left barrel might.



The next flush was one of these birds from a grapevine bush tangled that feathers located without any point that I could see. The bird

gave me a split-second warning and then came at me, up above my right shoulder. It was too close and I should have turned and taken it as a high going-away shot. Instead, I tried for it incoming overhead, firing in a vertical position and was then unable to turn in time to shoot again. Wild.



Counting the bars on their underparts and then seeing them fly on does the wrong thing to my adrenaline.

We followed this bird toward the shoulder behind us — low, cut-over and with hills of brush. He was there, feathers

found the bird, but instead of pointing, - moved in - his
chief fault I believe. The bird exploded from the low
tangle and pitched over the lip of rock giving me only a
seconds view. I tried, feeling the shot too slow. As the grouse
came in view rising, it faltered and both Ray and I
remarked that it had been hit. But it continued in strong
flight and I saw it bank and ~~start~~ start down



out toward a small clearing. We didn't find it tho we could
carefully. Two rabbit hunters had
mixed in and one later said he shot
a bird but denied having seen a
cripple. Perhaps he didn't.

We turned to trap above the beagles and hunted the upper
corner of this excellent cover moving a number of birds - six
more at least, and discovering some good territory. Feathers was
moving too quick and we could hear birds flushing out of sight. Feathers
made one lovely productive, holding staunchly - one of the best
moments of the day.



With that big head of
his he looks stretched
out in an almost

"setting" point, like an old sporting print of the early setter.
There were two birds and one of them came toward our path but
too far out. I tried with the left barrel but nothing happened.

It paced over 40 yards but the choke barrel should throw a killing pattern. However, in these pure straight-away shots I have had poor results, unless fairly close — perhaps because the grouse offers so small a silhouette, ~~it~~ merely the cross-section diameter of body and edge of wings. We missed the bird twice later (it had ~~landed~~ ~~landed~~ abruptly at my shot) so I know it was unhurt. One flush would have been a fair chance except for a tree, the next was a flush after we had been resting and eating a sandwich — and it was forty yards from us.

The afternoon was well along and we were far from the car and with two other dogs to work so we doubled back.

at Calvert's Ray stayed in and I took Dime and shadows (both too anxious) for a $\frac{3}{4}$ hour turn till dark — around the shoulder and up to the high level above Calvert's Hollow. Snow still hanging on shrubs here as it had been four days ago at home. Near 3 near Calvert's and two up high — with no shots at any. I find it annoying to run into Ward's notices inaccurately placed, for while I want to respect his land, he weakens his position by posting the upper side of the road when, according to Grays, he does not own, but implying that all the

territory above the road is closed. He has a lot to learn.

Back to the car and home to lick my wounds.

2:00 - 6:30 (4½)	March 13 (6 new) - 25 flushes	Feathers: 2 prod.
	4 shots - no hits	Puff
		Dixie
		Shadows

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Saturday 2 January: Last day, and how much I needed a bird.

Weather overcast and cool with intermittent rain in showers and drizzle. Should have been excellent scouting but seemed otherwise. Ray (who has hunted every day this week) and I took all four to the sell place starting with Puff & Dixie up onto the Clint Peckert country (hoping to come back for the two logs in a late evening).

I raveled up to the tram (moving #1 from a hemlock as we started) but no more birds until a big red one below the tramroad rocks - a wild flush from Dixie who ran into it with no reaction. He gives me trouble at times on a tramroad, insisting on holding to the path. This is not too usual for him.

Walking along the tramroad I nearly stepped on a grouse that both dogs had missed. It flushed from the right side of the path and gave me a short glimpse as it went away low and



rising. I think a point to warn me might have helped -  
perhaps not. I didn't hold off for that important focus, in  
fact, scarcely had time to move then pull on it - and missed.  
 Had no view of it going away but followed by  
sound. Moved on in that way that bird - wild - and  
then had a second go out, convincing me there were two new. We  
failed to move #2 later when we returned from a circle up to the  
Smith House (vacant at this time and where we ate lunch on the  
porch - very cold but with a magnificent view). Circling down we  
moved 2 of the 3 I expected to find in the corner - one on the  
way up, the other going down.

Had a two-flash contest with a wire grouse below  
the tramroad that never did let me get acquainted. And  
finally walked into a bird that flashed up over the train and  
took us into several double flashes. The last two were in  
the little draw along the tram-rocks (hadn't been there a long  
way out). The second grouse gave me a short glimpse between  
trees that was not a shot but I tried, unsuccessfully.

Circled and finally moved what I count the #2 red grouse  
near Pickett Run but Dixie ran out of with no point, not doing



her usual work today the trying hard. It was late and we were all tired and so we started back down the mountain [I could see Ruff beginning to get fatigued - moving a bit aimlessly off to one side. When I called him back he had difficulty getting the direction. We had kept him out much too long and hunted him too frequently this week. Ray put her camera case strap on him for a flash and let him back (we got a wild flush from the hemlocks at the stream) but Ruff had no further trouble, reviving promptly with a dozen yeast tablets at the car.] It was a frustrating last day (I have had equally unproductive ones, but usually there is not the long string of misses back of me (and there is often good dog work to retrieve the day.) With six days of moderate to miserable weather this week and with the fatigue from pushing myself hard I managed to come out of it with a nasty infection that is still with me over a week later.

Ruff  
Dixie

March 14 (6 new) 18 flushes  
2 shots - no hits

1:15 - 6:00 (4  $\frac{3}{4}$ )

No chance or strength left to take 7 & 5 out.



Summary 1959

A good season that ended less brilliantly than it started. The last two parts were Ruff and Dixie. Ruff getting to hunt so often and, at nearly 13, doing so well. No return of episodes after the early season (keep him away from dense brush and use the dilantin capsules in a.m. of hunting day, frequent rests, and he should not be out over 4 hrs., tho' he was once or twice.) His productivity, two killed on points, and his retriever (his wonderful pleasure in carrying around a bird another dog has retrieved) his just being the wonderful person he is, having him still with me, made the season.

Dixie is a dream of gratification - doing everything I want her to do, doing it brilliantly - better than I could have hoped. Feathers and shadows less than I could ask. I read of their work on pheasants other years (I can't believe it. Why don't they handle grouse?) Yet now and then some excellent work by each on grouse. Not enough time to spend on them. And those sessions self-hunting leave their marks. And then we come to George. 50% shooting up thru Thanksgiving. 41% thru the last bird killed. Then a blaze of ignominious shooting to blow it in 10 consecutive misses for a 35.9% (Still better than most years for me).

Birds plentiful this year (late season in now made them hard to find). Discovering the full potential of the Blackwater & Canaan country has opened a new world of shooting for us. And new excitement.



of old cover. In future too, remember to stay home and not hunt  
in snow. Three weeks after season ended strep infection still with me.  
11 of 19 days hunted after deer season, were in snow.  
of 18 corks, 6 were yearlings (11 with solid bands  
of 10 hens, 9 appeared yearlings.

(On shooting)

P.S. Again, I feel the importance of that moment's wait - to see  
the bird before mounting - then mount and overtake and fire,  
either going thru, or thru a lead, or right with it - depending  
on the direction of the shot. Especially difficult when the shot is in  
the open, but all the more vital.

I find I missed too many going-away shots and I am  
sure it wasn't always inaccurate shooting. (More nearly, the holes  
in the pattern losing the small silhouette of a bird at that angle.)  
I must try more often to use the choke left barrel and get  
a denser pattern.



CANAAN VALLEY

{ CABIN MT. 1.1.0 1959  
 { DEVILS RUN 11.17.1

## WOODCOCK TRIP

{ COON RUN 14.27.2, 3.4.0  
 { YOKUM RUN 1.2.1  
 COOPER 3.3.0

## CROWL TRIP

{ CLUB RUN 2.2.0 14  
 { CANAAN MT. 17.2.1, 3(8).18.0, 15(9).17.0, 11(2).11.3, 9.12.0  
 { YELLOW CREEK 4.5.1  
 22 MILE 2.2.0

BRIERIES

✓ WHETSELL 5.9.2, 11(8).15.1, 13(6).25.0  
 ✓ CLINT RECKERT 7.8.1, 6(6).9.1, 14(6).18.0  
 ✓ ROARING GAP 6.6.2  
 ✓ JONES 8.8.0

FOREST : SCOTT ✓ 12.15.1, 3(1).3.0

WILLETT 3.4.0

GLADE FARMS 2.5.0

✓ HOWDERSHELL 9.10.1, 10(5).18.1, 12(3).15.0

{ PINE SWAMP 2.2.0

{ TAYLORS 2.2.0

✓ OLD FARM (HAZEL) 7.12.1

✓ SCOTT PLACE 8.10.2, 4(3).4.0

✓ OLD HEMLOCK 2.2.0

DAVE MORGAN 4.7.0

{ BOWERMASTER 2.3.0

{ WILKINSON ✓ 2.2.0, 9(9).17.0, 9.11.3

✓ UPPER BEAVER 3.3.1

- ST. PETERS 9.18.0

~~WETSELL~~  
 BAYARD  
 STONY R.

HOMER M.

✓ WHETSELL

✓ ROARING

LICK  
 ✓ CLINT R.  
 ENCHANTED  
 ELSEY

SCOTT

✓ BOWERMASTER

✓ HOWDERSHELL

✓ UPPER BEAVER

G. RINGER

TRY:

ABOVE ROARING GAP (POWER LINE)  
 MUDDY CREEK (BELOW SELLS  
 PORITY

MT. 210N

✓ LITTLE S. (DAVE MORGAN



# DATA 1959 GROUSE

GEORGE : 37  
 53 DAYS, 124 HRS., 27 COVERTS  
 78 SHOTS - 28 HITS 35.9%  
 214 BIRDS - 403 FLUSHES  
 7.92 BIRDS/COVERT  
 3.25 FLUSHES/HOUR

RUFF : 22 DAYS 9 PROD.  
 12½ 19 KILLS (2 OVER PT.)  
 8 RETRIEVES  
 LIFE '47-'59 539 PROD.  
 241 KILLS (53 OVER PT.)  
 165 RETRIEVES  
 358 HUNTING DAYS

FEATHERS : 13 DAYS 3 PROD.  
 7½ 3 KILLS (1 OVER PT.)  
 2 RETRIEVES  
 LIFE '52-'59 28 PROD.  
 107 KILLS (3 OVER PT.)  
 78 RETRIEVES  
 163 HUNTING DAYS

SHADOWS 15 DAYS 1 PROD.  
 6½ 6 KILLS  
 3 RETRIEVES  
 LIFE '53-'59 13 PROD.  
 61 KILLS  
 21 RETRIEVES  
 125 HUNTING DAYS

DIXIE 31 DAYS 26 PROD.  
 23 MO. 23 KILLS (8 OVER PT.)  
 17 RETRIEVES  
 LIFE '58-'59 35 PROD.  
 37 KILLS (8 OVER PT.)  
 25 RETRIEVES  
 60 HUNTING DAYS