

Shooting Season 1963

Saturday 12 October: The second season without Ruff.

We've had a long, perfect and rather early Indian Summer - very dry after probably the most ideal Summer, weatherwise, I can remember. Which should have given us a fair grouse brood, which we need following three bad years. Today was crystal clear and rather hot but with a fair breeze. We started late - 2:30 (fast time) at Muddy Creek below Cuygart. The foliage was past color height but still glorious and much too dense. Once started along the path in the hemlock covert the temperature was lower and conditions looked fair, but though they heard our grouse go out lower that I was unaware of, we saw no birds.

Moving to the top of the ridge, we paused for lunch and I took a movie of Kay - with a "painted" maple leaf in her lapel - and Shadows and Dixie. This is Shadows' 11th season (10 years old) and Dixie's 6th (5 1/2 years). Both worked beautifully today which encourages me to use them as a brace as long as we don't get too many flushes. Shadows is still the wide-ranging, pin'em or bust'em type I like - amazing at his age and his work on the training trips on pheasants leads me to rate him highly.

Dixie, the younger, is working

perfect grouse dog range - busy but careful. Her approach is entirely different, a bit too low and inclined to trail, but I am waiting to see how she handles grouse this year before I try to change that - even if I could! I can use one of each, provided it works on birds. (We hope to breed these two this winter.)

We finished lunch and just started out the top path when a grouse booted up from the dense cover on the left. I got set to try for it as it cleared the trees but it settled for a moment a tree in a mass of foliage, then came over us and above the path, overhead and left-quarterning. I fired and missed and fired again as it booted straight away and high - shooting through leaves - and saw it drop. I ran up and spotted it, dead, on the path ahead, and in a few minutes Dixie and Shadows were combing the area, Dixie locating it. Her retrieve was gay and prompt and, to my delight, she sat to deliver it at my command (result of training with the mart this summer) as Kay got it on film. The bird was an adult hen, very centered - a thrill for opening day. Shadows was eager for some part in it and I tossed the grouse out for him to retrieve, and he too, sat to deliver at command - the first time in his life! the I've tried before. We hunted on the ridge and back along

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the margin of a strip mine on top. There were grapes, not abundant but in plenty, but no more birds than we thought we heard #3 further on.



At the old fields on the upper end of the ridge we cut into a dense stand of dwarf sumac (no berries) that was like barbed wire to get them. Over the brow of the hill we came onto a group of red haws glowing like fire. This will be worth visiting later in the year.

In the Blackwater country it would be the place to focus on but our birds don't appear to have the taste for haws.

At the car we paused for coffee and food and met the Conservation officer - Myers, with Cunningham, a forest employee. I'm not impressed with Myers other than as a law enforcement man. Later they dropped me and Dixie off up the road and returned to Sells with Shackles in the car while we tried the lower margin for possibly woodcock and quail. Did not get up into the good oak cove but Dixie made a lovely point into a rhododendron clump that must have been just after the fact. She deserved ^{a good} ~~it~~. I heard one quail go out wild above at another place. This cover is not too good ~~except~~ ^{except} along the creek. I got

back to Sells and King in the car about 6:30



JUST AFTER THE FACT.

Shot the bird with a ragged Remington quail I carried in the left barrel for 20 days last winter!

It was a lovely day. The the shooting went so good in this area for a week or more. But we got our grouse and all it Sunday morn.
adult hen: interrupted
crop: empty (gizzard: grapes)
4 hrs. moved 4 - 4 flushes
2 shots - 1 hit

Dixie: 1 kill
1 retrieve

Shadow: 1 kill

Monday we leave for Blackwater

Monday 14 October Cabin 22 and all the thrill of Blackwater - Canada after a drive down via Aurora in peak color. Gorgeous. Hot, dry and sunny. Started after unloading at the cabin, for North Blackwater but a bit disappointed at looks of it near Bealls, and so drove on to try the old Harman Place. There talked to young Sites, from Mouth of Seneca whose father leases the land for grazing. Permission to hunt but no encouragement re grouse. Looks grand. We walked down to Spruce - Lambeth Swamp and then sat on a path, expecting action that did not happen. At abandoned farm buildings spoke to the elder Sites who was leaving with another man. OK to hunt. Began in lower edge of beech brush working south - ~~worked good but~~ ^{immensely noisy.}

No action until along Gokum Run where Kay saw a woodcock bore⁵
back past me, unnoticed. We turned and Dixie flushed it with no scent.
Next follow-up drew a blank, so we hunted on to the upper end of
the covert Rinehart had told us about. Heard several shots that I
believe were R. in there with his spray-gun. No birds here. It
was five o'clock (first time) and we were a long way from car, so crept
below into hemlock-spruce cover where Les and I had found grouse.
There are black thorn berries (yellow & red) but fallen and on the
ground, but no grouse evident. On far edge of evergreen I walked into a
woodcock in a spruce stand that flushed and found me flat-footed.
after a struggle with the safety (amateurish) I got off a shot in time
to miss as the bird curved to a right-quarter. Kay marked it well
but Shadow & Dixie only bumped it a bit far out, but I tried for
it as it climbed over the trees and missed.

Following, I was telling Kay to wait while I hunted out the
fire/alder thicket and flushed the bird with my voice - again to show to
even get what would have been a good away shot. Am I losing my
reactions? The next flush was another wild bump by Dixie who
chased, of all things. After a reprimand, she moved on to make a
lucky point where the bird should have been, then rushed in to an empty.
After this it was merely a long walk back to the car. An unimpressive
first day with one grouse flush Kay thought she heard. With these conditions
probably more of them are moving out wild. Shadow.
Dixie
2 woodcock - 6 flushes
1 grouse - 1 flush
2 shot (woodcock) into trees
George Bird Evans Papers
West Virginia and Regional History Center
3:20/6:35 - 3/4 hrs.

Tuesday 15 October Hot, dry, sunny. To Cabin Mountain with high hopes. Parked at Stonecoal (another car that we think was a parked cross-country arrangement) and hiked down to a flat basin with acres of wild raisins (*viburnum*), water and cover aplenty but no grass. After lunch we hiked back the west rim of the valley - getting involved in a laurel, not rhododendron, hell on a cliff, and back to road via a nice branch of water. Think we missed a grouse here, but never found. If Walt Koser gives me any more stories of birds up here I'll have trouble being civil. Got car and drove to Gap, parking and climbing to top of "Graham's Knob" (our name) where I have found birds. Not today, but we did find a magnificent view of the Red Creek headwaters as well as of the Canaan Valley at lower end. Kay got married. Returned to station wagon by 5:00.

At bottom of mountain found Punchard's new International rig and had heard a shot or two, so he must have found birds down here. We moved on to the Galls where, to our immense surprise and pleasure, we found no other cars. Moved nothing in usually fertile south side. Covered the best part of the upper side with no results until we were circling back. An unexpected cock came barreling from the road beyond my right ear in a lovely left-crossing shot and then I swung there and fired. I did not have to get the extra split-second I needed. We followed and I heard it go out in front of Dick who

was working this area beautifully but getting no points on the birds.



NOT QUITE.

at the far Kay took Shadows, and
Dine and I covered the area up to the
gate, moving a ~~third~~ ^{second} creek that again D.
just failed to point and which gave me
no view, keeping low. (Kay saw it pitch

near the road, doubling back to car in a U-turn on landing). A third
bird flushed at my approach just beyond the gate. At any rate it
was action.

Moved 1 grouse - 1 flush
" 3 cock - 4 flushes
1 shot (woodcock) - no hit

Shadows
Dine.

Both dogs worked beautifully all day, both days, in spite of heat.

at Lodge were told season would close at 6 p.m. Wed. because of fire hazard.

Wednesday 16 October: Hot, dry, sunny. On way out of Park, Kay took
notice of a big red cork grouse along the drive, with tail and ruffs spread.
A good Omen!

We decided to try the Rim Road, approaching from far end. Passed
bowl hunters (had seen no grouse) and talked to a young Forest Service employee
who assured us there were no grouse in the area. We tried anyway, hunting
up Tur-Pan but rather discouraged. Good road up into this area. At
Forest boundary we circled back and down far side of, from then down

hemlock cover. Heard one grouse (large by sound) from hemlock but in
was no possibility for shot. Good for the hopes, however. Got in car and
started to drive back the road, planning to get up when we saw a
grouse in the road. It was a yearling that walked up the bank on right
into gambel and rhododendron cover. Not caring to pursue this
individual bird as such, yet feeling chance of rest of brood nearby, we
drove well up the road and hunted back. On the upper side of
the road - all similar cover - we heard two birds, one of which was
likely our road grouse. Soundly, but they pitched to dense spruce-
hemlock below. Hunting back to car on upper side in untouched
section I heard a third bird, a rather the log-did, which I saw
cross high and set its wings as it pitched into lower side of road.
all this was south of the by-pass into spruce where the Rain trail
is indicated.

Finally we parked near the South Forest gate and took a
short circle into lower side of road to sample the good looking flat
I have remarked. Almost immediately Dixie began making game on
the edge of the swamp and we heard a grouse leave in a few moments.
As I stepped into the clear a second bird flushed and, I thought, started
to quarter back on direction. With a fair view of the woods I then

I had a chance and moving fast, but missed. Probably should have
tried the left barrel instead. The bird went along the road when the car
just then a third grouse flushed and we saw it, way out slanting
toward the upper side of the road. Pursuing on to follow it, we



shooting heard a bird flush and saw it settle on a
slender sapling when the grouse watched the dogs.
Instead of flushing it stayed there even at my
approach and tho I normally dislike trying for a bird that watches
me, times are hard these days, and I walked in with blood in my
eye. Of course it went out as I misstepped down into a hole and I
merely glimpsed it before it took cover toward the swamp.
This bird up and counter as a reflex of the first, tho it could well be a new one.
I failed to move the bird that had gone out the road but on
my return I saw the grouse I had missed, heard a high tree ahead
of me and I followed, to hear a bird - probably it - flush from
shadows up a branch of Big Run. There are young birds and are a
fine prospect for action some nice crisp damp day - tho I don't
expect easy shooting here. However, the basin with the far ridge looks
excellent to me, as does the Big Run & Tule Run hollows - in spite
of the Forest Service!

We hurried out to 219 and down to Canaan Valley for
the late hour before dark in the winter. Again, no hunters except
two men leaving who were merely prospecting. (McDonald from

at 5:50,

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Bridgeport). Leaving Kay & Shadow to wait in the car. Dixie and I covered the south side first. This time I'm sure D. had a point, for she was gone some time. When she rejoined me I had walked into a nice close running flush that I overshot, then missed on the way - two barrels that didn't do the work of one. What's the matter with me on woodcock?

We made no new birds till we had hunted to the north edge. Then the "corridor" and into far aspen. Dixie worked in and stopped out of sight but on point, I am certain. The 'cock flushed back behind logs and me, crossing into more thick cover. I decided to canvass the area before following it but got a flush as D. failed to spot it. Following by sound I walked into the 'cock in low west-high spruce and shot as it flew low and away-right. The bird dropped, wing-tipped (sloppy shooting) and both dogs shortly located it, as it fluttered. Dixie caught it and retrieved, a young cock bird I think. She did not sit to deliver this one, but at least it was game. Our total bag for the 3 day trip! On the way back, Dixie made a nice point but moved too close and flushed another bird. I'm going to have to settle her down if this continues.



Feed as has been a good
George Bird Evans Papers
West Virginia and Regional History Center
given to the West Virginia and Regional History Center.

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If the grouse are so scarce elsewhere, we may have to rely on woodcock
for action - dog and gun, tho I hope birds will appear as the
weather improves.

Moved 7 grouse - 10 flushes
1 shot - no hit

Dixie: retrieved woodcock
Shadows.

moved 3' each
3 shots (woodcock) - 1 hit.

Stayed over in Cabin 22 for our third night and drove home leisurely on
Thursday into magnificent color on Prerries and Roaring Creek.
Have high hope for good shooting in home cabin.



With our season closed and with Dixie in season and no
results from Shadows, we drove to Les Crooks' on Friday, November 1st,
where we achieved the first success from Shell to Dixie. The following
day we drove in Les's wagon to Grayling, Michigan where, after
unpacking at the Purodo's Cabin on the famous Au Sable River, Les & I
took a late hunt (Peg & Ray had driven up in their VW).

Saturday 2 November

It was soon apparent that we needed
professional guidance, for Les's contact
with this area was from some years past. Our circles in the jack pine
cover were clearly hopeless and a late-evening hunt in alders along a small
stream looked better but was as fruitless. We arrived in a light snow storm
but the hunting was very pleasant with a trace of snow on the ground.

14 Sunday 3 November

We took Ray and Peg and drove to the

Deer area west of Frederic - good looking swamp covert, much like our Blackwater logs. Here they have spruce, tamarack, cedar, and jack pine with some white pine and a similar tree called Norway Pine. But no rhododendron. There are many open areas of aspen and maple scrub, and of course the lovely white birch. And for the most part the land is flat. I have never seen so much pine woods - thousands of square miles and almost all wilderness North-woods type. But the grouse seem more - exotant.

While Ray & Kay took the car on up the dirt road (sand), Len & I hunted the margin of the bog. When Len alerted me to him I crossed a small estuary that separated us. Stepping into 6 inches of water to reach a cross log I went in to my crotch, going over forward and just managing to save wetting my gun but pushing my left arm into the icy muck. Fortunately the car was near and I had a change of clothes, even to my extra jacket. We saw exactly nothing. Even the woodcock flight appears over, the coverts look ideal. (We effected the 3rd service to Dixie.)

#2 on Sat. into

Monday 4 November

Today Len did what we should have done the first day, obtain a guide. Eggy Bugsbey of the unbelievable name immediately got us into at least one grouse that flushed ahead of the dogs. Eggy is a little fellow about 70, with very sharp eyes for a bird along the road - the favorite technique for hunting "pots" up here. Downing from our car. This is just

of it with 75% of the time spent in the car. (Not my style).
 One place he took us was the Deard area we'd hunted yesterday, but
 instead of the swamp he put us abas, in open scrub and small
 3 foot pines. There was one bird - a flush by shell and a refresh
 by shadows that I've tried for as a right cross and missed.
 Finally about dusk, Eggy took us where he should have taken us
 first, to a side road off route 72 west of the Maunster River.
 Almost at once Eggy stopped us with a "whoa! there's one" and I
 went back and flushed and missed it. I can't see this method without
 dog work. At 5:30, after a further circle about the road we ended
 up in a big open basin covered with low scrubs and slashings. I
 had little hope but to my surprise heard a flush (can't say what
 the dogs did but both Shell & Shadows were there) and saw two
 grouse cross ahead, too far to try, followed by two more - one of which I
 made a swing pass, remembering to fire my left barrel, but missed.
 Then a fifth bird flushed out of gun shot. We tried to follow but by
 then it was almost totally dark.

Used 8- & flushes
 1 shot - no hit

(Eggy Bueby was a guide on the
 Air Sable; had a fence of broken
 canoe handles paddles around his
 house.)

Tuesday 5 November

Today we had hired another guide, a
 ratty little cross-eyed fellow named
 Bob Wakely who immediately antagonized me by announcing he had recently
 shot 16 grouse in a day. We had Bud Lee along today (they had just
 come back from Fandley) but he was not shooting. Wakely took us to far

places - less driving 40 or 50 miles. The first few counts were false but at one place I went with Wahely alone into a flat open bottom that oddly had clover growing among the ground cover. There were clumps of spruce dotted around and I saw Dixie, whom I was using alone, point tentatively and then move on into several spruces. Shortly there was a distant flush - not associated with Dixie - and Wahely began counting, flushing more birds with each exclamation. Possibly 4 or 5. He called them 7 or 8. I am convinced by his double vision, also that his experience is limited to pot-shooting them from a car, for he talks at the top of his voice constantly.

Following the birds (after quieting Wahely) I saw Dixie point intensely, then move up too closely and the grouse went out. I called her in and persuaded her for it. In a moment she went ahead and pointed again, and this time held steadily, even after the grouse flushed before I could get up. She made one more hot point that did not produce but it was good to see. We had no further contact with the birds tho we circled well.

Finally ended up in an impossible jack pine area at dusk, after a long drive, and less at Wahely moved a bird that Wahely missed twice. I hunted a good long while but missed none.

I missed 5 - 7 flushes
no shots.

Dixie: 2 productive.

Wednesday 6 November Before taking off for Waterbury. ¹⁵ And I
took a short hunt in the covert beyond the Manister. We creaked
some time, finally Dixie flushed 2 of the 5 birds we knew were there.
Following into a swamp, we did not refresh. The 1 saw a beautiful
snowshoe hare. Quite large and gray, it had blue gray ears much
larger than a cottontail, with a white belly and enormous white bottoms
on its "snowshoe" hind legs. Very handsome and with big soulful eyes.
We gave up and started back, but along the road saw a grouse.
I took Dixie (was hunting her alone today) back but the bird flushed
before I had left the car. Having seen on the road, I went into
the swamp to follow #1 when I heard him shoot, and in a moment
shot again. He had walked into 3 more along the road, all 4 having
been within 50 yards. We had no success in locating any more
returned to the cabin where the bear had brought the George Griffiths to see
us before we took off. ^{more 6 (4 more) - 6 flushed.} no shots.

The Michigan trip was disappointing as to shooting - 1 shot
the country was massive and impressive. There are grouse there but
you have to almost know them personally. We moved 19 for 21 flushes
less had 4 shots. Dixie's condition was complicating. I used both Dixie
and Shadow every day except the last. Shadow 4, Dixie 5
I would love to have shot one of the Michigan grouse - they are the gray
Togata sub-species, but you can't shoot them if you don't see them.
Weather held nicely, a light drizzle on Tuesday. There's fire, cool & damp.
now we are home with the season of peace and rain. ^{constant (Friday) but}

hope to get out tomorrow

Saturday 9 November

Twenty-eight years ago tonight Ed Speck

died (it was also a Saturday).

Today was perfect; partly sunny, mildly cool and damp after the long rains. We drove to Upper Dooty, passing Sybold's and parking just short of the stream. Couldn't bring myself to leave either dog in the car so closed both. It was wonderful to be hunting with Ray again. Began hunting new territory across from the Sybold farm on the flat where he says he usually finds birds. Fair looking cover but no sign of grouse. Flushed a grouse that was up into the trees before I could go there but I tried and missed. Following downstream along the main "road" that runs below the bench, Ray saw and heard a bird cross up to the hemlock cover on the steep hillside above. We followed and she heard it leave a tree, which I did not. Which raised a question as to whether my hearing is dulling. This is something I've suspected re my right ear and I'm sure Ray hears many birds that I am not aware of. The grouse flushed from a tree on the next rise as well and we lost it.



Hunting on out the excellent cover we came to a ravine with a road running up from the main road. This, I remembered from a former time when I killed a bird in here. I left Ray with I hunted up the head and found a mailbox: A.E. Christopher and a house on top!

On the way down the road, after joining Ray, Dixie made a
productive point but moved in too close - her bad fault - and flushed,
this again I did not know the bird went out. We paused to eat a bit
and then followed, Ray on the road, I above in line with the flight.
A large stand of rhododendron forced me up over the shoulder where
I came into a good covert over the brow. Shortly a grouse flushed
ahead of Dixie which must have been #4. Soon I saw Dixie point
and Shadows move in, but neither held solidly and the grouse flushed.
I disciplined both dogs who should know to hold grouse as well as
quail & pheasants. Calling to Ray to wait at the foot of the ridge I
worked out and Dixie ran onto the bird but held to flush nicely.
That was the end of birds in this area then I hunked down to a
good slapping and to the "chained hound" cabin and up to Ray.
We worked the road back to the car where we took a rest with
food & coffee from 3:30 until 4:00.

Shadows had seemed to show some sign of fatigue so we left
him in his cage in the station wagon and used Dixie solo which is
really the way to hunt grouse. Starting up the lower road we heard
one or two birds go out below and above but had no view of them.
Then, near the greenbrier & grapevine tangle at the upper end a big
grouse flushed below the road giving me a good look as it rose on a
left-away. For some reason ~~the~~ I failed to connect (probably did not wait
to focus before mounting) but managed to swing part and find the left barrel as
the grouse left-quartered high out over the
bird fold and dead - a nice shot.
well out - I suspect 40 yards - and ~~there some~~ located the bird. Oddly the
The fall was



Monday 11 November To Blackwater & cabin " with Pay & Sen.
Mild sunny weather turning cool. Hunted North Branch Blackwater at
Courtland. Excellent hawthorn country in good year, but none now. Also no
grouse. On way back made 3 woodcock (dogs bumped) along road
above river. I missed first one on long try. Failed to get dog work by
Dixie who seemed unable to locate them.

Moved to the Gates court arriving about 4:30. Flushed about
20 woodcock in 1 1/2 hours. Shell pointed two times, Dixie one good
production that I could see. My first bird was a close left-quarter
rising that dropped solidly — placing me in the W.D.A. Dixie retrieved
but not to hand. In wide fall clearing (near dead cow) I saw shell
on point at far edge — then more in as two 'icks flashed, one coming
across in front of me which I failed to shoot at, being involved in
amateurish "safety" trouble. On next rise my gloved trigger finger
caused the Purdey to fire prematurely (I don't count this shot) and
less dropped the bird as it came over him.
My next shot was a long one (right barrel) that came out
from Dixie well ahead, a hit. There were almost
constant flushes as we worked on.



as Dixie moved into a thicket I again had a long look at
a rising 'cock that I dropped with the right barrel.
This, after no grouse, was something like it. By this
time darkness had made in and with the gun firing in



the wrong part of the swamp I got us together and finally out of the tangle. Good action.

N. Blackwater : 3 cocks
Gates : 20 cocks

Dine: 1 prod cock
2 ret "

4 shots (cocks) - 3 hits

Tuesday 12 November Took Sen to the Rim Road. Colder but nice with
lot of snow on ground.

Started in basin cove above Big Run and almost immediately flushed a grouse from a hemlock - a high left crossing shot that I was certain of.



I missed and exclaimed to that effect, only to learn that Sen had shot too.

Found the bulk of my pattern stopped by a small sapling. Failed to refush this bird above the road (I sent L. to follow it while I covered the swamps below). Moved nothing on upper side of road when Ray & I shot flushed 3. Tried Two Run to no avail, driving up to head of arm. Returned to basin cove and, hunting up the swamp edge in opposite direction, moved a bird that must not far ahead of dogs within ten minutes. This I sent above the road and was not refushed.

Some distance beyond Two Run I was using

Today, go into an intense point, then near up and stop again. I got up to him and saw the grouse flush out and across to far side of the swamp. A miss point - that was it, the shadows & I circled the upper end and back across.



Shadows: 1 prod.

ward 3 (not new) - 3 flushes
One shot - no hit

Wednesday 13 November Less's friend Ed Fuller took us, with Ed Rinehart, to Stony River via the old Balcoch Grade in upper Carson Valley. Fuller & I rode in Stearns White's Land-Rover, & Less and Rinehart in the latter's International. It was a revelation of what those vehicles can take - riding rocky washed-out gullies for tracks. On the way up Cabin Mt. I made the mistake of saying I saw a grouse. The remark got violent response from Fuller who wanted me to shoot it on the ground. I stalled, hoping the bird would flush but when Fuller got his gun out, I released Dixie who soon went into a point. Feeling I might as well try for a shot over a point, I uncased my gun but the grouse flushed and bored down over the Rinehart car.

at the top we found for a magnificent view of Canaan Valley and the distant rim of mountains — a vast outlook with heavy woods, and winding rivers but mostly barren waste of grass. at the saddle of Cabin Mt. we parked over the top at the intersection of Babcock and Dobbin Grades (mere traces) and separated — J & R taking the left ridge, Father & I the right.

We had reached a patch of forest fern (brake) and low scrub on the crest of a rise when I saw Dixie on point. Whistling Father up, I moved in and saw Dixie work on, very hot. Father was using a young pointer, Ben, that belonged to Stearns White and one I was interested in observing for I understood he was from the Elbow Kennels. Perhaps because Dixie was still attractive after heat, or because he was flighty, I found the pointer unimpressive, both in performance — wild and no sign of nose — and in looks.

As both dogs moved to my left a grouse flushed to my right and appeared above the low scrub trees, giving me a shot that I should have dropped — but  didn't. Probably shot too quickly without focus. Bird may have turned. (Par alibi.)

Father had come up and we followed the line of flight. Out ahead I saw Dixie point again, very

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up and Feller missed a shot straight away and low. Oddly, we were
unable to refresh



(Other than on the way) NICE AND SOLID.

That was the only grouse we flushed, then we carried a long circle around the
mountain to the upper end of Stony River Dam. On the way I saw
Dixie making game and a woodcock flushed, dropping almost immediately.
It was extremely windy and cold with snow spitting, and for some reason
Dixie (and the pointer Ben) was unable to locate the bird tho I
knew exactly where it was and put them downwind again and again.
at last it flushed from us and the time of Feller's "there it
goes, get it!" I waited for it to swing past me and dropped it,
a cock bird.



We moved our mark  woodcock (a rather Dixie
bumped it) near the water's edge. Feller missed and we searched hard for
the bird but later heard it flash beyond the pointer, far up on the woods.
Saw a beaver pond complex of a series of 8 ponds in ascending level -
some quite small "puddles" room-size - with two ^{beaver} houses.

Returned to the cars after a couple of hours and waited in

extreme cold for an hour till Jess & Punchant returned. They had
flushed 8 grouse - L. missed 1, R. 5 & 6. These birds were well
around toward breast of dam in Rhododendron. This seemed a waste
of good territory - and time - and as was the long return trip in
morning darkness, going down the Dobbins Grade to upper Beaver Creek.

I think our trip up was on the grade that Fred Vierning had been
missed 1 'cock - 1 flush 1 shot - 1 hit
killed on.
We missed 2 grouse - 3 flushes. Dixie: two prod.
1 shot - no hit

R. had worked his pointer with electronic collar and antenna, and had carried
the control gear around his own neck. Small wonder he can't shoot well.
Coming down, more magnificent views of Canaan Valley.

Thursday 14 November: Cold, low fog that shut out top of Canaan Mt.
and ridges up Blackwater & Beaver. Ed Feller came in Land - Rover and
took us up Beaver Creek to the ridge on the right above the tipples that I've
wanted to try. Today it was non-productive tho it has good cover in
places - ferns, hemlocks, low shrubs on edges and brush and slashings
on top. We hunted all over it and did not miss a feather, other than
a Carver owl that Feller shot. Ice caps on top, frosting trees and bushes.
Nothing. Used Shadows who hunted
well and hard

Friday 15 November Les & I hunted alone today. Cloudy and cold.

In Cassan Valley went to mouth of Flag Run at N. Blackwater where Clay Heitz told me he'd heard of 8 grouse. Turned out to be swamp land. Almost immediately saw two ducks (mallards?) rise from stream and take off. With Les on near side, I took far side of Flag down and saw a snipe flush from Dixie who became quite excited. In a short while I heard a strange cry and another snipe (Wilson's?) flushed back over me with long bill extended like old sporting prints, but I did not care to shoot - a good fast shot offered. We heard no other game and after a half hour drove on down to the Balsams.



(I feel we perhaps passed up good cover further up Flag Run and want to check it in future.)

Drove part way into Balsam area. Les flushed a woodcock at corner of woods. I worked to the left and later arrived ahead of him to the Hawthornes above Balsams. There I saw a grouse flush from a thorn bush as Dixie ran onto it and marked it into the swamp. After Les arrived I circled about and saw Dixie enter beech woods and make as stunning a point as she has ever made, holding solidly

until I came ^{nearly} up, then moving on with no further pause. (Possibly a grouse flushed without my seeing or hearing.)

In the swamp I heard a flush into a tree, then out. On far side of the swamp I saw Dixie stop, ears up, and then leap out a few jumps into far clearing, indicating a flush. So I count that

we would 2 grouse for 3 flushes. We returned to the car about 3:15.

at Ben Thompson's we met Ray & Peg in fire car and prepared to go to the Gates for the evening woodcock shooting. But on the way Ben decided to give it up, and have his car oiled and (to my delight) Ray and I went alone, arriving about 4:00 with the place to ourselves!

at first the birds seemed ^{almost} non-existent, with only one wild flush until we reached the "far aspen" clumps where Dixie disappeared on point and Ray saw a bird flush. Following we made another, then, circling but on aspen grove where Dixie went into a lonely point. I walked in, with Dixie frozen, and flushed the cock - missing an unluckily try as it dodged the aspen trunks. We followed that bird by a long way 'round and near where I shot my first bird this season. Dixie entered car on the left and remained quiet. We knew it was a point but could not spot her.

thicket, I was unaware when the cock flushed, not even hearing it. Suddenly Ray called and dropped as the bird came out of nowhere over my head and bore to the side of her. I had a safe shot but fired too rapidly, missing, then dropped it solidly as it swung right and well out over the alders.



GODD WIFE WORK.

This was the beginning of a wonderful evening. Dixie finally retrieved after some persuasion.

We hunted down the road with no action other than indication D. had pointed a bird, being gone some time. Out on the road I walked outside

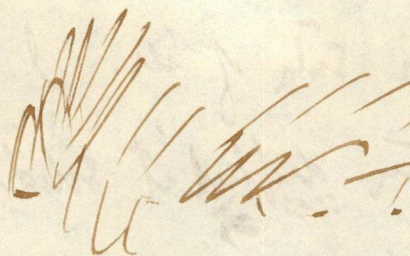
the cover now that it was getting dark while D. walked inside. Suddenly a cock flushed and leveled against the evening sky, folding at my shot and Dixie retrieved nicely as Ray joined us on the road.

at this hour woodcock shooting becomes intense with light failing and birds materializing from the ground, as it seems. Inside the "orchard" thicket Ray called out excitedly that Dixie was on point and I saw it, far out to the left and ahead. She was solid, with head up, and tail well elevated and there was no suggestion of moving in further. I ran to her and she still held, glossy-eyed. It was now too light and the cock was rather jumbled offering

little opportunity unless the bird was under her nose. It wasn't.



PERFECT.



she had it from at least twenty yards to my right and as it

flushed I missed and

fired again. For a moment I thought I'd missed the left, but then I saw the bird settling toward the edge, and in a moment saw feathers floating back even from the first shot. Dixie retrieved the 'cock, stone dead. It was a memorable moment.

Now with the light going fast, I left Ray in the car and hurried to the large twin aspens near Dixie a white ghost skimming them the alders. Just inside the large aspens a 'cock flushed, rising and left-crossing and I dropped it in the alders. Dixie had trouble with this one and failed to retrieve.

when I went up I found the bird had fallen in a hole in the black mud — possibly a cow hoof print — and she couldn't dig it out tho I saw her try. This was a very small cock bird.

I made one more small one before going Ray at the Gate. What an evening — the high point of the trip.

2 grouse - 3 flushes

made 9 - 10 flushes ('cock')

2 shots - 4 hits

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Dixie: at least 3 birds ('cock')
3 ret ("")

Saturday 16 November We planned a return trip with Ed & Lella to the

Stony River Dam area, and started up, only to have the fur belt on the Ford. Rover broke at the bottom of Cabin Mt. By luck we got back to Davis, adding water from a canteen, and Leo and I found Kay & Peg just about to leave the cabin. We took Leo's station wagon and drove to the corner school road to the Wolford Place where, to my surprise, Leo went directly to a flush in the blackberry briar patch, missing the shot. Later he shot at a woodcock from the far edge, missing. We hunted down to Club Run where Leo saw a grouse flush that could have been the reflush. Separating, I hunted up the hollow and coiled back the ridge, locating the woodcock (Dixie was very still) but then it flushed within yards of me, it kept behind trees so that I could not shoot.

When we decided to give up - both being very tired from

lack of action (Leo seemed let-down after a nasty dog fight earlier between Shell and Shadows at the cabin after Kay had taken still photos and movies of the dogs). However at the Park Leo drove me to the pipe line corner and Dixie and I took in that area with no results. I was glad to give up and go to the cabin about 4:00.

Mixed 1 - 2 flushes

no shots

The Blackburn trip was most disappointing - probably more than any year as it has been there. 1959 was the last good season with 1960 still fair. '61 and '62 seemed bad but 1963 is being a real stinker, so that with few chances to shoot (I seem to have lost my usual luck and have had even fewer than Leo) I am too tense and anxious when the chance comes. There seems to be no food in the Canaan-Blackburn area as well as almost no

grouse. Only the woodcock shooting redeemed the trip as a sporting³⁰
status. Am almost inclined to go back for another day of that!

Monday 18 November Ray and I back home but Ray did not go out.

Took Shadows along to Barnes Run below Jimmie Butcher's.

This was an interesting experience, returning to an old
favorite cove I have not hunted for, surely, eight or ten years.
Oddly it seems much as it did when I first hunted it in 1939, tho
there has been a cycle of cutting and regrowth to the original condition.

Parked on the old spot this side of Little Sandy bridge and hunted
upstream. Within five minutes I walked onto a grouse that flushed
six feet from me but kept behind hemlock branches, darting and twisting
as I shot almost blind and missed. Shadows passed up a good target
on the follow-up and that was exactly where the bird was, lying tight.

It crossed Sandy without a chance to shoot, and I hunted on up to Barnes,
keeping on the left bank where I used to make birds. This time I did not.

Doubling back I crossed Little Sandy at the "blind hole" and hunted
the far side above the patch of standing corn. As we moved up into the woods
I saw the grouse flush wild (I was not near) and go out the
ridge. I hunted but failed to locate it.

The weather was hot with forecast of rain and now the sky
had clouded over but I continued up the right side of Sandy thru
the lower cover of hemlocks & rhododendron. It is interesting to hunt
old paths that are now almost ~~obliterated~~ by growth that has met

over them but with no actual trunks or roots in the path itself. 31
Interesting but difficult: for I was fighting thru rhododendron,
especially some that had died which in the most brittle kind.

I hunked up to the Ray Guthrie bridge, a bit above, and angled
over to Ray's side where we moved exactly nothing. Hunting down the
right side from the stone cabin I walked a trail thru beautiful cover
but still moved no birds. This sort of thing is the most tiring kind of
hunting with no action to stimulate energy and no anticipation
of action. at the forks of Burner Run & Sandy it began to sprinkle
and I moved on down to the car. A bit of a let-down.

Moved 1 - 3 flushes
One shot - no hit
~~~~~

Shadows worked hard  
but seemed to have  
trouble keeping me located.

Tuesday 19 November Back to Upper Dooty at 5:05 -  
country that we know holds grouse. If we had not had the  
experiences on the 9th we would never have realized how good it is.  
Finally moved a bird wild land on Dooty across from the car, after  
working Shadows & Dixie. Leaving Shadows in the station wagon  
we hunted up the main ridge exactly as we had done before when  
we moved 7. This time we moved none! But today we worked all the  
way up the branch to the upper parking place. Above the crossing  
I saw Dixie point to the left. After a short moment  
she moved about the path and a grouse flushed too far out to



try on, going up the stream on the left.

Further up the path Dixie again pointed on the left, between the path & the stream. Then, out of sight, she moved in and we saw another grouse flush - this time back down the hollow. At the small bridge we saw D. show signs of game and excitedly work up into the hemlocks, there, not from her but from us, a grouse flushed from a hemlock and bored up the hollow out of sight. This upper end appears hottest today.

As it was getting on into late afternoon we worked back down on the steep side making both our grouse & our reflexes but no chance to shoot. That was the extent of action. Then we hunted all the way up to Rattlesnake Hollow and down the main ridge on the middle path. Some days they're there, some days they aren't.

Mixed 4 (3 new) - 6 flushes Dixie: 2 prod.

no shots

Shadows  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour.

We felt it as well to let Shadows rest & he appeared tired after regular hunting.

Wednesday 20 November

To Big Sandy Valley back of

Gerris Bensons, a wild vast area of perfect brushy grouse cover that in a good year is worth looking into. We were let down for lack of action. Saw good grouse berries (loads of them) as we started out but had no birds moving. It was hot and



extremely dry and noisy. Hunted down and around to the old  
"Kennedy Goodie" place, deserted, and in the far ravine in hummocks and  
Rhododendron I saw pointed on the path, then moving into the dense  
cover, ~~met~~ a bird that must have landed on a tree as we heard  
her working for a while before leaving it when it must have flushed.

This habit of moving in after painting is a bad one but I can't  
always feel I can punish her on the spot and later is often too  
ineffective. All this cover is magnificent except that there are no  
birds in numbers. As cut-aw it will be good for a long time.

at the old farm place Ray took the road and I hunted back  
toward what I thought was the location of the car - misjudging by one  
round too many. Seeing two large beech trees I recognized I soon  
got straightened out and joined Ray in the field where the car was  
parked. Big Sandy Valley is beautiful, with a view of the  
falls below Parkville that Ray took on movie film.

round 1 - 1 flush

Dines: one prod.

No shots.

Shadows

Both dogs worked the country well - one taking over if  
the other lagged from the heat & lack of action.

Thursday 21 November Today left Kay & Sheldon at home  
and hunted Charles ~~Hall's~~ Kellys, banking a pond above the  
Beaver Creek bridge. This event is ideal. Study and visit house



country, but we moved no birds the Duck worked it perfectly, first  
on left then crossing path to the right side. At the point of  
ridge on top I flushed a grouse well out that topped the trees and  
pitched for the bottom. I failed to replace.

Hunking down to the tributary and crossing, I followed the  
old path or what used to be Frank Steffis. Again, it was odd to  
use a path that was almost invisible now. Around on Sunday  
I hunted about the Brown Hole and planned to circle back to  
Kelley's. But along the margin cover I saw and heard a grouse  
flush from Dick who stood, steady to flush, and watch it cross  
the creek.

With water low it was easy to follow on, using a fallen  
tree for a foot log. As I climbed up into some newly cut hemlock  
stumps and tops (on Casteel, I think) the grouse flushed from a tangle  
some distance to my right, flying low up the slope. It was well  
within range and I waited for the focus then mounted and fired,  
expecting the bird to tumble but it rose instead and topped out,  
flying far up the creek - a  
nice big red cock.



I think I fired as the bird was  
turning, but guess I should have  
swung ~~past~~ it sooner. Quail!



I had to follow, even tho I was getting far from the car. However, dense cover kept me too high on the steep hillside and I did not reflect the bird. By the time I was able to cross Sundry I was in sight of the bridge and decided to try the Jimmy Guthrie coast for the bird I sawed Monday. It was not at home so I crossed the stream and was about to enter the woods above the ~~corn~~ <sup>corn</sup> patch when the grouse flushed from the edge to my right into the open. It was well toward the creek when I focussed on it straightaway but I fired - the right instead of the left barrel, like a fool - and the bird went on over.

Why does a straight away seem so impossible to hit?



I followed and made three tries to locate the bird on the Guthrie side, up along the road but had no results. It was now getting dark and the car was a long take off so I moved briskly thru the Shaffer woods to Kellys and followed the log road back to the car. On the way I acted as if I had seen a grouse flush but I could not tell.

at the car, I drove down to the old George Rinjer road, paused long enough to fortify my energy with food & coffee and ~~started out~~ <sup>started out</sup> in the twilight coolness, following up the tributary of Beaver into the



Arman Place. At the Shokolendron hillside I hunted to the top  
and hunted back the newly bulldozed road. D. was stale from too  
many days' hunting in a row and found to look back at notes  
frequently. At the corner of the woods and the old clearing on the  
top where the road drops down, a big grouse flushed in the thicket  
on my right but I could only see it in the darkness as it  
leveled off. Down the road I came to the notes on the old  
George Ranger Pass - signed by Harley or Harvey ~~Swaingood~~.

It was almost dark at the car but I enjoyed some more coffee  
and watched a distant group of trees etched against the clear  
sky with a planet showing thru - possibly the one I saw at  
the end of Carman Mt. from the Gate? A good day but  
poor gun work.

Mixed 4-5 flushes

Dixie worked well.

Two shots - no hit

~~~~~  
Are these shots I've missed too far out for the more ^{set of} down barrels?
Perhaps I should switch to the 55%/70%.

Friday 22 November Our third trip to Upper Dority,
entering the upper end this time to try to locate the 3 we moved
here last time. They were not at home. First action was at lower
line on main ridge where we moved a bird near jeep trail and
another at edge of lower line, Shadows running into latter (doing both
dogs). No birds at all along lower path or ridge. Hunted
around & side above Sybolto and not until near top did we hear
#3 go out above us from Shadows.

Leaving that gentleman with Kay I took Dixie out to the
corner covert and hunted down into a hillside of hawthorns, with
large numbers of red haws. Almost consentually grouse began
flushing one, two; then another flush of two or three, then not far
beyond another pair. I started to swing on the first of this last
brace — not a very good chance — when the second flush turned
me but I had no shot on either. Six grouse in a quarter
acre of cover. If Dixie pointed I was unable to see but I suspect
she did what she usually does, point and mark in. This is the
hardest thing for me to take from her.

Following the lower birds (at least 3 of them) we entered
the cover below Kay. One flushed from a hemlock overhead with
no shot offered. Not far beyond I saw a grouse flush and Dixie
chased, which required discipline properly dealt out with feeling.

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joining King, she told me she had heard a bird fly into cover below
her - possibly from the first flushing. I was unable at that
hour to follow. The birds were then feeding at 4:00 p.m.
and we hope to relocate them another day.

By this time Dixie was stalling a great deal - possibly
the slogging - and neither dog worked well. They flushed
a grouse on the crest of an ridge as we worked back - I
think possibly one of the six birds.

It was fast getting dark as we dropped down the ~~side~~
side to the lower road. Below this, near the power line, a
grouse flushed from me but was too far out to shoot at. We
followed but did not reflect and now it was really getting
dark. We dropped to the creek and felt our way up the valley by the
easiest footing and arrived at the car in near blackness. Tired but
exhilarated by the action even without shooting. This is what
has been lacking in other coverts and makes the difference between
pleasure and fatigue. Cloudy, dry and noisy.

Wound 10 (6 new) - 13 flushes Dixie & Shadows
no shots

Monday 25 November Saturday rained (we went down for Mother).
Today King stayed home with Mother and Shadows and I took
Dixie to James Cochrans in ^{West Virginia} ~~West Virginia~~ birds there. I

63/79

saw one grouse flush 75 yards ahead of us (not from D.) and
held for Roaring Creek. That was it tho I covered all the old coverts.
I have said this before, but I repeat it and hope I remember:
Do not go to this covert again until a good year. Period.
Heard 1 - 1 flush
no shot
Dixie

Tuesday 26 November Today began drizzly but cleared
about 1:30 to perfect overcast and cool and sunny. Too
late to go to Dority so I dug & I hunted Mann Run. Again
a blaine except for one grouse that I am certain Shadow
was pointing on edge of woods and startings about Mann Run.
Too far to shoot at. That was it. Returned to car parked in
field about Mitchell Place and drove to bottom of ridge near
Plovermaster Bridge where we saw Dixie a short time. Nothing.
Heard 1 - 1 flush
no shot
Shadow: 1 prod.
Dixie

Wednesday 27 November Fourth trip to Upper Dority, this
time starting above Syppotts and hunting the steep ridge behind
their house. Amazingly, no grouse, for it is perfect grapevine cover
on brutally steep hillside - even some grapes and grouse droppings
but no birds here today.

Returning to car we went down to end of our main ridge
and parked, hunting up the lower ridge. It was about 3:30 and ideal time

to get action. It came, as both dogs worked the sides of the path in beautiful manner - a big grouse exploding from the path twenty-five yards in front of me and rising acutely left. For some obscure reason I missed the right barrel (probably did not swing up through from sheer excitement after all these days) but folded the bird as it was leveling. It fell solidly and rolled down

the slope above, fluttering to where Dine made in and retrieved - a huge adult cock ("Think of me") with a solid tail band.



ONE FROM THE PATH.

When it comes it always washes away the days of frustration and it even seems that the grouse must be participating.

We hunted up to the power line with no further flushes and, wishing to be in the Hawthorn covert by 4:00, we moved higher and topped the ridge, hearing two birds go out from the dogs below us as we reached the crest. Pausing to rest, we moved down to the Hawthorns and worked from the woods toward the open areas, hoping to keep any flushed birds out that way. When there were 6 last time at just this hour there were none today. That is grouse hunting. And none all the way to the car. But the shot made it a real day.

Adult cock: solid, fan $14\frac{3}{4}$ "
 2 shots - 1 hit
 tail feather $7\frac{3}{8}$ "

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 Dine: 1 ret
 Shaleen: 1 kill
 1 kill

born, caught, shot, banded, tagged, sexed, weighed, measured, etc.

Thanksgiving Day 28 November

Ray stayed home with Mother and I⁴¹
took Dixie & Shadows to Roaring Gap.

I didn't visit this area last year and found it quite changed this time -
Timbering, in a controlled manner, had improved many of the sections, tho
I found no birds on the first parts. I also found unsigned notices near
the upper end (sawmill bridge) which I chose to ignore. As I
came in sight of the small bridge I saw a grouse flush from the road.
Neither dog was near, nor were they as I making any sound to notice.
But the bird flushed 60 to 75 yards ahead and went up the road toward
the old sawmill. Dixie moved that way, unaware of the flush, but went
into a lovely point at the site. In a few moments she moved toward the
stream in a short rush that indicated another grouse had gone out.



NUMBER TWO?

I could only follow the one up the log road
and at that had no notion where it had
gone. Circling near the sawmill, I was
peering down into the rhododendron
tangle where the dogs were half-heartedly
searching when I became aware of a

grouse zooming overhead - from a tree - and back toward the original
flush. Not caring to go back I hunted up the sloping path around the
shoulder and moved a bird from ahead of Shadows into a tree and later
from the tree to perch in the heavy hemlocks along the "road fork" of
the stream. I followed, ineffectually, for there were a thousand places
for it to hide. Here again, the cutting had improved the covert.

There was no bird evident up the road, but I hunted on in spite of

in the air
 a close warm feeling, that boded rain that didn't come. Topping the ridge I circled back into the woods and had the pleasure of seeing Dixie whirl and look up 90° to her line of travel. There was no bird, however, and a damned shame it was with such a lovely point. Actually, with a decent amount of grouse Dixie would finish off into a fine little grouse dog but she doesn't have them to work with this year - nor has she had them the past two years.

As we hunted on, the grouse flushed well below us with neither dog at fault. Never can I remember birds being so nervous, other than on dry windy days, and I wonder if it is associated with the "down cycle" - if there is such a thing?

Around the ridge I began hunting out the greenbriers on the west of the steep thick hillside. Almost immediately the dogs moved a bird - too fast to shoot at - and I saw it bore toward the flat as if it would land shortly. It must have done so, for as we got near the critical spot I heard it flush and saw it cutting back - too far out but appearing to come closer. I tried a long left barrel shot that I half believed would have connected but not a sapling stopped the bulk of the charge at close range (they so often do!) and on a foolish impulse I tried an impossible shot with the right barrel and of ~~course~~ ^{course} missed. I attempted to follow but failed to ~~reappear~~ ^{reappear} this bird ~~in the~~ ^{in the} ~~woods~~ ^{woods}.

late but, in the bottom, I hunted up and around the right fork of the stream. Nothing there. And so I came back via the main log road. Shadows was by now tiring but Dixie seemed determined to show me how hard she could hunt, and how well — quartering the rough cover about the road, cutting back in each time she came out.

Two things stay with me, beside the double miss. One, a two-foot oak stump cut years ago and now half enveloped with moss up its sides; and in the moss a colony of 3 and 4 inch ferns — dozens sprouting from the sides of the stump. The other: a big deer — maybe a doe but built like a buck, that jumped from Shadows and, angling away, climbed the hill like a leisurely buggy horse, its enormous white flag flapping first right, then left in opposition to the motion of the heavy hips. A shame to ever hunt a beautiful thing like that.



THAT DAMNED BRANCH.

A good day
 Made 5-7 flushes
 2 shots - no hit

Dixie: 1/2 mod.

Shadows:

Saturday 30 November Day got cheated in that yesterday rained viciously most of the day, turning to snow later. Snow that lay on all branches and was still there in abundance today. We had given up hope of hunting even today, but in the afternoon the sky showed thru a couple of places and we decided to try the Scott Place for an hour or more.

As we approached, a car was coming out the old road - deer hunters scouting country for Monday. Hoping they hadn't ruined it for us began hunting and soon saw that, without their car tracks in the snowy road and the cleared overhang by the car we could not hunt at all. So we followed their tracks out to the turnoff to the Scott Place lane. Just before we reached the intersection two grouse flushed from the dense snow-creek on the left where Dixie and Shadows may or may not have pointed - it was too thick to see. I was unaware of the first bird until it was across the road and boring into "the white foliage" - a possible shot had I been alert. The other bird went into which creek the other way. It was impossible to follow. In fact, we soon ran out of pilot tracks and turned back, being out only 30 min. But it looks as if there are birds in here this year. We shall see!

Mud 2 - 2 flushes

No shots

Dixie

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after deer season.

Wednesday 11 December As per schedule, snow has been on the ground
thru deer season, with more added Monday and Tuesday. Not wanting
to take the car out on the roads with smooth tires, Ray & I took Dixie &
Shadows for a hunt around the ridge on the Choptank Place. The
cover bordering us is perfect for years with grape yields - brush heaps,
grape tangles and low growth coming back - all with a log road along the
lower edge. But today we missed nothing until we returned, when two flushed
well ahead of us from Shadows. Following us were approaching the log
road when a grouse flushed near me - a good left crossing shot -
but I was tangled in blackberry vines and could not shoot. Oh, well.
Dixie & Shadows

Mixed 2-3 flushes
no shots

Friday 13 December: Thus began a repetition of last year's
post-deer-season hunting. Snow on the ground thru more recent
falling. Tracks of a few birds but almost no look at any. Today Ray &
I returned to the Scott Place and missed three singles - all on top of
the ridge, tho we found tracks of two or three along the path at the old
house site. altogether, we must have seen tracks of five we did not
make. New station wagon delivered yesterday. Perhaps it will change luck.
D. & S.

Mixed 3 (2 new)
no shots

Saturday 14 December Returned to Upper Dority today in bitter
weather. Even the dogs didn't like it. Hunted up the ridge across from
Sycamore to Hawthorn thicket but no sign of birds, not even tracks.
Topped ridge to green briars (with ^{George Bird Evans Papers} on crest and near grouse wild.
no view. Hunted to power line and middle path and

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found double set of tracks on low ridge beyond. One grouse flushed
back to the left, offering a shot had I been less frozen but I
could not even get my gun up. Kay marked it down as a
Doubt. We hunted back down path and I tried a "hopeful"
at a far rising quivering flush that should have been a left
barrel - if at all. That bird went across to Sybolt's distant
farm where I think we finally moved it from a tree.

By the time we reached the car - good looking - we were almost
frozen and ready to believe Sybolt's thermometer which read 4 below zero.

Moved 3 (no more) - 4 further D. & S.

One shot - no hit

Dog work was searching
in this weather.

Monday 16 December Still bitter cold. After unloading things of
Mother's in Brunston from yesterday's trip to Unumtown, I stopped off
on way home, parking at Veston, and hunted the rim of ridge back
of Brandonville with Shadows. Kay & Dixie stayed home today. Saw
nothing - not even good cover - except first quonvex patch
below corn field. On return, hunted it out and found grouse tracks
among briars. At last saw a grouse flush below me and head
toward Sandy Creek down rd road. On examination, found pheasant
tracks (the 2 houses we saw along road yesterday). Began following them
up over fields to little thicket where Shadows hunted excitedly.
Tracks indicated one bird running out on us. At near dark I found
where it had moved out of thickets and across fields and away!

Moved 1 grouse - Shadows
No shots

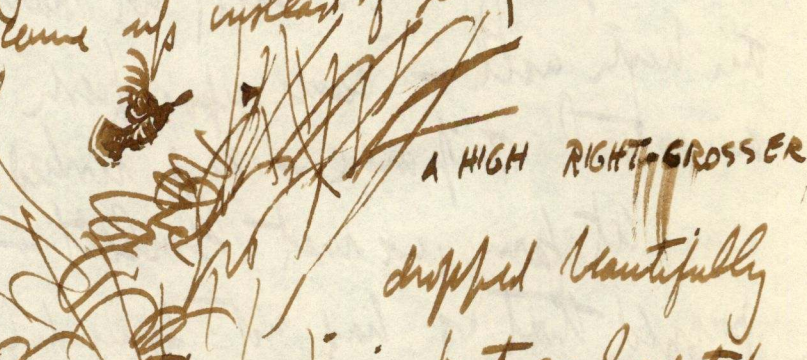
Tuesday 17 December Fine day, tho still cold and lots of snow. Drove to cover back of Kingwood (Mullard Garlett's) where there are supposed to be a lot of grouse - reported by rabbit hunters here. Found the place, obtained permission, and started out but unaware of where to look. Following loss of strip mine, we found nothing until we doubled back above high wall and saw tracks of a Song Sparrow - the only thing in view until we finally arrived at a point near the farm. There had been good cover but no grapes on the vines and no birds. As a last resort before giving up we creaked a knob of darkness and came out on the east face with perfect holding cover at the narrow - brush piles, grape tangles - and at the far margin a glimpse of a grouse flushing fully a hundred yards ahead of dogs. Some found set of two or more fresh tracks that wound thru the brush heaps to the site of the flush, so there must have been two at least that moved out. Followed, but found no more signs of them. Late, we marshaled and located a place to descend the high wall - came upon fresh grouse tracks feeding on weed seeds on actual strip area - and worked our way to the house.

At farm we met Garlett - a very hospitable chap - who was puzzled that we had not found birds. Told us where to look next time - they'd moved 10 or 15 miles - and about 500 acres of grape cover across the road. Come back. We shall!

rechecked - 1 flush
no shot

Saturday 21 December Bitter cold weather kept us out of the woods until today when, after, returning Weston to Princeton (trip to town yesterday) Ray and I dropped off at area across from Nestor's to look for pheasants and the grouse I had heard there. It was 3:30 a later and this time there were no tracks. After a half hour we returned to the car and drove to the Scott Place. It was getting late even as we started out but we hunted out the top road. There were tracks at last beyond the turn-off to the Scott house and we worked down the slope through good grapevine cover. At last, just at the path above the Scott Place, Dixie flushed a grouse - whether by point or "roading" I couldn't tell. It was best, we thought, to follow this bird back toward the car and we moved along the path, coming onto two sets of tracks working up or down below the level we were on.

It takes a long time in many cases, as it had done this season, but at last it came - a fair chance. I had been given one good offering with less on the Pine Road ^(Mar. 12) but a tree stopped the pattern. I can think of no other until today. The grouse flushed below the path and by a welcome chance came up instead of going out. It made no flushing sound that I could hear - only the snap of wings against trees - behind Ray who and I turned, located the bird, and mounted, swinging just as I averted and fired, and saw the grouse tumble. Whew! Afterward, I always regret the bird's fate in the matter, but if ever one was needed, it was this.



Both dogs came in and searched at my direction from where we stood on the path. For a moment it seemed they hadn't located it beyond some cover about us, Shadows still hunting for it. But then Dixie came, running almost, with the grass - very proud. She brought it to hand and sat to deliver - perfect, as said, for Briar! and the other puppies. This is to be her last time out before whelping.

The game was this years bird, a hen.

I had to toss it out for Shadows to retrieve for he was trying to tear at my hands.



GOOD FOR BRIAR. BLISS!

It was good, and good for us, and we hunted back to the car on a rosy cloud.

Mixed 2 (1 new) - 2 flushes
One shot - 1 hit

Dixie! 1 ret, sitting
1 kill

Shadows: 1 kill

yearling hen: inter.
& crop:



Saturday 28 December - my 57th birthday. Snow. Hunted alone with Shadows on Upper Beaver, parking at lane to old Tyra Kelly place. Heard none on Kelly place tho discovered a good grapevine stratum above the strip job - ~~but~~ on side of Kelly knob - grapevines & grapebushes but no birds today. Crowd

to below the "back road" and almost at once found fresh tracks of two birds. Followed and flushed one, missing a poor opportunity. Later moved #3 down on Brown. Saw other tracks but no more birds this I hunted 4 1/4 hours today. Tracks of 6 altogether. Shadows worked hard.

Heard 2 - 3 flushes
One shot - no hit.

Monday 30 December Hunted the Garlett place alone with Shadows (Dixie in retirement till after puppies). Cold, much snow. Traced area beyond Garlett's where he said they had snowed 16 in one day. I moved two for 3 flushes. The second bird flushed from a tree and came across overhead left - perfect chance that I missed both barrels. You don't get many likes that to try! On way back, I moved #1 and again missed both barrels, first shot washed up by a tree. Returned home and found Mother seriously ill. DIED JAN. 7, 64
Heard 2 - 3 flushes
4 shots - no hits
Shadows

Dixie has had 3 puppies on Jan. 3. Bliss, Bonnie, & Mark!
Friday 10 January 64 Took Ray back to above Garlett's. Better cold and snow still there. Heard nothing. Tried last half hour at the house behind steep rise back of Garlett's house and again nothing.
Heard 0
Shadows

Saturday 11 January To Roaring Gap and of course snow, 12" and crusty. This day was sunny and we moved (see journal) Ray called
George Bird Evans Papers
West Virginia and Regional History Center

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a group of five at the old sawmill site. We reflected on a two
with no shots. Finally, at sunset we plodded, tired but happy, up
the hill toward the car. Almost at the spot where I had once passed on
the road to catch a squirrel climb and leap from a tree, I stopped to
speak and a grouse roared out of a fallen tree top on the left, coming
away with a short glimpse against the fading sky. I shot and
missed.

Ward 10 (5 new) - 13 flutings. Shadows

One shot - no hit.

Friday 17 January. Season is extended to Jan. 25 to make up for
early fire closure. I hunted alone today with Shadows on Warm
Run, parking however out at Mitchell's on Manley's road. Back
roads too deep to drive. Our first contact was two grouse out of
a tree top on hillside above Warm Run - both birds flushing to the
creek. Hoping for a reflex in rhododendron along creek I walked
down to the lowest path. Shadows was about the same level with
me but some piece away when a grouse flushed - coming out of
rhododendron below me and cutting across fairly open stretch toward
the creek.



I can't remember a similar shot -
away - right below eye level.

I found going there instinctively
and the grouse folded about 40 yards away, stone dead.

Now, I thought, was a chance to direct Shadows like a retriever
at trials, and set a retriever that would make long squirms to have covered.

However, the more I directed the harder Shadow tried but in the wrong, the logical, place - in the rhododendron below us. Finally, I had to go part way down and at last got him headed out where he soon hit the scent and zeroed in beautifully, picking the grouse up and wagging his tail delightedly. Then instead of retrieving it, he laid it down and looked at me. The more I begged the more confused he became until he actually came in to me without the grouse and stood quivering with anxiety.

When you can confuse a perfect retriever like Shadow you have over-handled your dog. At last, I ordered him to "go fetch" once more and this time he retrieved it, sitting to deliver - a nice big cock - first-year bird. We took this grouse home, still warm, and gave the puppies their first introduction to the bird at 2 weeks ago. Little Bliss, her eyes scarcely open, put her little head up and sniffed the grouse with flavor - a good sign - and I say got it all or nearly.

Used 2 (1 new) - 3 flashes
One shot - 1 hit

Shadow: 1 kill
1 retriever

1st year cock: solid
crop: catkins & twigs (poor food)

[This was first time I have seen
when a grouse had dived into deep
snow, spent the winter, and flew off.]

Saturday 18 January Ray & I returned to Foiring Gap, where last trip we'd made 10 grouse. Hunted just as hard and today made 0!

Deep Snow

None [Saw another "burrow":] Shadows.
[Two days in succession]

~~~~~

Tuesday 21 January Getting near the end. Left the car at Ralph Muller and hunted around hill to down Huffman area. Found none in the usual covert this did see tracks. Shadows made two points that was not productive but he was trying hard. Snow walking fierce, deep and breaking them to holes in ground and broke piles up to our knees. Heard one grouse wild at the Smith house and followed for a replush. That was it.

Heard 1 - 2 flushes Shadows hunted hard.

no shots.

~~~~~

Still found visited needed Ralph.

Wednesday 22 January Returned to Upper Dority (Dyrolts) Snow thawing. Good weather. Hunted up crest of ridge and in the greenbriers made a group of 5! in old field but out of gunshot and no dog work. Followed around top after one that flushed back my way - one of best views of a bird I have had all season - and I swung fast and fired - directly into a tree.

Heard 7 (no new) - 12 flushes.

[One shot - no hit (tree)]



DON'T COUNT THIS SHOT

Thursday 23 January One of the rare times King & I have returned the following day to the same cove - but this is a hot one in a year of almost empty areas. Savely and warm today with the sun well off the west ridge (South exposure). I used a heavy chain on Shadows to slow him down (at 10 1/2 years) and it worked fairly well tho it made me feel a heel. He didn't seem to mind and did not tire. He made a production that I probably would not have seen had he been as wild as he's been working lately.

Moved 6 (no new) - 8 flashes Shadows: 1 prod.
no shots.

Friday 24 January Back to the Scott Place. where we moved four. One was a production by Shadows - again in chains. I had a shot that was on a grouse King had seen and marked. It was a rising away shot - not too probable but a possible, but not for me in my present state of nerves. An exciting moment at sunset was discovering a chestnut tree about twenty feet across - loaded with thirty or more horns, and others on the ground. Bunches of undeveloped nuts, but as was stated until they found lesion of the fungus about shoulder-high. But it was a pretty thing to see.

Moved 4 (no new) - 7 flashes Shadows: 1 prod.
One shot - no hit

Saturday 25 January Last day. We've hunted every day this week but Monday. We're all on a razor edge and pretty tired. No place as good as Upper Douthett so we went there for our last day. Cold and windy but lovely. This time we made only four - tho we know there are about twenty grouse in the area, but that's the way it's going. No shooting.

March 4 (no new) - 5 flushes Shadros.

No shots.

And that is it. The end of the poorest grouse season I have known in the twenty-five years I've gamed in West Virginia.

Not much to say except food mostly lacking, dry weather early, snow later. Dixie missed much time because of pregnancy and puppies. My shooting abominable tho the Purdey fits like a dream.

Pheasant Shooting

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6 March '64 Friday After a long wait thru deep snow, as finally got a perfect day and went to the Rockwell Memorial Preserve to shoot quinquedras. It was Dixie's first hunt since Christmas, due to her injuries, and we started with her alone. The day was warm - high 40's or more - and clear and ground underfoot instead of snow. We found a pheasant almost at once - I saw Dixie standing watching the large cock walking out on her into the edge of the woods. After much maneuvering during which Dixie pointed nicely the bird continued to prefer foot to wing. Finally Lee Shapa & Nick Resroad who were still on hand headed it toward the opening where it flushed, left and low. I missed the right barrel (too much chasing to be deliberate) but folded it with the left barrel and Dixie retrieved from some distance, nicely. Used the lighter barrels on the Purday 55 & 70, probably nearer 65% right with the 3-1/8-6 Ely shells, and used Peters 3/4-1/8-6 in left. Like them but question the Elys.

The second bird was a nice point by Dixie in an edge of woods - I was forced to walk into thick cover and again the bird ran instead of flying. Dixie stood staunchly at command and I had to run this one up alone, finally getting it in the air on the edge of field where it took off low and left - away again.

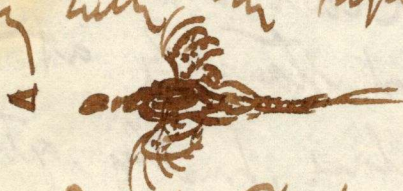
I shot ~~to~~ now but dropped it centered with left barrel - and another nice retriever by Dixie.

I decided to go for Shadows and work two dogs in hope the brace would put the birds in air cornered between them. I forgot ~~something~~ I once read that suggested a whistle like a hawk would put up pheasants promptly. Must try it -

Wick Recreational drove by, Dixie and myself to an station wagon - the new Fairlane - and after eating a bite of lunch we hunted back with both dogs along lower edge below pond.

Shadows however was too wide and I could not keep him in to work with Dixie who ~~was~~ was doing her work at a fairly comfortable range. Consequently, Shadows murred out on the action when Dixie made #3. She had made game but failed to freeze and the pheasant came out of a brush pile in the open field where Wick had told me he'd planted it. (Dixie he'd keep it to himself).

The bird came across to the left low - a perfect open shot, and I waited till I got my eye on it - waited some more - and felled it nicely with the right barrel. None of these birds made a typical pheasant vertical rise! Again a nice retriever by Dixie. Regret Shadows murred out but he seemed to enjoy it all.



With three birds, we didn't want to get into too many more.
But the afternoon was not over. Circling wide to come into
the wind, we worked back towards a solitary stand of cover for a
bird that I expected. But it evidently had moved out, which
is desirable and I walked into it before we reached the cove.
Unfortunately there was no dog work. The rest was nice, left
and rising and I took it as a rather high left-quarter a
crosser but almost felt myself slow the wing. The bird came
down but only veered.



It must have hit the
ground running for I saw it going like a deer ahead of Dixie who
waited for the retrieve. I hoped to get Shadows in for a retrieve
and tried to cut him in ahead of the bird but he became
excited and I couldn't get him into action at the right place.
Dixie did a magnificent job of keeping on the bird which ran into
the woods in long strides. Finally she headed it off and I had to
shoot it on the ground rather than risk losing it crippled to die.
Oddly, the dog hesitates to take a pleasant run - discipline
that I admire. It was a fine afternoon and we stopped about 5:00
- 2 1/2 hours of good air, sunshine and excitement and - after the
barren grouse season, welcome shooting. Very large birds. Very
not only coals. March 4 - 4 fowls Dixie: several points
6 shots - 4 hits of retrieve (presumably)

Monday 23 March

Our second day at the preserve at Richards.

The day was another lovely one, with no snow and with sunshine. We called and suggested that we hunt alone, with no "guide" as before. After a late start, we were surprised to have little contact with birds. Dixie, ^{with} whom we started, flushed a pheasant near a feeder in the little draw between the two lower fields and stood at flank as the bird went into the far wooded woods — too wide to follow.

Returning to the station wagon, we switched dogs after a little to eat and again drew a blank in the upper area with Shadows — tho he made a lovely point at one place where I'm sure a bird had been. Curiously, a while later, he failed to get any scent from where I moved two cock quail near the feeder on the woods path.

Toward the end of the afternoon, we decided to circle down in the woods along the high fence in hopes we'd find a bird or two "dammed" up against the wire. In the corner of the fence we came on one. I could see it ahead of us but Shadows had no wind of it. Finally I stopped him by command but the bird pounced and fluttered into the corner. Shadows barked and it was a close thing for a moment but the bird cleared him and topped the wire with no chance to shoot at it. As we walked up, Ray saw a second cock, crouched on the far side of the wire, evidently convinced it was hidden.

I swung Shadows up to it for a point but they were lost to

bird ran out and up the jeep road toward the crest of the ridge with
Shadows in fast pursuit on our side. With both dog and bird
out of sight, we began walking up the hill along the fence,
wondering why Shadows was so unreliable. Without knowing what
flushed it or why it did what it did, I was suddenly aware that
the pheasant was coming back our way — like a missile in a wind
tunnel — full speed and just above the fence from where I
stood but on the far side.



A FAST ONE.

I took a fast overtake swing that centered the bird and dropped
it on the side of the road — on the far side. The shot was our only one of
the day — a gratifying one and as fast as a grouse. The Peters 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -6
seem to pattern beautifully with the tightest ^{set} barrels of the Purdey (55% 70%
There was nothing to do but wait for Lee Shefer to get the bird so we
hunted on up the woods. Shadows made a nice follow-up and found
a running pheasant but I saw it sprint out a line and, regrettably,
over Shadows' back and chase it. This bird topped the fence and
went out of sight — all out of gun range.

Up on top we found Lee Shefer waiting & we if we were
all right and while Kay took Dime down to the Club house,
Lee drove Shadows & me back thru the fence into the

pleasant lay. at the bottom Lee spotted a pheasant along the fence
and I tried to put Shadows on it. The bird began running but Lee
drove on past and it turned up the hill where Shadows made a
nice point. But as the bird moved, Shadows broke and flushed
it - with no chance to shoot. He was not in good form today - the
running birds unnerved him, tho he will usually let quail run out
without batting an eyelash. He made a nice find ^{in the} ~~and~~ fallen
bird, winding and growing in beautifully, sitting to deliver.

It was a good day for all the limited shooting, and was good
for me. . . .

Moved 4 - 5 flocks

One shot - one hit

Diehl:

Shadows: 2 prod.
1 ret.

Good Friday 27 March Our last day at the preserve (Rockwell) with
their season closing on the 31st. It was a perfect day - cooler with
sunshine, ideally crisp. When we called we learned that the
McMullens were out but were expected back before long. So we got a
call from Lee, advising us that the Mcs had come in at 2:00 - and
we took off.

at the club house, Lee said they were out of rangers -
the Mcs had shot one but there should be some out since a release
on Wednesday. However, they had a few Reeves cocks and a hen
they could put out if we had no luck. Lee followed us out the

Haes Road - unfortunately - for in the day the birds were out and

his jeep truck slammed us from the rear, causing us one tailgate
and a ^{rear} light. The first scratch! However, we didn't let that stop
our day and went on, parking at the corners above the 8' long house.

We'd been told a cock had been heard cackling in the woods
below the impoundment and, since the Mullens had no doubt secured
the chickens well, decided to try the hollow. We found some few
quail — one, two and three — that Dixie handled rather
well tho the birds ^{were} inclined to run more than flush. We
heard the cock but could not find him.

Finally in the corner thicket at the head of the draw,
Dixie made signs of scent in front of me, but a cock pleasant
flushed above us, with no sound, and sailed back over the woods
right short of range toward the main woods below.

We'd had a conference in one of the preserve logs, Morrison,
and I knew he'd released a couple of the Peewees. So rather than wait
more time, and it was getting on, we worked up over and covered the
upper fields. In the little "island" thicket Dixie made a good
point from inside pointing toward the far edge. I moved around
and flushed the bird, a Peewee hen.

The flight was low and
away-right, and a bit
less fast than I expected of the
hen. But I dropped it fairly close.



DIXIE MAKES
A NICE ONE

Deirdre rebuked the bird nicely - a beautiful bird that more closely resembles a grouse in wing and rear under-parts than any I've seen - so much, that I could easily believe it a hybrid pheasant-grouse cross.

With our bill on Deirdre, we returned for Shadows and after a while, I could not bring myself to leave Deirdre alone on the last day so hunted with. It worked all right - tho I find my vision troubles me almost trying to follow two dogs' work, and Deirdre did not do her best later on. I think the odd situation bothered her.

It was five o'clock and we knew there were no birds still up high. So we headed for the far end before hunting down to the fence at the old street "high house". Shadows made a well point and Deirdre backed perfectly. I was certain there'd be a pheasant on the far side of the structure but there was none. ^{With} Shadows still holding, I decided the bird had run inside and so looked in, only to discover two three crates of quail - some fifty birds that I'd have forgotten for, I don't know, how long.

We moved across the flat thicket to the fence near the "tower" gate and then down the fence line. As per strategy, I saw a cock at the base of the fence but again Shadows did not get the point and the bird flushed wild. We continued to the bottom fence and were working up along it. At just about the place I had stood to shoot Monday, I heard a cock cackling in the woods above us and saw it ^{plunging} from the top - very

high above the trees and coming our way. Hesitating only a moment, I
sawing part it shooting almost straight up, and centered it —
I think the highest bird I have killed (about 45 or 50 feet).

It landed within 20 yards of where Monday's bird had dropped!



ANOTHER ONE OVER
THE FENCE.

We heard no other but saw her
at the car and told him to get the
delivering truck! Ray took Shadows
and rode with her for the bird —
Shadows finding and retrieving —
while I took Dixie for another late
turn in the woods below the bass
house. No pheasant, tho Dixie again
found some of the quail in a nice point.
I hunted until nearly 2:00 and then drove
back and met Ray at the breeder house.

A fine day and last shooting for the season.

Nov 4 - 4 fowls

Two shots - 2 hits

Dixie: 1 prod & net
(Reeves here)

Shadows: many prod on quail.
1 prod on quail
1 net, pheasant

The Peters 3 1/4 - 1 1/2 - 6 make a fine pheasant load, ~~totally~~ ^{evidently} patterning
exceptionally well in the 55 to right level.

at home the pups went wild over the pheasant.

1963

HOME

MUDDY CREEK 4.4.1 - 4
 BARNES RUN (BEESE) 1.3.0 - 1
 GERVIS BENSON 1.1.0 - 1
 LOWER BEAVER (KELLY) 3.4.0 - 3
 GEORGE RINGBE 1.1.0 - 1
 JONES 1.1.0 - 1
 MASON RUN 1.1.0/2(1) 3.1 - 2
 ROARING GAP 5.7.0/10(5) 13.0/0 - 10
 SCOTT PLACE 2.2.0/3(2) 3.0/2(1) 2.1/4.7.0 - 5
 CHORPENNING 2.3.0 - 2
 BRANDONVILLE EDGE 1.4.0 - 1
 UPPER DORITY (SYDOLT) 12.20.1/4(3) 6.0/10(6) 13.0/3.3.1/3.4.0/7.12.0/1.5.0 - 21
 UPPER BEAVER 2.3.0 - 2
 GARLETT 1.1.0/2(2) 3.0/0 - 3
 HUFFMAN (RECKERT) 1.2.0 - 1

BLACK WATER

OLD HARMAN PLACE 0.1.1.0 - 1
 CABIN MT. (STONECOCK) 2.5.1.0 - 1
 RIM ROAD OIL 7.10.0/3.3.0 - 7
 N. BLACK WATER 0.0.0 - 0
 STONY RIVER 2.3.0 - 2
 BEAVER (GATHER) 0.0.0 - 0
 FLAG RUN (MOUTH) NIS
 BALSAMS 2.3.0 NIS - 2
 COSNER SCHOOL 1.2.0 - 1
 NIS

Home 72
 Nisch 17
 total 89

72 - 159
 17 - 21
 89 - 180
 home much flunkies

17-21
 24 | 72.0
 72

WOODCOCK
 GATES 3.4.0/3.1/20.3/9.4/
 0.6 NIS NIS
 woodcock data (not guess)

DATA 1963

3.0 BIRDS/COVERT

24 COVERTS { 15 HOME
9 CANAAN

GEORGE

43 DAYS

26 SHOTS - 5 HITS 19.2%

(MICH. TRIP EXTRA COVERTS)

890 BIRDS - 180 FLUSHES

(72 " - 159 " HOME
17 " 21 " MICHIGAN)

SHADOWS 10+

36 DAYS

3 PROD

4 KILLS

1 RET.

LIFE '53-'63 28 PROD

87 KILLS

35 RET.

249 HUNTING DAYS

DIXIE 5+

28 DAYS (TIME OUT, PREGNANCY & PUPPIES)

10 PROD.

3 KILLS

3 RET.

LIFE '58-'63 96 PROD,

76 KILLS (13 OVER PTS.)

54 RET.

199 HUNTING DAYS

1 A. HEN
1 A. COCK
1 Y. HEN
2 Y. COCKS