

Shooting 1980

nonhunting
Opening Day
October 18

We left on New York trip, staying
overnight with Rita & John Spangler in

Bourbon on the Foyalsville River. The drive on 48 to Cumberland
and north to Williamsport via the Bald Eagle Valley was the
most spectacular autumn color we, surpassing even Massachusetts
in 1978. Have never seen such intense color on sugar maples or so
many of them. Left high intensity color at Old Hemlock just beginning
to thin. Arrived at Furman cabin in Nevada area at 6:30 after
more gorgeous color. Covert's looks better in this area than anywhere
we've driven. Mike & Merily Krot and Wm Furman here to greet us
and Mike drove us in our car to his grove - great looking.

Nevada Area

Monday 20 October
40° wet, rain / 50 min.

Lost Dog Cove

Delta
worked well
& hard.

Rained until 1:30 and we drove thru Delta
to this place on Mr. Stumpers' land. Color still gorgeous in wet
condition. Started in high hope, passing gray dogwood with its
lovely scarlet stems and waxy berries (Krot says grows here it has
as in Michigan). Hunted in dropping over to hillside & old sugar
house ruin very excellent work. If aspens never grow, they
should be here. Far more aspen than I've seen anywhere but Michigan.
Wet quilted pants under sunny pants; turned wet for half an hour.
When knees soaked them, I put plastic under my knees under

quilted pants; helped but after the fact. Ran out of cover and turned back to reach the station wagon just as a sleet storm hit. (2)

Belton took the covert apart but by lot and I will say there was not a grouse or woodcock present. This is the second season without Brian but I think of him constantly. Belton is a worthy vicar; only hope there are the grouse here we're told about. Woodcock should be in the area as hunted... Perhaps tomorrow.

Tuesday 21 October

45° wet, cloudy & sun.

2:20 - 4:40

intermittent sprinkles & sunshine

2 1/2 hr.

Rattlesnake Hill

Public Hunting Area

Belton:

moved 3 - 3

0

Rain cleared after trip to Nunda and in drove to the Public Hunting area, driving up a very steep dirt road that sidled back Rattlesnake Hill for 2 miles, leveling on top on a large flat. The cover is good in spots but too much western evergreen plantings - large red pines. The deciduous woods are at their height in color -

much aspen on sides of the roadway (cloud to cars) that leads about a mile back to a distant barn a shed near an impoundment.

We parked at blocked road end and hunted an edge of hardwoods on east bordered by red pines on west with grown up thicket between.

Moved two grouse separately - as I saw that showed as a gray tail the second I saw but I only heard. Both went to the hardwoods that had a curious fence of large uprooted tree stumps all inverted and set together to form a border with the roots up.

We made no attempt to follow the two flashes - preferring to

3/80
hunt or north on the edge in hopes of meeting more birds in similar places. Belton was working beautifully, quartering and checking with almost no whistle signals but did not have a chance to point either bird.

About a hundred yards further on I saw him on a gorgeous point - tail at 2:00 and head high and turned left toward me and solid. It was a little edge over and I hurried around outside to get an open shot if the bird came out. Key moved in to get both wings and some stills of Belton's point that hadn't changed by a hair.



When nothing materialized I motioned to Key to run to him, expecting a woodcock now, but saw that failed to

happen. I can only guess that a bird - cock or quail - had lefted just ahead of us, leaving enough scent to convince Belton, who rarely stays on an empty point, and to left my pulse about thirty points. Anyway, it was a honey of a point.

We had one more flush far out the roadway near the old shed - a quail that came out back of us about fifty or sixty yards away, followed by Belton who had ~~just~~ either had a point or had run into it. We followed when the quail had flushed in the next cove - very thick but about locally.

After sitting on a large aspen blowdown then worked back ④
to the north end, covering the good edges all the way. We found
apple trees with loads of fruit - some pecked - gray dogwood with
the berries all eaten, and ~~loads~~ an abundance of aspen
everywhere but no grouse. Tried to locate the first 2 birds
on the large hardwoods but had no luck. Feel they do not have
a viable grouse population here - certainly not enough to
justify a 4 bird hunt a February shooting.

Found myself surprisingly
tired when we got to the car
at about quarter to five,
especially my back which
was sore from the uneven
ground under the dense woods
and from clambering over fallen aspen trunks, dropped in clear cuttings
and let lie in all directions. See no advantage to them. There are
no trails or paths - just the one wide roadway that runs north along
the ~~flat~~ plateau.

Let Bunny out of her confinement at the car and she
took the occasion to go off in the woods for at least half an hour.
We had to call and whistle and finally, tired as we were, go hunting her
in the big woods. Without warning she turned up bright and sunny and full
of merriment from beyond where we had walked the little boat.

Wednesday 22 October

5/80

cloudy but rain is over. 42°

Lost Dog Cove

Belton: 1 prod.

windy. 1:15-3:30 2 1/4 hrs.

moved 2-2

4:30-5:30 1 hr } 3 1/4 hrs.

Ruins
mowed 1-1 mowed 1-1

Walter Prof went with us and suggested more definite area in this cove, where he took his Irish setter Mac and his English setter puppy Bess to the Birdfinder II to hunt separately.

Today the cove was nice and dry, albeit with a stiff cold wind, but the ground back was beautifully damp. We hunted via the old sugar house and doubled back toward the thorn corner. I say that she heard a grouse flush and I saw Belton draw to a check but still fly, then move on excitedly. We followed to him and as we went over a steep little bank I say heard but did not see a grouse flush behind us.

After that we hunted all the big exposures Walter recommended without a hint of action. There was more gray dogwood than I knew existed - far more than Muskegon - and much aspen, but the actual cove was not really good for grouse if they weren't working the dogwood berries.

We met Walter at the cars at Stumpers' corner at 3:40. He had mowed 3 acres and had mowed 3 woodlots with a pound by his puppy and one by Mac. We decided to drive on for a late hunt at the Ruins where I say wanted in the station wagon. This cove is about the best one I see here - old fields and thickets grown back rather densely and with some planted Europeans. The state has done too much solid European planting.

at the edge of a low woods I found Belton on point almost
 at the fence border of a large field beyond. I got almost to him, then
 circled about and across the fence border (no fence here) and came in
 from the open field side. He held like a dream and I was sure it was a
 'cock, but could get no flesh without pushing into the border growth and
 run out a shot. Once more I circled, this time below and stopped over
 the ^{avenue} here at a low place, swinging in below Belton on his side of the
 fence. Still he held like an angel and I walked in until the
 woodcock rose straight up: - a hen that made no twitter I could hear.
 I mounted but did not fire for the bird doveled and went high up
 the field side of the edge toward the road. Belton did not break but
 waited at my "hold!" a good dog, and an excellent one. It was
 amazing what that point and flesh did to revive me.

Mike was not near enough to see the dog work. I rejoined him
 and we hunted out the hour, covering excellent corners and small pieces of
 cover with one flock in a small wood before we had entered. Many dogwood
 were everywhere here, with aspens and magnolias and much tangled
 thickets. There is certainly an adequate grouse population in these woods
 as they would be resident in such places as this.
 Belton hunted beautifully all day.



Thursday 23 October

English Hall State Forest

Belton

7/80

perfect day, sunny, 47° moved 5-9 flocks

field

1:50 - 5:50 - 4 hrs.

1 shot - 0

Equipped with a hand-drawn guide to the public hunting area by Mike Woot, we arrived to find what looked like a low hunter that evolved into a log cutter who was helpful with suggestions. Dave Schwab, ex-Navy flier, had been seeing more grouse than usual this season - had shot three doubles - "three-for-one" (how do you add that up?).

We hunted a corner of aspen where he and his companion had moved 3 last Sat. None today. Then hunted into the good cover bordering the west edge of the large stand of red pines (biggest reds I've seen) and turned east along an old tractor road grown-up on the south border of the pines. One grouse flushed by Belton who ran out and stopped at flush well. He was working too impetuously today and too wide, with much ineffective effort on my part to control him.

At east end of pines we covered the area Mike said the grouse sometimes "congregate" - God, that they would! and then hunted north to the road.

At car we again talked to Dave Schwab who told of an area near Warsaw and drew a map. Claims he feels he could make 25 a day with a good dog. Today ours did not live up to my idea of that.

At 5:00 we set out, working a corner on north side of road with apples hanging on the trees - excellent cover but moved nothing. again on south side of road, we hunted the thicket edge and found

we were doubling our former entrance.

Working the edge of the big pines paralleling the road, I walked into a flush from under a pine tree - a straightaway rising flush that I felt I should have tried but I think I had a subconscious awareness of Schuab being on the road. The bird was out of sight in a second and then another one flushed from the outside edge and crossed the road. nearly hitting Schuab, he said.

We had followed #1 and Belton bumped it - a flush across to the north side of road. after talking to Schuab who showed me when #2 had gone, we entered the woods but got no dog work on it. Coming back I saw it flush from Belton who didn't seem to know it had gone out, crossing to the north side once more.

Followed and did not relocate but I saw #3 of this area flush high and to the east. Belton had mentioned gone to birds and required constant whistling, finally coming out at the far east end of the pines.

on the chance that the #3 bird had gone to the edge, we took the winds of the fence in reverse to the way we had come out at 4:45. Suddenly I heard and saw a grouse flush from the field side of fence and took a fast snap shot that missed, but it did my taxons a world of good to release them. Nash Buckingham didn't have time grouse flushes to be sure to hit "on the first shot of the summer." We followed ~~around~~ a grouse flight and they heard a flush from well in the big woods.

Turned back and hunted about 25 yards with parallel 980
to the fence. Our fifth and last bird and ninth flush, went up
so fast from about 15 yards in front of me that all I saw was
a flow-back of ^{yellow} leaves when it left the ground.

Hunted to the car and ended at 5:50, tired, empty-handed
but somehow satisfied for having had a bit of action. Gorgeous color
well past height and cold clear sky on drive back to cabin -
Belton's performance was a shock; could not seem to get scent except after the
flush.

Friday 24 October Rattlesnake Hill #2 Belton: 1 prod

sunny, some wind

moved 6-6

1:00 - 5:00 / 4 hrs.

toys: from a gray-tan, 1 shot - 1 hit
young ~~hen~~ hen: into ruffs chocolate
very small moved 3-4

crop: one hawk

Last night the Woodcock
Moon was full.

equipment: hawk seeds Last day of trip with forecast of rain for
next few days. Will leave for home tomorrow. Nicks and Mervyn Wood
came and we hunted the upper public hunting area, closer to our
location at the cabin.

We hunted separately, they with Mac and the puppy Blue, and
we followed a jeep road to the flat not far above where we parked.
As we leveled, a hen woodcock flushed left across us, coming
from above and landing in view below. Knowing what would
happen, I called Belton and waved him to the area. I had to
repeat the process and he circled around the 'cock, once within
a few yards but got no scent. Finally he was himself of my

marking, I walked to the bird and flushed it. A new (10)
how difficult such a recently landed woodcock is to find.

We hunted, as planned, up the slope thru the
areas between the overly large blocks of red pine or spruce
that run up the grade. The spaces between logs are
clothed with gray dogwood - as much (there could hardly be
more) as on our Wednesday hunt. The Southern Tier of N. Y. State
must have more gray dogwood than any place ^{else} in the world.

Along the border near a pine stand I saw Belle pointing
toward me from above, his head ^{sun} over the gray dogwood.
Then I saw a woodcock flush to the pines - all too far to shoot -
and I almost felt another 'cock follow. A short distance above
a 'cock came out of the pines and crossed high left in front.
This looked like the probability of a flegut, but that was it.

What followed was a long afternoon of pushing on and on
thru excellent cover - even some grapes - but no quans. We heard
3 shots that must have been the hunter a hunter whose car was parked
ahead of us at the bottom of the ridge. This one is no longer there is
little feeling of caring about other hunters.

We met the Kees and arranged to regather out the ridge
on which they & I took an old road that was bordered by countless
black walnut trees. We met the others at the old farm site,
where had cover that should have held quans if any had been
in the mountain.

It was four o'clock when we started down over the mountain, again hunting separately. Those from an effort at manners than from conviction, I called to Mike that this would be the good hour of the day. They had flushed our grouse, at 3 o'clock and it didn't seem encouraging.

Putting down, we became involved in evergreen cover and some poky hardwoods and I can't hear and saw a grouse go down the slope ahead and into pines. I saw nothing. Some long distance further down in a trace of log road I saw Pelton wheel and faint double round but near on, and I can't hear a faint sound of a flush well out.

at last we came out on the paved road in the valley and started south toward the cars. We had heard a shot above and behind us that turned out to be Mike's - a rock grouse we later saw (also a chocolate ruff).

We came to a fair looking piece of cover at the base of the mountain and to the left of the road and had moved into it when the birds appeared from the road. They had been down ahead of us, flushed 2 grouse from where we were; Mike had followed one of them back and had his shot above us as we were nearing the bottom of the mountain. They suggested that we continue in hope of moving the other bird and they would go ahead and wait at the cars.

We worked things good Mike hit, heard a flush that was probably the other bird. Continued and in a shot which caused a grouse flush.

right-crossing and down the slope - a chance I felt I might
have taken but was too tired, or perhaps it wasn't a chance.
I am beginning to think I know a shot unless see it and
at times, see one that is almost a shot but not quite. (12)

We followed toward a large stand of pines (there are too
many of such here in N.Y.) and a second grouse came in
from our left and landed just ahead, then flushed.

Feeling a bit inadequate, I pushed on and had passed
a vacant cabin in large woods and was just at the trunk
of a small opening when a grouse flushed from ahead,
angling high and back our way. I felt it no chance, then
found myself swinging there and firing and saw the bird
against the sky tumble just as it disappeared in thick tall
spruce trees above. It had been a left-crossing high shot when I
fired. Kay saw it fall and we both hurried to the area and whistled
Belton in.

He came, circling excitedly too far out and after a few turns
came to me and I climbed a steep bank to the dark spruce stand
where the bird had fallen. Almost immediately both he and I saw
the grouse near my feet, lying dead, breast-up against a
small log. Belton grabbed it but was too overworked to do more
than sit beside it and mouth it. I gave him time and finally
got him to deliver by blowing away ^{the} ~~the~~ ~~and~~ ~~commencing~~



fetch. He came out of the thick cover looking beautiful with the grouse in his mouth and we had a session of gloating and

Photographs - movies and stills. The first grouse of the season and coming at the end of an empty day and an empty week, it was glorious. It is amazing the impact of a successful shot at grouse and prompts up the irresistible appeal of getting grouse. And it had been a darned good shot (Alcon 3-11-8)

We walked to the car when the birds were generally nice and pleased - a fine end and making the trip worthwhile.

a made shot or a missed shot affects so much more than getting or not getting a grouse. The former produces euphoria, the latter a yearning sense of "if only it could have been the other". The simple joy of the completed action when a shot is a hit brings home the full awareness of the mystique of getting grouse.

Wednesday 29 October

Phlem Place

Belton

sunny, cool, damp 44° most 1-2 flocks

(good range)

2:15 - 4:30 / 2 1/4 hrs

Used this covert with the discovery of timbered area on south end as our opening day in West Virginia. Conditions seemed ideal but it was the old story. We hunted the log road around from the "corner" to Fox Hollow with Belton working well and with almost no handling for me. We were working him with the Tri-Tonics today for the first time since, which may have had some effect. We heard sounds on the other lap of the road of a motor, as well as voices, and when we came around we saw tracks of a 4-wheel drive and where it had mired down, and a fresh 20-gauge shell 7 1/2 shot — today a recently. I believe they had been ahead of us, perhaps all the way on the log road, accounting for the lack of grouse.

We left the road and hunted the thicket flat to the west and near the old cellar hole. I heard and saw a grouse flush from near Belton and marked it ahead. I heard and saw nothing. Following, I flushed the bird — a mere sound and a swaying leaf — nothing else.

We had a good point that evolved into a rabbit track. Belton went after, and repented electronically. The large woods ahead was empty and we worked to the road where, just within the edge of cover Belton looked into point on the left

sides - a gorgeous point that pulsed with intensity. I circled around and came from below, then waited while Ray got both movie and still film of Belton. Finally, I changed my concept from quail to woodcock, and against all logic and evidence, gave up and ordered Belton in. He was frantic with the impact of the scent but nothing developed - it had to have been a recent flush. That was it. One more the Plum Place fizzled out, grand cover that it is, but hunted too hard

Thursday 30 October Rehobeth Thorns Belton: 5 prod.

perfect, clear, sunny 50° moved 5-5
 2:00 - 5:20 / 3 1/4
 moved 8-9 flashes
 1 shot - 0

A gorgeous day and a return to a lovely covert. Nowhere, since we lost him, have I felt I could so clearly see Brian. It was always his covert.

We moved two cock in the first thorns, both put up without a point but it was good for Belton. The first flush stopped him for a long stand, intense and high, until I ~~ordered~~ sent him on. The second cock flushed without his knowing I was there in the cross path, and again in similar manner from the mud road.

Our next contact was a flush, somewhat only, of two quail in the third thorns and the pipeline, and this was followed by sound and circled with, we did not recover them. This took

us to the back end of the mud road, where we packed ⁽¹⁶⁾
for lunch - cool, as John Phillips put it, enough to
make the sun feel comfortable without being uncomfortably
warm.

We were on the border of the large exposure of thorns
in the back area and we had scarcely started out when
we had two flushes - one out-out - of quons, again only
around. Following, we heard a third quon flush back and
we followed it but found none of them.

Belton had a nice point on a 'cock but the bird
went out low. This cover offers few shots unless the bird climbs
and tops out. Some after, Belton had another nice high-at-the-
ends point. They saw the woodcock leave well ahead but
Belton held, unawares. That was all the action until we made
our final work in the first thorns when Belton went into
a doubled-up point that turned to stone. I crept around to
the left and I lay moved in for more shots. I wanted what she
switched to the still camera but the 'cock had had enough and
came out left-crossing and just above the thorn bush, too
close, but I fired and missed. Moments later, another woodcock
came back over us and settled behind the action, a bird we
could not find. They shot surprisedly with the sharp record



DOUBLED UP

the trigger guard jamming my middle finger. The shell was the Winchester Short load 2 3/4. 1 1/2. 9 with no shot sleeves and should have been fairly light.

About 4:30 we started into the last area in the south thorns where Brian used to pick the birds out of mounds at this hour. I lay wait for the car before any contacts, but in the center of the cover Bolton made two productive - both on far birds - not solid but working toward them step by step. The New Englanders probably would say the cock had run out on his points. I'm certain they were merely long points. Both cocks lifted well out, nervous as grass. A good day.



100/10
78/10

Friday 31 October

Upper Wilderness

Beltan: 1 p.m. (18)

perfect sunny, clear 50° moved 1-2 flocks

2:20 - 4:50 / 2½ hrs.

windy

Repeat of yesterday's weather with ~~bit~~ high wind today instead of calm. This was no place to go with wind.

We started out the Wilderness road in a blizzard of No Hunting notices (Cherry Run Hunting Club) that extended from the Wayne Miller strip job to the end of the Wilderness road and visible beyond the far refill. We drove out with a feeling of loss of the wonderful count that gave Brian his first and last birds of his final season. I resent outlanders taking over like this.

We drove to the Well Chapel and out past Bartholomew's to the corner where we were relieved to find no notices. Parked and started down the old woods road only to find the notices starting about fifty yards down in the woods. We said to hell with them and proceeded to hunt in excellent cover along old log roads as last year but with no birds. Again we encountered the flood of notices far down in the woods. Cut back and hunted to the old hunters shack - no birds - started down over the big fill job to hit the lower gapes but saw three vireos and several men starting in at the bottom. There are too many people. Retreating, we hunted down on the steep cover north of the

shack. We needn't have been concerned about not getting to the lower graphs. This ridge is hanging blue with grapes. 19/80

In the bottom after lunch we got away from the morning wind for the first. The cave was too open but I hoped to find some parked down here for protection. We hunted up a trace of log road and finally came to thicker cover - slashings along the run and older slashings of laurel in our stratum. I saw heard a quail further and I marked its direction by Belton's attitude.

Further up the valley he made a ground level point and held while I walked a complete circle around him but no bird. Not far above he whiffed into a point and I saw heard a quail almost simultaneously. That was it. I consider it a reflex of the one bird. Near the head of the hollow we came to an old wreck of a house and one of the ubiquitous deer tree stands. A good 2 1/2 hours later, good dog work but the "grass on top" to nothing.

Saturday 1 November

Mauist / ~~Mauist~~

Belton:

windy mostly sunny 52°

moved 1-1

four work ground trailing

to cloudy

3 1/4 hrs

Morrison Place
moved 5-6

2:10 - 5:30

Hunted both courts as one. Mauist place dense with blackberry bushes still green in leaf. Finally found slashed corner and moved the one quail wild from near

Belton. Belton was disturbed by a big black mangrel youngster that

tried to accompany us, fawning over Belton, who is too good natured to resist attention. After I browbeat the brute, who lives at the Rosenberg trailer, Belton continued to be upset, stopping and standing instead of hunting his misgait.

Reached pine knob on Morrison place where they raised a quon in the tall stand. The wind was high and we found quon in the bottom near where we moved to last season. Belton was in the thicket and we heard a quon left, followed soon after by another. Couldn't see Belton but feel he should have pointed at least one. Going into cover we found a the stream, deciding not to try the chancy crossing (I lay in leather boots) and as Belton started across, heard another flush a few rods - no fault of Belton. Moving down the near side to the rotting bridge we heard another - no idea of any of these. Count one as a reflex of lead from pines. On far side we covered what good area was there and turned back to the Morrison place and ate lunch on a rock barrier in a field. There had been a barrage of shooting all afternoon on the Plum place and Picket place - birds or crazies? that area hunted hard by Pennsylvanians.

climbed the ridge from over-good cutting above Morrison to the flat inside the Dennis field. Belton had been ground-trailing much of the way up the slope (good cover) and I tried to break traps with the two best whistles, only moderately successfully. On top in low quadrice, he went totally to ground and I blamed deer a squirrel scent. When he came back to start and roared into a big quon that day beautifully for him. I'm glad I didn't shoot, (might have by reflex) for it was a sin of a bump and by ground trailing. We called him in and scolded seriously. These things cause us genuine concern, but I have to concede the tiger wind. Next day George Bird Evans Papers West Virginia and Regional History Center Monday he thinks like a dream - high all the way.

Monday, 3 November

Pipfle Ridge

9

Beltan: 3 prod
1 kill op.
1 net
2 prod
1k
1 net

21/80

warm, sunny to cloudy 58°
freezing
2:20 - 4:55 / 2 1/2 hrs.

moved 4-4
1 shot - 1 hit
moved 1-2
1 shot - 1 hit

young
~~adult~~ cock: ^{semi}inter. AM

crop: 141 orange haws (cherry-size)

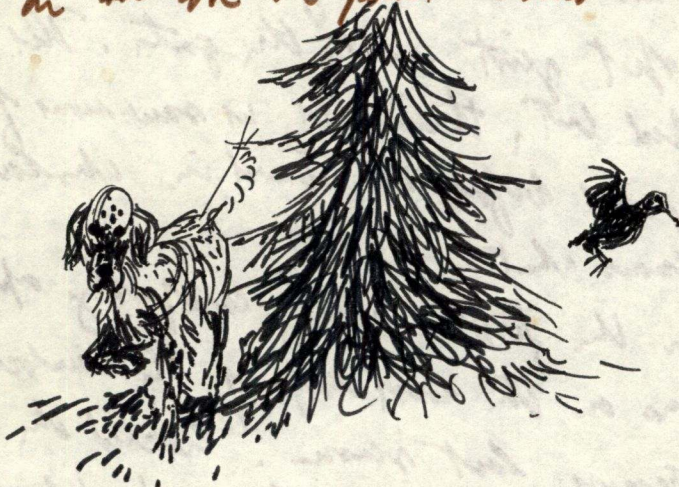
Our first trip to the Big Mountains and to this grand
covert, Pipfle Ridge with its groups of mature spruce and hemlocks and
huge old maple stumps and an occasional big lone oak. We parked
Denny in our usual shady spot just inside the gate. The gang of
bow deer hunters was encamped but, thanks to, we saw none of them, just
a lone crazy lay on the road before we turned in who later blasted
half a dozen shots at God knows what.

We moved nothing in the first piece, carefully approaching
the several large hawthorns on the west edge of the hemlock/spruce
woods when we moved two years last season. Circled the old home
site (our outbuilding, collapsed, had wide hemlock planks with
as I measured at 22"). Working up the edge of mixed hardwood/hemlock
woods on the east border of the enormous field, we came to a woods
road hard traveled by jeep. We followed to a large bog with
shedodendron/spruce/hemlock and came to a wide pipeline.
Beltan had two products - far out, with the ground lifting as
sound only.

We ate lunch and walked the pipeline right of way toward the
distant opening on the big field, intending to reach the "island
knoll" for the last hour. There should have been ground on this
long stretch of pipeline between excellent cover.

(22)

at the very end of the long corridor we saw Belton
pointing on the right side - so high it appeared he was trying to
view us from far away. I pushed toward him but the bird flushed
before I was remotely near - a woodcock that looked large as it
cut left on the outside. Belton held beautifully at flush until I
wounded him on. I hurried out the corridor and around the edge
when I felt the 'cock had landed. As I rounded the corner,
I came on Belton on point toward me by a small hemlock.



The 'cock flushed rising right
and dropped at my shot
into some briars beyond a
pile of stones. Belton held
until my dead bird, goshawk
and then bored into the tangle

and located the bird and retrieved beautifully. Our first 'cock of
the year - an adult male, beautiful and rich russet orange.
This put a lovely glow on the day and King, Belton and I
were high.

Pushing toward the very distant island cover, we followed the
woods edge to within sight of the old barn (that we were farther out)
and cut across the corner of woods we'd touched on our way out.
As King and I took a line for the high bank of woods we saw
Belton swing in a big arc to the several large hawthorn on the
opposite ^{edge} and go on a gorgeous high-headed point with a grand
high tail, standing ¹⁵⁰ yards from us and holding like a saint
just outside the cluster of large hawthorn. I blocked them the



WHAT A DOG!

long grass hillocks toward him but just before I made it to
quashed the grass suddenly lifted, for I saw Bella break and
move in. I continued around the left edge of the thorns and had
started up thorn when a grouse ~~flushed~~ in front of me exploded and I
got a glimpse of the bird leveling for the dark spruce. I wasn't
aware of mounting, simply the shot and the grouse falling in a
wing-broken tumble far out.

I ran up, calling to Bella to fetch and he made a series
circles into the woods a bit too far, out I thought. He was with me
and as waited, finally with no sound or view of him. I was
rather sure he'd found and was staying with the grouse. After a
while we saw him coming in without the grouse. Curiously, he
came to us, lay down, panting and seemed confused. Seeing a number
of feathers in his mouth, I realized he had found the grouse,
smothered it, but left it - something I would not have expected him
to do. Without tension, we got Bella going back into the woods,
under command to fetch, and I soon saw him standing over the
grouse lying on the ground under ~~branches~~ its tail jerking. I

had no success persuading Belter to buy it, and going to town, dispatched the grouse. Finally he picked it up and retrieved it, sitting on command - a cock that appeared an adult. That put the touch to a grand day and we headed for the car, leaving the land over for another time.

Belter's point had been insignificant, his break at the fresh
understandable after that long hold. But I can only guess at what upset him enough to find and leave a grouse. I suspect the bird had run, that Belter found it and had to catch it, but that in his mind it was wrong to have quilled it. Therefore, he left the grouse and came to us, a feeling of guilt taking over. Otherwise I'm at a loss.

It was a great opening for our Blackwater trip, two shots, two hits (both shells were clean 3-1-8). And Belter was entirely over any ground scouting he was doing last Saturday.

Tuesday 4 November
Cloudy, threatening, mild 52°
to cool, wind later
3:05 - 3:30 / 1/2 hr 2 1/2 hr.
4:05 - 5:15 / 1 hr AF

Park corners

Gates

0
moved 2-2

1 shot - 1 hit

Belton:

1 prod
1 h
1 ret

25/80

And to a hard rain that let up after noon, but the clouds -
brigons - continued to drag over the Canaan Valley. We decided,
when the sun broke them occasionally, to drive up Rt. 93 and try the
Two-Brooks covert on the adjoining hollow. When we got there, and
when we got out of the car, the wind was blowing stiffly, an impossible
condition to hunt grouse.

Returned to Davis and drove in the Blackwater Falls Park road to
the corner covert where we used to find birds in spare-moment tracts.
Today, nothing.

From there we drove to the Gates where the road was appalling.
We drove almost to the Gates, to be turned back by a huge
pool on the road, turned and parked at a wide place and walked in.

Belton recognized the grand old place, ugly with its black smoke,
its totally barren alders and aspen, reminding me of John Phillips's
comment about the difference between the mood of a woodcock flushing
from bare dead alder and the same bird twittering up in October color.

We saw nothing, the boy saw some whitewash, until we crossed the
aspen clearing where no much has happened to me in the past. Today
was no exception, for I found Belton frozen, headed toward me
on the north margin. I walked in, waited until they got some still pictures,
and then I stepped closer. The order - a big box - climbed straight

up my coat front, topped them an opening above me and
fell as I fired. Belton held like stone as he watched it come down,
hanging a moment in the canopy of trees and then drop. I gave him
the word to fetch and he dove to it and came back to us,
almost in one motion - a nice juvenile hen

We hunted on north and I saw Belton working in chest and to
be a tall aspen grove - well cut-out now. He showed evidence of
getting scent but moved in and crouched, a bit low and lumpy



WHERE ?

the woods, another hen that left the area. We had no
further contacts all the way back to the road, into the face with
thorns and up the road to the gate and the car. As we drove out we
saw two or three ducking birds and one big hen standing in the
middle of the road in our headlight beams.

Belton's point was lovely, the shot gratifying, and
it was good to get back and have the place to ourselves - one lone
low hunter. Ben is still, I understand, protecting woods by hunting
exactly for us. Nice.

Wednesday 5 November
cloudy, cold, windy 36°

1 1/2 hr.
3/4 hr. } 2 1/2 hrs.
1/4 hr }

Helwick Run

Belton: 27/80

0
Peyton Road

road 1-1

0
Church Court

This day was one of frustration. The Grassy Ridge area is plastered with notices reputed to be by Hawks who live on road north of Seher who cut timber. We had not been in the Helwick Run terrain for 27 years - now part of the Gray Run Lake. Low income home complex of cheap cabins at end of road beyond strip mining holes, but we pushed on in a wind with wind chill of about 15°-20°. Came to better cover beyond on the ridge and followed a road then at much lower scrub that looked fair, with no trees of game other than a small buck. Road brought us back above the cabins and we rejoined

Benny. On way back, determined to hunt the Fort Collier corner in spite of notices but after talking to a Vepes driver, felt it not the thing to do.

Stopped at Porter Bell's, the odd little man at mouth of the old Peyton Road road. All that is also Hawk's land, posted; took a turn in that road but gave up with the wind howling up the draw from the lake. The good looking log I'd hoped to hunt proved too much.

At the regular Peyton Road with road we parked and hunted the nice court we discovered last year - good grassy edges and small run for woodcock. Funny how regularly you're disappointed with places you find and dream about and so and are let down. I saw Belton chuck and stand a moment, and Ray said she had heard a flick.

at the road again, I hunted the far corner where Ray got the (28) car. I damaged many frogs.

We stopped at the Church Court for a last turn. Ray waiting in the car with Bury. Belton hit ground on the east edge of the log-road, ground trailing until ordered in, then crossing and continuing to follow then the woods to the west. I hurried around to the main road, hoping for a shot, only to see a deer sneak out for ahead of Belton. They seem to be no game anywhere and not even woodcock.

This is typical of our traps which other than Thonby, seem all alike - Nothing. I want someone to tell me "game seem up this year".

Thursday 6 November
perfect, mostly sunny 40°
gusty at times

1:00 - 2:10 / 1 hr.
1 1/2 hrs. } 3 1/4 hrs.
150 min.

Ridge Road North
0

mixed 1-4

Ridge Road South
0

Two-Mile Run
0

Belton: 3 prod

It takes a short time only to lose the edge when you hunt for an hour with not a feather moved. Belton was hunting well - a little weak (no wonder) - but there was no game anywhere or hunted today. Belton had three sharp points in the first cover, brief but points that lasted only moments before the apparent but unwill and, to me, silent lifts. I'm certain they were 'corks' but why so jumpy. I saw one flock, a wild one, with Belton nowhere near and there was the bird that gave us the points in Ridge Road North. It never seems ideal to change covers, hopping like woodcock

hunters from covert to covert.

This Blackwater country is dead, as concerns grouse. We have
 made one grouse in three days of hard hunting. The cover is good grouse
 cover if the grouse were there but they aren't, and so it's a long loss -
 tramping them the same stuff over rocks (the entire mountain is one big
 pile of rocks, whether they take a moss-covered). People tell you
 of men who shot 14 grouse in a week or less, who missed 20 in a day,
 people like Charley Reed who don't know how big fat acetabulum
from a stump - they are the experts, being in a part they never
knew, telling you to try all the places you have seen go down in the
past twenty years. I can't blame the Fed. shooting here, for there can be
 no (Fed. shooting in) It was and is, just too many hunters. We see
 almost no hunters' cars now and I think they have finally realized
 the Blackwater is gone. One grouse seen is one hunt. They tell you of
 one grouse that flies across the road as if that were the place to go.
They are dreaming dreams they have never known.

I wish I had the courage to not return to a covert where I've
 had a good day. Remembering Two Crown Run always was pleasant
 driving past, knowing there were at least one or two birds there. Going back
today only made me know it isn't so. Tuesday and Wednesday
 can be explained at least by the high winds. Today was ideal and
 leaves no room for hope. Yet I expect to hear about the man who
 hunted Two Crown Run and missed 20 grouse - and shot 6. Along that
 strange subspecies *Bonasa umbellus equanimis*. (lots numbers)

Tired and staring from fatigue, we came down the east side of the little run when we had the nice day work and shot and took last year, thinking about it, when Belton began working scent ahead of me, as he does when he hits game foot scent. I moved him on to get his head up, and he finally worked it to the brink of the highway, Pet 93 with the log trucks moving past at regular intervals. Then on the edge of the sight of my he pointed on a small tangle of spruce or hemlock and brushy stuff. I was concerned that a flash might tempt him to break and cross the highway, but nothing happened. I traipsed the cover around and on foot, feeling now I must be a' cack, but it wasn't even that. Finally I sent him on, and as usual parallel with the road with no result. That I was revealing what motivation, and hope, can do to bring you back to life. Not that we weren't low-tired when we reached the car and sat and drank some brownies and coffee, but for that short space which was hoped, he lived. And that is gaining. The woodcock simply are not in.

Tomorrow we will hope again

14 (as sample heading)
Friday 7 November

Clyde Davis / Edelmann

Belton: 1 prod
1 k
1 net

partly cloudy, warm 60°
breezy at times

moved 1-1
moved 2-3

Use screen at end: From my "loots"

2:05-3:35 / 1 1/2 hr
4:05-5:10 / 1 hr

1 F
1 shot - 1 hit

2 1/2 hrs Rebebeth Thomas

moved 2-2 (not now)

5 prod.
2 k
2 net

A → F
1 F

moved 7-9
3 shots - 2 hits

31/80
If the first and last days of a trip are good, it is possible to forget what lay between. Today was beautiful. All the cock we couldn't find in the Cuman-Blackwater coverts didn't matter when we missed some for twelve flashes and three pairs, two probably reports at Rehoboth.

The road down to the Edelman covert was rough at the lower end, but better than last year, and we parked at the old Poplar House, which looked a little more sunken this year, the windows empty. A segment of the herd of white and black cattle was lying in the corner of the yard and all got up and came over to watch us put on boots and get started, as if hungry for a little sociability.

We waded Belton over the sagging woven wire fence on Clyde Davis's side, the way we used to send Brian into a new season of 'cock, and he was ~~down~~^{down} into the woods in moments. I can't tell if he had a point but I saw him work smart, and later more so. Unwilling to pass up the small flat area just inside the fence, I flushed him back, and within yards of the place Brian has pointed a number of 'cock and I have shot them. Belton wheeled into a solid U-shaped point. The 'cock - a ^{young} hen - climbed and was leveling right-quatting when it took the pattern solidly. Belton held like an angel until my dad bird got fetch and was on the land and retrieving, sitting to deliver. Like Brian. The good start set us up and in hand the Davis piece to the

thinner faces (rail) and the large trees when I take a
map of Kay with Bliss. (32)

Today we followed the fence line along an excellent piece of
ground cover with grapes hanging on the vines. Kay took a couple of
35 mm shots of a still life of 'cork, Belton, and Purdy on
a log stream with November leaves. fairly.

We turned south to hunt back at a lower level but
seemed to miss some of the cover I wanted. Near the bottom, I
was pushing along a trace of log road full of blackberry bushes
when a grouse flashed below and was gone. I feel that Belton
didn't cover the area near me well enough in his work costs.

No action until we crossed the road to the good corner on
the Poplar House side when he soon but scent at the fence, working
in without going wild. He finally pushed too far and the bird
lefted on the field side of the fence and I lay marked it along the
road but on the field side well up toward the house.

We covered the top of the corner but had to turn back to the
car with time running out if we were to reach Rehoboth. On the way
to the house, we flushed the woodcock, a male, with no point. Such
a recently-landed bird is paradoxically difficult to scent.

We parked at Rehoboth gate and began hunting at 4:05.

We put the beltman's collar on Belton for this time. His first contact

33/80
was a quonset bumped on the west border of the thorns, a situation I couldn't see but guess as simply running into the bird too impetuously. I feel Belton is not handling grouse well, either coming on them carelessly or, as I've observed, ground trailing into them. We recalled him and sent him on and shortly he had a good point on a 'cock. Kay moved in, crawling, for pictures and then tried to flush without results. Belton moved on at my command and almost immediately slammed into a stop. The woodcock, a mall, came out my way and gave me a good chance in the open but I had to turn and fire, knowing I was behind it. Such a shot should be handled by not mounting too soon.

In the north corner, Belton hit scent but worked it carefully without a solid point - an honest effort but the bird lifted not far from him before he could establish, and he stood well at flush. Working with the same frantic urgency that Brian showed in here, Belton pointed on the east edge into a couple of thorn bushes. I walked in, up tight after my recent miss, and Kay approached Belton for pictures. As held, solid as stone, until I came in from the left side. The 'cock, a hen, flushed left crossing as it showed low between the two hawthornes and I waited until it came into view and flew straightaway, still not over a yard from the ground. I dropped it at about 35 yards, wing tipped repeatedly Belton held for my order to

fetch, ran to the land which he had marked, and caught and returned - a lovely piece of work from beginning to end.

Within moments he was on point again - the woodcock that had lifted on him and again it didn't hold long - flushing to his right before I could approach him.

We hunted to the pipeline, hoping to meet the flushed grouse and the 'cock I'd missed. Belton checked on the latter as it flushed without giving him a point. Pat Ross and others speak of woodcock running; ours do not, but I've never found them more nervous and flushing so quickly as this year.

It was late and we hurried across to the far thorns and the woods road that leads back to the big north spread I had to hunt at this last half hour. Nowhere do I see Brian so plainly as in these Rehoboth thorns he made his own. We got to the "hedgrows" cover where another 'cock flushed without a point, all descending to Belton ~~who was trying to get a point~~ who was trying loyally. Well up toward the road he stopped on a point about ten yards out in the open field so suddenly it jerked him into immobility. I walked to him and all around, expecting the flash to be between us and the woods. Kay, standing at the woods' edge, saw the 'cock flush behind me and take the field down to the main woods on the west. I was totally unaware of it and was looking at ~~whenever~~ whenever Kay found out



LAST MOMENT GLORY

when I saw Belton snap into a turned point and lock like a spring,
 again 10 or 15 yards out in the open field. I walked to him and
 the cock flushed straightaway and low and dropped at my shot,
with Belton, the world, and life hanging suspended with the echo. My
dead bird, so fetch before the shell and Belton had the bird
 and was bringing it to me ~~laying~~ laying it down a few yards away to
roll on it, then pick it up and complete the delivery - another nice
 large hen. This was, as Kay ~~had~~ described it, the quality we
 quest for, and I said, "This is too good, let's stop," and we
walked to the station wagon at the gate - a perfect ending for
a trip that began beautifully. Seven shells (Calum 3-1-8) with
five cock and a grouse.

Wednesday 12 November

Mostly sunny, breezy, cold

38°

White Oak Road

moved 3-3

1 shot - 0

moved 5-7

2 shots - 0

2:15 - 4:15 / 2 hrs. }
50 min. } 2 3/4 hr.

Belton: 1 prod.

3 prod.

Hoyes Run

moved 1-1

0

Portioned plans for Mt. Storm and instead drove to the corner near Raymond Zinn's. He was unable to join us. Parked at usual place and started Belton in at the little corner with grassy depression where he had scent immediately. But altho he worked it carefully, he did not stop flagging and the cock lifted and crossed left into the open area - a male.

We followed to the corner near where I shot the woodcock ^{the} ~~last~~ year. Brian was ill, but today Belton failed to locate it, a normal situation on a newly landed cock. Certain it was there, we circled and again he failed to get scent and I nearly stopped on it, flushing it toward the car.

We worked west along the alders and at the far end I saw Belton point in a stand of thickety woods among tall hawthorns. It was a dilemma, finding ~~an~~ entry but I got to him when he was immobile - no flagging now. The bird lay tight while I walked ahead of the point, puzzled as to when it was and how I'd get a shot when I found out. Day had moved beside Belton and the cock went up close to her and bared low without offering a shot.

37/80
We discovered a stand of hemlocks along a stream in the even
beyond - a good place it seemed, for quies on a day of sun & shadows,
but there were none there.

Creeping back to the narrow neck of cove south of the site of
the point, I saw Belton work silent in heavy tracher and weeds on
the edge of the clearing, then moving into the woods and point. I
moved in to his front and worked toward him, again standing and
awaiting the flush, which so often requires long leaving a good
position and getting involved in thick branches. The cock lifted -
another male and I waited for a chance, taking a rather poor
one as the bird dived and missed. As we moved on to follow,
a second bird flushed from a few yards to the left - a bird Belton
had not been aware of for the action of the shot - this one a hen.

Both went the general direction - north. One was within
feet of the location of the ~~point~~ first point a while back,
Belton went silent again and again I was faced with poor chances
of a shot. Hawthorns at Rehoboth are dense in themselves but they offer
a view of the birds, ~~in some~~ ~~cases~~ this ever do so. The male cock
flushed and this time gave me a fair chance, steeply rising
straightaway, a chance I fluffed by firing right-on and not
going with the bird, and missed. flushing #5 without a point,

We worked the cove south to the end, crossed to the forbidden
side where Belton should ~~be~~ ~~have~~ ~~been~~ ~~seen~~ ~~but~~ ~~with~~ ~~no~~
George Bird Evans Papers
West Virginia and Regional History Center

bird then. We hunted that east side ground back to the car,
 interested in moving out to the Hoops Run but wanting to try for
 the #1 woodcock near the car. Belter, instead, worked up a draw
 toward a hemlock that is not far from the rotatory larch tree. In
 the dense mass of blackberry briars and goldens in the draw,
 we saw a group of birds ahead of Belter - no fault of his - then
 a second one - both going up the slope toward the woods above.
 Hurrying to where he stood steadily at first and expecting more
 of the first Payment had descended, I wallowed up the tangled
 footing and heard the third again explode from briars on my
 left - a small rise that put the bird over my eye level.
 I fired and saw it seem to scale down as I lost sight of it
 over the rise of course. I say could only see about the same thing,
 both of us losing sight of it the moment after the shot but both
 feeling it might have gone down.

I hurried up, calling Belter and confident he would find it if
 it was down. But he took off up the hill after the first two and
 I had a time wrestling him back to the proper area. That,
 unfortunately, was the goddamned mass of blackberry came
 around an old snag, and I couldn't get Belter to hunt it out, and
 couldn't get them to myself enough to by now the bird wasn't there.
 There was an impediment beyond what I could see the way was
 not flushing on it. Belter took this bird, as does do at a time like

39/80

then, to drink and lie in the water and chew lumps in
his coat and I could have killed him.

At last we gave up after Kay & I had done what Belth
didn't do, and went to the car with the ~~most~~^{most} feeling of
inadequacy that follows what must have been a miss without
being certain.

We drove in the last hour of the day to the Hoops Run
cove - beautiful in its November ~~abundance~~ blackness. Belth
was too wise but we found him on point in the bottom near the
stream crossing. Nothing materialized, but he did a magnificent
job of careful work in the bottom, pointing, crawling,
scenting intently, taking each step with caution, giving me
jolts of adrenaline that nearly laid me out, — and still no
bird flushed. We hunted the north side of the stream in good
cover that is getting almost interwoven in places. Odd that the
woodcock don't use this.

Finally we turned back and reaching the pointline had
started toward the car on the road when we saw Belth on point in the
exact spot where he'd pointed on the way down. He was in the old
haunt, Kay tends him, and I circled around and came in thru the
hellish thicket to him, crawling myself this time. The Green flushed

below and crossed the run to the left. When had it been all the times we had worked this the first time?

We tried to relocate ^{it} where Kay had seen it ~~spot~~ so, but with no luck, and gave up at nearly dark. A frustrating day, and yet, active and some good dog work. My shooting was not at what I like to think is my normal, but with such luck chances, it is difficult to judge.

Thursday 13 November Covert #1

Belton: 5 prod.

sunny, breezy, warm 55° moved 1-1

1:45-3:45 / 2 hrs. } 3 1/2 hrs. moved 13-15 flocks
4:00 - 5:15 / 1 1/2 hrs } 3 shots - 0

Rehobeth

4 prod.
2 k.
2 net

1 AF moved 5-6 flocks
1 AF 3 shots - 2 hits.

mostly for the sake of memories,

~~today~~ we went back to Covert #1 where Dixie and Bliss, and Brian in his early years, had it good. Today, after at least five years or more, having tried it with no luck after the cattle were taken out, we found it like the old days.

We parked behind the Stony River tavern and within minutes Belton had a point in the woods, which seemed unchanged, pointing west near the little run. It was a high point but when he tried to reestablish, the bird lifted and I refused because Belton was flying.

We moved toward the fence at the alders and just about 1/2 way there, Belton whistled, again without song, and flushed the 'cock out. He is trying hard to work scent carefully, keeping his head up as he slowly moves in, but he stops one step too late.

We found him after a long absence, on a point in the alders near the ^{small} fence near the pipe - a bird that Kay saw left without Belton's being aware. Later (same bird?) I saw what I took to be a gray boulder in the center of a hawthorn clump and made it out to be Belton instead of stone. There was no way to flush without pushing too close to the hawthorn mass for a shot, ^{and} Belton remained in a cove, doubled low in an arc.



A GRAY STONE.

The 'cock, when it rose, gave me a good chance - too good - coming out over me and quartering left. I fired, feeling myself wait too long, and missed.

We hunted out to the northeast edge, and found that the hawthorns had grown into an interwoven mass with some of the cow paths remaining. Our only way was to get to the woods below and push thru the thinner margins - thick enough. There in that border hawthorn cover we moved three 'cock, following the #5 bird that Belton had pointed - very high and stylish.

Marking one of them we found it on the edge of the woods where Belton pointed and the woodscock lifted almost in an instant.

Beltin has such intensity, it is difficult to handle him by whistle signals, but we got him turned and away from the woods and waved him into the clumps of thorns out on the big hillside.

We had to work higher on the way back because the thorns were simply impassable partway up the slope. We saw at least one 'cack' left from Beltin and we can't identify a point. As I was pushing thru what passed for a deer path (small deer) with Kay behind me, a grouse flushed from close about me - only sound, except that the bird gave away a feather - counting ~~the~~ view and ~~the~~ doubled back. ~~I~~ ^{I began to} wonder if I should walk second-in-line ~~to~~ ^{to} get the shots.

Next action was over me in the woods just over the fence, where I walked into # 11 and stately afterwards Beltin pointed suddenly a few feet in front of me. I walked the cack up, too tense, and shot too hastily at the low flying bird darting thru the narrow trunks and again with the left barrel as it went on, still not high - a double miss. This is not woodcock shooting as it should be done - smoothly and easily. We missed one or two more birds in this piece behind the tower before we left to try to get to Rehoboth by 4:00.

It was grand to find this great covert alive again, even if it has gone into hellish shooting, and we left with a glow of pleasure.

We made it to Rehoboth and got started at 4:00, passing to

add a shirt ^{against} ~~cut off~~ the dropping temperature. 43/80

Belton hunted the first thorn like a racing shoot, too
wade but I wasn't quarreling with his speed. Finally had to shorten
him with a touch of shock, and as settled into the north corner thorn
with no action all the way. Found him on a ground high point
~~just beyond~~ in the woods near the fallen log thicket, where he
almost always finds birds. As I approached, he raised his tail
but I put him back slid with the command 'hunt!' I scolded
the last clump, unable to go in without sacrificing the shot.
Standing at the point, I reacted while Kay pushed to him,
getting pictures and, at my request, moving on in to flush. The
woodcock - a hen - came out high and left. crossing and I
sawing thru it and saw it fall, not tumble, flattening down and
I expected a crippled bird. Belton held well until the order to fetch,
crouched excitedly too far out, ^{having been misled by a second bird that flushed,} then came in and, landing the bird,
pointed until I told him to fetch. The bird was, to my surprise, dead.
This wiped away my frustration in that curious way a bit over a
point can erase all past misdeeds. We all then made the most of the
moment, then hurried on with ~~the~~ tones and light going fast.

In the pipeline rest of way we saw Belton pointing in high
blackberry briars. Kay saw the woodcock (I had hoped for a grouse) left
well ahead of him, angling to the big woods where he called into it on the

reflected.

We hurried to the cross path at the edge of the first thorns and to the main woods road where we found new bulldozed scars, widening the road for what is probably a strip question - bad news.

In the south corner we ~~let~~ ^{let} Belter work the hedgehog cover only to have him insist on working the open field as if remembering the two cock he found out there last week. ~~So~~ To hear his instruction, he made a grand point standing at the roadside fence and pointing into the open area toward us. When I approached, a cock flushed and bored past me low and south. I wheeled, pointed and fired and saw it drop, winged, and struggle along into some tussocks of grass. Belter went wild, not seeing the drop and circled again and again far out in the ~~cleared~~ clear area. I could see the woodcock walking along, then trying to lift, only to drop back ^{from} a foot of the ground and finally hide in some ^{dead} grass. It required shaking to get Belter to settle down and then I had to almost point him the woodcock. At last he hit, pointed and then picked up the bird. He dispatched the bird and delivered. It was a good moment, if not a clean hit.

Within minutes, Belter ^{also in the open} swung into another point not far from the site of our action. I walked it up and had difficulty getting a crowd of it boring low and nearly invisibly against the dark background. I fired as it went out of my sight, still low and missed. I followed, which they went for the edge, but we had no more contacts.

even tho Belton & I carried the south truck until I stopped.
Incidentally, the two luts had been with an alcon and a hand-load
plastic case 2 3/4 - 1 - #8. The last shot had been with Winchester paper case,
no news 2 3/4 - 1 1/8 - #9 shot target load. I have never hit a bird with
that shell and am becoming superstitious - Am down to my last
two alcon 3-1-8, my old lockies from 1971.

A good day. Covert #1 bringing back Deane &
Bren, and Brin; Reddick Thoms always bring back Brin -

Friday 14 November

Hartman Place

Belton: 1 prod.
1 k.
1 ret.

overcast (smoky from 50°
first fire in S. West Va. to 45°
and Kentucky). Mild
to turning cooler with breeze

moved 1-2
1 shot - 0
moved 2-2
1 shot - 1 hit

IF

2:45 to 4:45
with last turn } 2 1/4 hrs.
of ten minutes

This seems to be a time of going back, today
to Bliss' special Hartman Place. We've not been

back, I think, for more than 12 years, and it was lovely to find the
address and the fact that it was remote. If we reached the area of
the Hartman steamboat house we couldn't find it. Stripmining has
refaced the area, and still is at the northern end. The old road, once part
the strip activity, is horrible and gets worse in the distance. We had to
turn in the narrow road but the little Pinto is wonderful that way, and
our newly-pat-on-mud tires did the trick. We came back and parked at
the remains of a nice stone chimney, a pear tree and an
apple tree, with a cow house and some trash. We couldn't get to the ridge

about Muddy Creek, which I had in mind, but we found the left
 side of the road grown to thorns and what vegetation that looked perfect.
 This is now a big valley grown almost entirely to hawthorns and
 crabapples, hundreds of acres, with two high terrain points cutting
 the enormous spread of thickets black now in the overcast sunlight,
 with not an colored leaf remaining in a November that has seemed
 the most typical November possible.

Hard-put to know where to begin, we chose, at Ray's suggestion,

the cover beyond the reclaimed stripmined areas seeded to heavy grass
 growing over what is reasonable footing in furrows and holes and gullies.

We heard a grouse go out ahead of Belton who was already in the cover.
 Ray marked it a long flight northerly and we dug in and followed. The
 thorns and crabs are nearly impenetrable with the faintest traces of
 deer tracks ~~found~~ ^{made} by very short deer. One or two small clearings
 allow a chance to stand up for breath. At last we came to a small
 stream (headwaters of Crab Orchard Run) with some openings and larger
 scrubby trees. Belton was working the very thick stuff across the run
 when I heard the grouse (I think a reflex of our bird) roar up, saw it
 coming across toward us, and had to wait until it came from behind
 several large trees and tried for it left-crossing high, certain it would
 drop. It didn't, and I think I saw it straight thru as it banked and
 leveled back the woods we'd come from.



BELTON FLAMING

We sat in the station wagon and ate our lunch and talked about the days when Belton was here, and how wonderful this was, having such a wild covert to ourselves and the charm of a dog like Belton who could make a shot at a woodcock over a point like his neck an event.

We took a final turn on the other side of the road in excellent hawthorns, rather separate in places - a great place for cock and for grouse at this time of season. The fact that more were there doesn't destroy the illusion or the chance that they will be there another time when we come back.

Wednesday 19 November
cloudy changing to clear 32°
quiet, damp, snow on ground (about 1") but
Brewer's are glazed with ice
2:45 - 4:45/2 hrs.

Hartman Place
mowed 1-1

Belton: worked hard

Return to this intriguing covert. Today parked in same place at pear tree chimney but hunted down #2 downwind edge until well down, then came on deep stripmine (no reclamation here) to main road at old house (two) with spruce; perfect situation. Belton had good point in road at tangle of vines but

My next-to-last Allen 3.1-8 popped out by the ejector ^{47/80}
landed in a small pool of water in the stream and floated straight up
until I retrieved it.



Kay had dropped nicely to
the shot and Belton came
running in for what he thought
should have been a retriever, a
bit upsetting to an already
sporty summer. You can't hit them all.

We doubled back in the hope of relocating the bird but there was too
much cover to lose it in and we did.

at the far end of another seeded piece, a perhaps just an old
field, Kay found a lot of woodcock wintering but the only sign of 'cock
was a big hen that had come back our way from Belton and
pitched into the thick cover. We tried without results to ~~flush it~~ set a
point on it.

We walked our way down to the run when red haws almost covered
the bed of the stream in places, and Kay found some grouse droppings.
The cover looked good for grouse or 'cock but we walked it downstream and
then up the road with no action. Coming out near our turning point on
the road, we walked it back toward the car, with Belton covering both
sides well. On the lower side of the road at the edge of the woods and
one of the powerlines, we found Belton on a gloriously high point, drinking
scent from out ahead but totally ~~unavailable~~ I chose to stay on the

start road while they moved to turn for a series of two points, and we all stood quiet for a long time with nothing happening.

I was debating about moving down into the tangle when they worked closer and flushed the 'cock, which I had decided I must be after all that time. It came left-crossing thru the branches not much above my eye-level, with intervening cover giving me no chance to shoot. I felt I was waiting too long, when it showed on the edge of the woods, then disappeared behind some brushy stuff as I fired with the bird out of sight. I saw it appear on the road, tumbling and landing dead with a bounce exactly in the middle between the roots.

My dead bird! went Belton thru the thickets and onto the road and into the rocks - first left, then right, and for about five minutes I had no control over him or his advection. My whistle brought him around three or four times but he paid no heed to my pointing at the 'cock lying where he nearly stepped on it three times. His mind told him it couldn't be there, and therefore it couldn't. Eventually he would do enough to listen to me and follow my pointing arm, and altho he picked up the dead 'cock, he laid it down instead of sitting, gasping from excitement. We finally got him to pick it up again and set to deliver it to hand - a nice young hen. The best I had ever seen; actually only an male I believe in the eyes of the bird.



there was no game a'coll. We had heard (Kay did) a quail left ahead of us as we worked our way up over deep mine cuts and spillbanks - good enough corn - but found no other bird. At least in woods near the two old houses - many frames of wrecks - with a magnificent view of the Prerios above. There had been someone there to see. Apr 10

Walked road all the way to corner of Hawthorne near car - a good place next to powdermill right of way - but no game. It is impossible to believe there isn't game here. We may still try it further later on.

Good air, good exercise, good health.

Friday ²¹ ~~22~~ November

Gales

Belton
Jake

cold, windy, some snow & 38°

moist 1-1

ice on ground

1:00/2:45

} 1 3/4 hr.

moist 0

Bayard Graceland

4:15-5:00

} 3/4 hr

} 2 1/2 hr.

0

Came to Canaan yesterday to join Jeff Seach, whom we met in Davis. On way down we had driven thru Fontert's ice coated terrain in Friendsville and Oakland areas - roads clear but very treacherous.

used glazed with $\frac{1}{4}$ " of ice from the storm that came storm Monday night and has stayed unchanged since. Report from Cora Davis of 6" of snow with ice glaze but Tom Thompson had reported only about one inch of ground cover in Canaan. It was a foolhardy trip, for we could guess the woods had snowed out and I would not have cared to shoot any of the ice had been in Canaan, but we hoped for some luck and had to keep our promise to join Jeff - a disadvantage of plans to gun with other people.

Thursday afternoon we drove out of Doves and started up Reservoir Hill in Jeff's four-wheel Cheyenne, which looked undefeatable. Took the left fork and in short order a deep hole in road full of water and ice defeated the invincible 4-wheel and there we were. I learned about all-terrain vehicles. We spent the afternoon working to get it out, which we didn't until Kay and I walked to our car on the highway and drove to Doves and called the Nelson Towing Co. in Thomas. Their tow truck got us out just as the sun sank and the day was short.

On Friday, we gave up hunting any of the places we had planned (Jeff had been upon Cabin Mt for the night and found the road terrible and ice-coated). We went to the Gates where the pools of water in the road turned us back to park exactly where Kay and I parked earlier and we walked in exactly as we had done before. Four-wheel drives.

It soon became apparent that the 'cock had some, but we hunted to the far aspen without a bird. On way back, a grouse flushed from the

edges of the cow lane after both dogs had nuzzled it and I had (52)
walked past.

Turned to Jeff's car, drove to Mt. View Motel (no longer
what it was) and started to pull out, only to find a large mass in
side of right rear snow bank. Another hour at Phillips 66 station
on Rt 32 south of Mann Lake to have tire repair, then a slow
drive up Rt 90 to Beyond headed for about hunt on Rifle Ridge,
only to find too much snow on ground and back roads. Made
rapid change in plan and drove to Beyond Maryland, only to find
two cars: a Maryland 4-wheel and a WV passenger car (empty shell box #5
in seat of latter). Went in anyway and followed at least 2 sets of
best prints and several beagle tracks (one beagle had returned to cars).

Ground covered with frozen snow that broke under steps in grass.
Found sets of 3 ground tracks with sets of two more tracks following.
Demonstrating what sparse ground populations will do, instead of reducing
game pressure, it drives you to try harder. Like 3 feds with no trace of
reason, we tracked these ground/runner tracks to the highway, although all
might have been made soon after daylight. Even if they had been
fresh, what good would it have done to follow to where the birds had no
doubt flushed.

We did hear a volley of shots on the ridge below the road, which
could have been the trackers hunting at the ground, which could have
flushed ahead into the woods.

We pushed back over the wooded hilltop behind us to find a number of turkey tracks on edge of good hillside of grown-up field - one large track. In valley about sunset, we heard a squeaking sound that Kay & I think was a turkey call - probably the man with the #50.

At cars we left Jeff to return to Cannon and we drove to Pet 50 and home via Oakland with no problems. So much for planned trip.

This Grayson's cove at Baywood is a good place to investigate, with brushy hilltop and hillside and possibly relation to brushy cove on knob with high water tank east of road. Try it.

OF 14
Saturday 22 November

~~Donald Thompson~~ / Ft. News Thoms

Beautiful, clear (mostly) with sunshin, cool clear	42°	heard 7-9 flutes	Belted: 1 juv
Some snow in spots but ground largely bare	9	3 shots - 1 hit o.p.	1 R.o.p.
1:45 - 4:45 / 3 hrs.			1 net.

young hen: inter: gray effect due to feathers
crop: several hairs ~~numerous feathers~~ on back that were grayer looking than normal.

Back home in our own coverts that look better to me than any others. We hunted the hilltop thoms above Lake Noel, which is partly filled in by mine operation, at present dormant.

Parked at our usual overlook on Donald M's and hunted the windy hillside above the lake with Belted Grouse, the good thoms

with no results.

First sign of birds was large tracks at far end, headed south but Belton had no scent. On top in thick cover where we shot our first grouse last season there were still other tracks (smaller) and again no bird. We circled the area to the nice grapevines with grapes in the corner beyond the tallwood on ^{the} east side and again no birds or tracks.

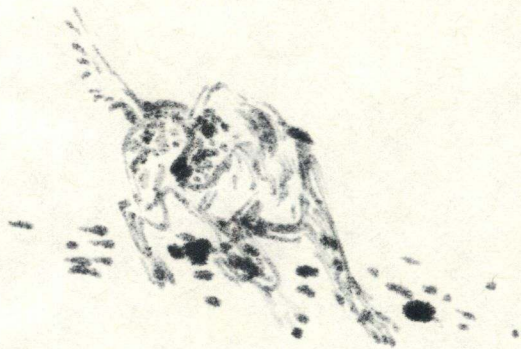
We cut back SW across top thorn flat (a few red haws on hawthorns with a lot on the ground in places) to try to intercept the birds that laid the tracks. At far end near edge of bulldozed area and just about where we had entered and where Belton certainly had covered on the first jog, a grouse flushed from the edge of old road trace, after letting both Belton and me pass closely. It flushed low and moved away by a foot and a half at shoulder height, disappearing in thorns. Ray felt it was going to land close. While we remarked this flight, a second grouse came from where Belton was working, a high right-quartering flush that I tried for well out and missed, watching the bird go on toward the north end woods as it'd been in recently. It possibly called for the left barrel but it really wasn't too far for the right, properly placed.

We parked into the dense hawthorns after ~~#2~~ ^{#1} and soon after we entered the thicket, it came across left overhead and very close, flushing again from Belton, who I feel is putting them up by moving too closely. I mounted as it was in front of me, feeling myself snuffly ~~back~~ and not moving, firing thru hawthorn branches and missed. I knew I was behind it when I shot but I was a ~~case of stupid movement.~~



We followed the general direction of both grouse toward the north end of the top, with me grumbling most of the way. Some after we entered the large ^{stands} of thick cover, I saw Belton trailing into a dense thorn clump and warned Kay to touch him with the shock if he leaped. However, he moved on, very excited, and then swung back and slammed into a U-turn point, solid. Faced with the impossible, I tried to circle outside, turned back by thick Hawthorns and once more stood facing Belton. There was the flap of a wing against twigs and Kay said the bird had gone. Belton held and our voices burst up a second grouse - round only - and Belton moved in. As we stood, a third grouse came back left - crossing and high and after a split-second hesitation I swung them and fired thru the twiggy tops of the trees and the grouse folded, centered, glory be!

Belton came at the shot, circled, taking direction and hit a lovely point at the bird, held several seconds, then picked up the dead grouse, carrying it toward me over a log, laid it on the ground in his excitement, and completed the retrieve and delivery, a young hen, very gray looking on the underparts and ^{George Bird Evans Papers} ~~and~~ definitely a red phase. West Virginia and Regional History Center



It was a good moment for us all.
after more and still pictures, we left the area with no further pursuit
of the other four. Near there could not well have been any of the pair
we were following. Incidentally, I missed with 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ -1-8 on the first two
shots, but with 3-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -7 $\frac{1}{2}$, for what it may signify.

Driving to the bottom of the hill, we parked and at 4 o'clock pushed into
the Ft. Monks thorns, which have grown some since we hunted them, opened a
bit inside but are impenetrably close. Not far inside, Kay signaled
a flock ahead where Belton was working, then a second that she saw land in
a tree to my left front. I looked at and moved up, watching it look
down at Belton, then me and made my decision not to shoot. The grouse,
a cock, took it for a while, then turned and flushed left-away - a nice
experience. Kay informed me I did not get shots in here if I didn't take
that land but I think she felt as I did about that land.

We hunted the thorns then to the "marker field" then back
along the base of the stripmined spoil bank, seeing a low hunter moving in for
a treeless stalk. Few areas are unworked anymore. We had passed Mark and
Barry Murphy on the way in, rabbit hunting, but they had shot 2 grouse in Pines
in the a.m. later we heard a barrage of shooting from their direction.

This day, beginning slowly, emerged into frustration with my 2
misses but exciting with the discovery of birds ^{changing} into a wonderful
euphoria with the magic of the point and hit, and the pleasure
of the gift of life to the perching grouse as it fledged, and a
feeling of gratification in finding our old covert so rich again.

We may have a season ahead of us ^{Something to remember the next time you hear} of other quans who seem to have all the luck.
DEEP SEASON

Monday 8 December
cool, partly cloudy

Covert #1
mowed 1 (not new) - 1
0

Beltan: 1 prod.

1 hr. 20 min. }
1 hr 20 min } 2 3/4 hr.

Rehobeth Thorns
mowed 2 (not new) - 2

1 prod.

Now the deer season is over, we had to try the Mt. Storm area to
see if any woodcock were still coming there. They weren't, undoubtedly
swept on by the ice storms two weeks ago. In Covert #1 we mowed the same
grouse in exactly the same spot as last time. Kay saw Beltan (the
point in the dense thorns above us (this time we were headed in the
opposite direction) and heard & saw the grouse cut down behind her.
From my position in front, I neither saw the point nor heard nor
saw the grouse. So often I'm unaware of the birds as do most. They are
so wild and my hearing is so bad I miss a lot of the pleasure.

We covered these thorns today more extensively than before, letting
Beltan work far out on the thorn hillside beyond the woods but
found nothing. ~~It~~ We returned via the lower margin and tried to
locate the grouse where Kay had marked it in the woods near the

Tavour Run, exactly where the grouse could have been, Belton (58)
but a good point among the spread of rocks in the woods. We
negotiated these killers but there was no bird, so went to the car
and drove to Rehoboth, which looked so good in the hills cloudy
afternoon.

Belton responds to that covert as Brun always did.

We that of the 1973 hunt as had here on Dec 3rd, after deer
season when we had good 'cock shooting and shot a grouse on
the far side of the Arundel basin. The old house is entirely gone
now, not even the chimney.

In the first throw Belton but went and made a
gorgeous point, but began drawing into the stiff wind
from the west and I knew it was a grouse. He made a stunning
approach, stretched into the wind, stepping ^{out} a foot at a time,
so intently he seemed to pull each foot away from the ground
by effort, and finally went wild. It was an impossible
situation unless the bird came out the point and I could be there.
I actually half-ran around and pushed three interlocking heathens
to an opening but heard Kay's voice say Good boy. She had
got inside of the point and was behind Belton which would logically
have put the grouse out to me, but it lifted - again without
my knowing it - and went high to the south -



MOBILE POINT ON GROUSE

We pushed for the far thorns, but there is nothing emptier than woodscock cover after the birds have gone. Beltin seemed to try to hold some birds to be there but there was only a rabbit.

As we worked into the thicket on the north of the pipeline, when we had a grand point and shot earlier this season, I heard and saw a grouse start out low from about the fallen log. We tried every way to relocate it on the hillside down to the timber run but had no luck.

On the last swing into twilight we tried for the first grouse and had a thrilling momentary point but no bird. I've had so many such empty points and feel the grouse left long before Beltin gets there. Our grouse really offer no sport shooting; they won't hold for points any time, I think most have left 30 yards from Beltin before I reach them and I haven't had a shot (with one exception) less than 25 or 30 yards and very few.

On the last short period when they went for the car, I saw



Beltin running, as though he had seen a flush but can't be sure enough to count it. Key was in the long stretch of road waiting for us when we came out at 5:15. So many times I have come out just there with the grand glow of a good afternoon behind me - with Brian and Beltin tired but happy. Today it seemed, after no work at all, that our era had ended, if only for one more year. It is a grand event. We saw a fresh 20-gauge 7 1/2 shell in the thorns, an unpleasant thought that it is not quite our own. But no one can love it as we do, and so it is especially ours.

Wednesday 10 December

Little Sandy, South

Beltin: 1 prod.

cold, mostly cloudy, 35°
2+ hrs.

moved 4-4
0

This was the first we have been on the Jimmy Spiker land up high for years. Hunted up the wide road to the powerline and climbed the steep right-of-way, which grew steeper (45° plus) as we climbed. The dead bracken and low ground cover is excellent, not to mention the view of Little Sandy far below, as well as of distant Chestnut Ridge and our own high point of land - hills and that of which by hills foreshortened.

61/80
Halfway to the top, Kay heard two flushes, seeing me, come down
from Belton in the good mixed hardwood/hemlock cover on the left
and pitch for the bottom.

On top, we found re-stripped areas and sketched it to go
higher. As I approached a good grapevine-tangled corner, Kay saw a
grouse flush and fly left-quantizing along a fence-row directly
across in front of me and I neither heard nor saw it. My hearing
is becoming such a problem that I am unaware of half the
grouse in most.

We followed into excellent grapevine cover above but
the Belton pointed at one place we found nothing, suggesting that
the grouse had lifted far ahead of us. We came onto fresh turkey
scratching (droppings).

It was late, as we had not decided to hunt until near 3:00
when the clouds broke a little, and we started back the old road
that would lead down to Pt 3. After a bit of lunch in a corner of
woods, we started into some excellent starling's about 3 years
old (new to us) and at the powerline Belton made a grand point
standing in the old road. I was undecided as to how to walk in,
with excellent cover on the powerline to be holding the bird and with the
old road as a possible flush escape. Finally I nabbed in past
Belton and had gone a short distance when Kay said the grouse had
lifted before I had actually stepped off the road. flushing from

the far side of a dense tangle just off the powerline and with no view. I may realized I hadn't heard it but with good judgment let me go on without distracting me in case there was a second bird.

We had to leave this area, which must be tried at leisure, for it was fast growing dark. We cut across the big flat field on top and plunged into the woods on a bearing for the Sandy bridge. I located the head of a woods road I used years ago before there was much large woods (refers here, still) and by feel more than vision, got us down to the highway and out. A good event to hunt some again.

Monday 15 December
cloudy, light spit of rain in a.m. ending.
2 3/4 hrs

Graveyard Glade
mowed 4-5
1 shot - 1 hit

Belton: 1 k
1 net

young hen: inter.
crop: 19 skunk cabbage seeds.
fern tips
rubus, twig ends.

I have felt for years that the Graveyard Glade would eventually give us a day's sport. We started today for Baratis but upon approaching we realized the bottom cover had been cleared, and so turned and

drove back to the Glade Farms road and to the cemetery gate, now broken down.

The timbering in here a couple of years back produced excellent cover on the south slope and we hunted to the bottom, then up the run and across to the Baratis side. We then went into the big swamp

where in '76, Belton's first season we shot our only grouse in the year at about this time in December over a point by Brian.

Today we moved two from the general area, one flushing from ahead of Belton - they are all spooky this season - crossing to the south side, followed by the sound of a second bird fifty yards away. We crossed by hopping tufts of swamp grass and worked toward the two large trees I had marked. Belton was working to the left near the border of the hillside field below the graveyard and I saw him and saw the grouse cross right from his direction. I saw it heard nothing. Som after, I heard what I thought was a flush but we decided it was Belton shaking his ears, a habit he had today. We made a large circle with no further contact with either bird, and we turned and hunted east to the hillside field and the good edge cover below. Belton worked it well but there were no more birds here.

We crossed tundra grass to the clump of white pines in the bottom, where I saw a grouse. Belton worked the thorn thicket above the fence and I worked them the corridor between - excellent hawthorn spawning, but with no results. We ate lunch with I say standing like the wife in an old golden wedding anniversary photo beside me sitting on a horizontal limb of a cherry tree.

We stayed along the lower margin of the hill, coming to the far hillside field where I say took a higher contour and I worked the low level with Belton hunting the alders in the big swamp. At one place I was tempted in the late cloudy end of day to shortcut around a bay in the edge, but I hunted it out.

without a bell, I saw a scrubby hawthorn suddenly bloom with a quon landing and balancing itself on the distorted crown. It looked like a large cockbird, quite red, and I didn't give it time to watch me, ruling out my desire to shoot. Instead, I moved toward it and it turned 180° and flushed out the left side, curving along the margin of the field/cover in a wide left-quartering flock that seemed to my eye nearly left-crossing. I was rather pleased with my split-second focus, my mount and wing-thrust and the centered shot that dropped the quon from a cloud of feathers twice its size.



GRAVEYARD
GLADE

I lay heard my "dead bird!" and hurried down the slope while Dalton came on the scene and within seconds struck sent and pointed in the edge of the thicket, then picked up the dead quon and delivered it as I lay got to us.

to take movie and still shots. It is curious how a shot and a retriever can change a drab cold dying day into something grand and as the trees of us stood ~~there~~ in the wind and vastness of the glade, everything was good. Oddly, it was not a large cock but a small quonking hen - but like a trout ⁱⁿ the first glances you have of it, a quon always seems a big one. As the bird had flushed, I caught a moment of a second quon

in flight. Without the bell sound, I can't know if Belton ^{65/80}
had a point - am not counting one - but there is a possibility he
did.

We hunted up over the end of the hill above and out the top
to the station wagon. On the way, Belton pointed convincingly into the
dark woods on the left but we could see nothing.

At the car as I carried the Purdy in its sleeve, I thought how
much Dr. Norris has given me with that gun, and wish there was
some way to express my pleasure. This was a good day, for all that
we missed only four quon.

Wednesday 17 December Mathews/Humbertom Belton:
light snow on ground ^{30°} missed 3-3
cold (very blue sky) 1 shot - 0
over snow cover
2:00 - 4:50 / 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ hrs. We had raised this favorite for a good
day. When we drove in the Mathews lane we saw fresh car tracks in the
snow and could guess they had preempted us. The tracks led beyond the
Mathews house, where we parked and walked ~~to~~ (are we the only people who can
walk?), and still beyond the clearing where intruders usually park - there
tracks going on out the old field road. We reasoned we'd have the good
woods/sharps on the west, but once in the first woods road we found
quon tracks overlaid with human tracks. It's no wonder I close to be
optimistic.
Driving up, we circled to the right into the hollow and came out the
woods road to the clearing once more, where we hunted east up the
road to the Tard Humbertom place. That, crossing the line fence, we

started to hunt up the bulldozed road - full of tracks. (66)

I had sent Belton into the thicket on the right and, just as we saw grouse tracks leading into the cover above the road, we heard a flush below the road and a grouse boiled straight up into the sky over Kay's head. Instantly I held off and turned - not easy to turn away from the view of a grouse coming over your - and in seconds the bird came into view, high and going straightaway. I fired holding below it and a bit too far away and saw the grouse set its wings and arc left - a maneuver not a reaction to a hit, I'm sure. I feel the left barrel ~~may~~^{might} have been possible but can't say.

We followed into the dense hillside brush to where I guessed the bird would have landed if hit. Belton hunted hard but we found nothing. Presently on, we came out at the south-east corner of the hillside starting - to my surprise, for I had thought we'd be wandering around the upper edge.

Although we covered the top margin and later down to Brear's Xmas tree point, we missed nothing all around via the lower borderline road. Saw day-old boot prints in snow here (Dayton Friends, no doubt) and tracks of one man but no birds. Also no birds in the shotodundron cover below the boundary road.

We hunted back to the Matthews hill and pushed (again, that word) up the slope when I saw a flash. There were tracks of our bird and also human tracks again. We had heard several shots and one burst of it, an all-loader, near the Esauhoe line. Turkeys?

It was getting late but there was no path to take, so we waded the boot tracks to near the top, then down to the "back" fields and along the woods line.

Near the road to the Mathews, Kay heard and saw (I neither) a grouse flush from Belton and come out low against the dark background, taking the edge and across the road and so all the way to the distant woods where we'd started to hunt today. Kay felt my darkness. Photography clip-ons possibly prevented my seeing it, but I think know.

A good count being hammered by pack hunters like so many and probably on the way out. When are the days when you could count on a place to yourself during the week?

Thursday 18 December
cloudy, 38°
2 1/2 hrs.

Little Sandy South
mud 2 (cut new) - 3

Belton: 2 fresh.

Hunted this in reverse this time, parking at Royce Barons' trailer and hunting up thru large woods on old farm road to the good darkness on top. This cover is so good it simply drops you in the imagination but there was only the same two birds as mud here last week.

at the corner beyond the powerline I heard and saw the grouse of the strip-mined-end corner flush well ahead of Belton and marked it going back toward the powerline. I first entered the good gap-mined corner along the fence line, George Bird Evans Papers then returned and

many Bells toward the recent flash line.

On the east side of the powerline, Belton moved into the edge woods and pointed. I began to circle around to his right but heard Kay ask if I'd seen the grouse left, which she said was high and far - probably down over toward Sandy.

We chose to swing back and hunted the edge cover of the right-of-way back to the upper road and then worked up the excellent track ground cover under the big oaks, crossing deep gullies up a steep rise where Kay found masses of bitter-sweet berries ("hearts bursting with love" as Ann & Jeff call it). Kay was picking some of the bitter-sweet and I had discovered some more growing low on a tangle of vines and briars when Kay heard a grouse flash just as I caught a motion left-to-right over the next rise - too indistinct to have identified it well alone. Then we found Belton on a glorious point in a dense thicket on the left of the right-of-way, headed up the hillside.



Beltan either had not heard the flock or felt there was a second group and I circled about him on the latter chance. It was a grand place, old clearing grown to thorns and briars, but there was no flock and at last I sent Beltan on.

We hunted in the direction I thought the bird had gone, but there is a good corner in the other quarter for the next time. We had to walk the outside edge of the hilled parkings bordering a sloping meadow, the edge hanging with grasses and red with haws - the best food ever on the ridge, but the slashings are so close that it is impossible to dig out our grain for another flock, and so we hunted on west until we came to an end of field and took time to eat, sitting inside the woods on a log with good cover surrounding us.

With only twenty to thirty minutes until dark we took a good clear log road down the ridge thru the thick cover - all good - but moved nothing all the way to the bottom, following the stripmine road to the highway. This should hold more than the two groups.

Monday 22 December

Weather/Humberton

Beltan: 2 prod.

partly sunny, 32°

marked 2 (new) - 3 flocks

2:15 - 5:00 / 2 3/4 hrs.

Slight ground-cover of snow from last week with ice in areas, and spots of dead leaves on patches in woods. Today we saw that we had the road to ourselves - no tracks beyond Weather's house - and we were glad.

Walked to the back fields and this time chose to pass up the
front woods road and take the second, which proved to be no road.

Just to show the quality of my judgment, there was a grouse
on road #1 which flushed from Belter - a hen that crossed left for
out. We had not brought bells or red ribbon for Belter's collar
and couldn't tell if he had anything to do with the flush but I
suspected a bump. Was at the day of an unfortunate start,
and later when Belter ~~was~~ disappeared and a second grouse - a
male cockbird flushed from him I again questioned his
bumping. Kay felt he'd been on point and I now agree, but my
frustrations at so many grouse flushing from him too far out
put me in a bad mood and I upset Kay.

We didn't follow the last flush far down into Mill Run
hollow but worked to the SE corner of the clearing, when, with my
signals, Belter came back and disappeared behind a fallen tree top with
dead leaves. When he didn't appear on my side, I stepped back and
saw his tail on a nice orthrus point - all I could make out.

Judging the flush is a matter of good sense and luck and I
tried the former but did not have the latter. Looking around to the
front of his point into the brushy tangle, I hoped to have a view
of several exits, but succeeded only in seeing the grouse flush
back over him, evidently, and go down into the valley.

The point was a nice hot one and solid, and was worth $\frac{7}{80}$ any shot.

We moved on south toward the spot of our last kill on our last day in February, saw the blazed sassafras tree the bird fell in, and moved on to hunt up over the good cover along Jones line. But once more this cover when we shot the big one on Dec 24th, 1933 held nothing. We did the upper margin cover all the way back. But it was a beautiful day, and two points, and 2 new birds. However, that cover should hold light or ten. It looks as if it is "down" this season.

Tuesday 23 December

Glover Place

Beltan

cloudy, calm to 35°
breezy at times

moved 2-4

o

(View from car of the Don Wright
farm on Skyline, gazing into the land.)

2:05 - 4:50 / 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ hrs

Frank Wright

o

Light snow ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch) has been on the ground since the weekend, and is a guide as to whether a covert has been preempted and to what birds may be present. Car tracks at the entrance to the Glover road caused us to move on to the next woods road when we parked at the top of the Frank Wright hill. We hunted down excellent cover to the road below the Glover corner without a track or sign of game.

Partway down the washed-out road Beltan but went below the road and ground-trailed what turned out to be about four sets of grouse

72
tracks that led to the spoil bank above the road. Unfortunately
quarry tracks in snow will cause ground trailing and Belton is no
exception in his reaction. I followed to the top of the spoil bank
when I tracked two sets of tracks all the way back to the Grover
corner when they disappeared into the rocky gully across the road.

I rejoined Kay and we walked down the old road to follow the
two flocks she had heard, suggesting four quans in the original group.

We had another sound flush - a reflexly, we count it - and then
I sent Belton to some excellent cover above the road and followed.

Suddenly I heard a quann flush behind me and saw Belton
stop suddenly at flush and hold. The quann went directly over
Kay on the road where she had dropped, but I would not have shot
over her were I'd had the time to fire.

No more contacts altho we hunted to the old road in the
bottom and back up the valley to below when we'd come down over
the straggle there. We came up there a hollow that had me
foiled into expecting it to be the French Wagon draw. Saw some quans
tracks there but no birds.

at end of day we came out on that F.W. draw and crossed the
thorn flat to the road but no birds there, but Belton had a thrilling
looking point that was empty - uncompleted action that destroys me.

Walked the road to the car, very tired.

Saturday 31 January

Mount Corner

Belted: 73/80
hunted well

frozen snow 8" on ground
sunny, no wind

30°

Moore's Place

2:25 - 5:40 / 3 1/4 hrs.

Very cold in a.m., warming to nice day. The only day we hunted in January, at the first since December 23.

We heard there would be hunters comparison after the long sojourn of better weather & deep snow, and there was. We were followed by 3 men in a jeep on the Dotson road and out the Salem Church road, passing us at the entrance to the Moore's Place where we found to observe jeep tracks in that lane. We elected to go on to the Mount corner, and there we found jeep tracks over tractor tracks than the woods. No sign of birds until partway thru woods, where we found one grouse track (then) winding thru greenbrier cover. No bird.

These footprints and grouse tracks could sum up the day. In the wonderful new clearing below the first Mount woods we found a second grouse track and the front of the footprints - cleared sole hunting boots that covered every brush pile, but not dog tracks. Later found more game - at least 3 men.

We hunted the lower slope of ridge along a test drill road and finally came to at least 3 sets of grouse tracks, but our preceptors had been there first - wherever there was a grouse track there had been a ~~game~~ ^{grouse} Bird Evans Papers

Seeing the footprints go up the ridge and back toward the
Mount place, we felt we'd hear the Museum to ourselves. We should
have known. There were more of the foot prints than, and ^{additional ones,}

We found at least 5 sets of gopher tracks in and out of the point
hill, and down on to the bottom and the stream but always the
foot prints superimposed - one two a thin man. There were
large "big-foot" type of prints from last week in the snow -
large holes melted to double size, and all over the cover. Then I
am sure on the Whiting Mountain who heard it for clear hunting and
parted and looked the entrance gate - hammering it every week.
That we saw tracks of a Brit. Their gopher had turned at the
Museum house corner - they must have been there early and left before
we approached - for we heard no shots or voices.

We ended by hunting up the brushy place above the
house - and found two sets of foots going up to the Dennis field.
Found where a gopher had run out from spruce on east side and
plunged to the ~~bottom~~ Ches. Thomas woods - probably the leg are.

After road we walked to the car and saw tracks of 3 men gnomes
along the edge on north side. We guess we saw 15 sets of
gopher tracks and not a feather - the effect of some person, even if
not a shell was found. Very disappointing. Too many people

Saturday 7 February

Little Sandy North

Bellon:

75/80

now on ground
sunny to cloudy 40°
2:00 - 5:30 / 3 1/2 hrs

ward 2-2
0

Having had it with other hunters preempting us last Saturday, we drove back to Little Sandy to hunt the north side on the Jimmy Spiker place, only to find a red jeepster parked at the gate.

Changing plans, we hunted the north side of the valley, seeing several sets of grouse tracks - but no human - crossing the bottom path before we reached the powerline. Bellon hunted the rich cover well but with no action.

I hunted up the powerline right-of-way while Kay hunted the path, paralleling me, with Bellon covering between us but not well enough on the n.-o.-w to suit me - good-looking cover. Kay signaled that Bellon was hunting in front of her (it turned out to be fresh tracks) and I started to him, only to have a grouse flush 50 yards ahead on the n.-o.-w exactly where I would have walked - Evans's law.

Hunted the upper level with no flush and out the top to the al. forest place (Dale Sess then now), down over to rough cover below - more tracks - and back down the valley on the lower path, with a note trip to the Beaver Hole - beautiful with ice and green water and Beaver Creek flowing into it. Kay took pictures.

On the way back Kay heard one flush ahead of Bellon - out his fault - and then we hunted up to upper path and down n.-o.-w again in

had no further contacts. Had some shooting over on Charles Kelley
and back toward Pt 3. When we turned the car we found where the jeep
had been parked and found the footprints went on the far side of road into
my Fossilhuts. We could have had our us as planned. Winter
hunting is bad enough; Saturday is almost useless.

Friday 13 February
snow on ground 32°
sunny mild

Wolfe Place
saw 2-2
0

Beltan:
good work

2:30-5:30 / 3 hrs. Drove to Monrovia Place in hope of avoiding the
rush but the rush was there ahead of us — car tracks down the lane.

I am growing desperate. We drove back to the Vergie Sees road
and parked at the Wolfe house. We hunted back thru the woods behind the
barn and I recognized this as corn we had hunted a number of years
ago. It is fairly open but with enough cover to hold grouse if they
were around.

We came to a long field on top with a dense Scotch pine planting
on the east side. Kay walked the pines while I hunted the north edge, and
she saw fresh grouse tracks working toward the excellent cover below. We
found tracks working into some dense better cover to the north — blow-downs
and tangles of vines that couldn't have been better. But tho the tracks
had been laid they recently, we saw nothing.

At the north end we turned south and built the margin of the
good woodland and replaced *Strepus* or *Colinus*, then worked up to the pines

finding very fresh tracks leading from the lower woods, then through the pines - at least three or four groups. But then as we moved to the north end again, we saw nothing.

Eating at the forelone, we decided to hunt south along the pines, with Kay & Dalton inside. Kay had a flush from a ^{pine} tree over her head, no view. Later, I heard #2 also flush from a tree. But we had no further contacts, tho we hunted the lower cover again and found the group of tracks all thru the upper margin.

Our last period was back to the station again, finding still another group tracks along the edge of woods on top the knob, but no bird. That corner looked good, with greenbrier, low, and some berries. We hunted without being on a road - good example of brush-busting that made get you signs of birds but too thick for shots. A skilled grouse summer is different from the thicket hunter with his head in branches. This went out with a repeat.

Saturday 14 February

Mathews/Humberston

Bellton: 1 hot dead.

sunny, warm - 42°
mud on ground

9 ^{new} ~~new~~ 3-4

center tailfeather 1 kill
6 1/8" 1 net

2:30-5:50 / 3 1/4 hrs.

1 shot - 1 hit

Adult hen: inter (no double peniculation)

1 sheath #9 / fairly rounded berries / frequent rashes
crop: full of greenbrier leaves

More Saturday population. Drove in the brush road to corner of woods, only to find fresh vehicle tracks and fresh bootprints going into our covert. We hunted anyway, but found the prints all over the

Humberston / Matthews land.

We saw only one grouse track at the Hallowed Spot, but boot prints lacking the prey. We walked an intermediate road to that area, then up to upper bank and to far differences and down to the shoulder gap. Then we came to the bootprints again after a short climb, and we walked the test-drill road up to the top of the Matthews ridge - backtracking the bootprints with an hour or more ahead in our time.

On top the ridge and among greenbrier tangles, Kay and I heard a flock that, by sound, went down over toward the far corner of Matthews back cover. We found fresh tracks of two grouse, later what seemed like the more headed the other direction.

Hunting down the trace of hollow path, I took a shortcut across to reach the bottom path, only to hear Kay say a grouse had flushed from near where I would have walked had I stayed on the path. It was facts. With our #1 grouse having flushed down to the east and #2 to the west, we continued east. Belton was working well but I had to put him about the path all times and I stepped into the lower side. I probably should have let him make the decision. There was a flock about 25 yards above and to my left and I turned and took a ^{acute rising} ~~west~~ ^{left} quartering flush, moving them and seeing the grouse tumble at my shot. I was sure I'd find a dead grouse where I marked it, and sent Belton to retrieve.

It was a tangle of brush ~~plus an area~~ ^{plus a hard to find}

but there was enough room to check for tracks. While Belton searched
 assiduously, Kay found tracks and two small down feathers and we knew the
 bird was moving off. We tracked it slightly up grade - unusual for a
 wounded bird - from one brush pile to another. I tramped and tried to
 break up the brush to find it while Belton checked out the places but there
 were holes in the snow and brush that would have concealed a dozen birds.
 The tracks continued up the bank and they went in a normal way and I
 lost confidence in them, feeling they were laid earlier, possibly by the same species.

I had given up and intended to return to the site of fall (I had
 gone back to where I had fired the shot and double-checked my estimate,
 finding it the same.) Kay had dropped behind in the tangle and I
 was coming out on the bullhorn path we had come down originally when I
 saw Belton pointing into a tangle across the path and about 20 yards
 ahead and above me. His tail was up intensely but his head was pointing
 down toward the brush. When I reached him and ordered fetch, he
 erected and pointed forward for the far side. At my repeated fetch order, he
 tried to lunge into the tangle and there was a flutter that he went back on a
 jump, leaping around and over the brush pile. The quail ran out the
 side where Belton had been pointing and, dragging a wing, hopped lamely
 away, trying unsuccessfully to flutter up. I directed Belton around to where he
 saw it and ran after it and caught it, picking it up, then keeping it back
 down, with much mouthing and feathers ~~falling~~ falling The quail was still alive,

and I moved in to dispatch it, having called all the news to Kay, who was struggling to get to us. Belton picked up the quail at my approach and instantly dispatched it, its heart stopped and it was dead.

How many times I have shared this moment with Brian, and what a moment it is. Belton was still grasping the bird and I hoped to have him carry it down to when Kay had broken out of cover, but too ^{long} ~~long~~ is too ^{much} ~~long~~, and he laid it down and we went down to join Kay.

The quail was a ~~young cockbird~~ ^{1st time error in my sex determination} ~~adult hen~~, black ~~of~~ ruffs not large, but a definite complete collar, and the throat was some burnt orange at the throat, it was less than on a hen; and the upper breast bars were that golden faded tan.

There is no trace of the double peacock eye feathers on the lower back - the second male I had observed this situation on - and while I have not checked this out on enough cocks - have shot too few of later years - I am beginning to wonder if the double-eye mark is only on adult cocks! - a good way to age at least the males, if true.

We ate lunch and then Kay took pictures, and we decided to head out the shortest way - more to the west - see the Esoutrant pines, when we flushed #3 juv & kept pine - a nice flash of motion & sound.

Getting them the rhododendron headwaters was not easy but we made it, enjoying every bit of hard walking and struggle because of our bird. We walked the top margin with a smoky red sunset glowing behind Chestnut Ridge and Kay took pictures of the red fall trees low trees.

and I moved to dispatch it, having called all the men to Kay, 80/80
who was struggling to reach us. Bolton picked up the grouse at my
approach and apparently dispatched it, for its head sagged and
it was dead.



How many times I have shared such moments with Brian, and all
those others, and what a moment it is. Bolton was still grasping the grouse
and I hoped to have him carry it down to where Kay had broken free of
the cover, but too long is too much and he laid it down, and I carried
it as we went to join Kay.

The grouse appeared to be a young cock but it had me puzzled in
that there was a pronounced but limited area of burnt orange at the upper
breast and throat like a hen, but there was a distinct complete neck band
of dark feathers and the upper breast bars were the faded golden of a male.
The black ruffs however were not large, but seemed larger than a hen's.
There was no trace of double peacock eyes on the lower back feathers,
but I shot a male last year that had no such feathers. I pronounced it
a young male (the tail feathers were soaked from rain and snow and I
could not judge the fan, other than interrupted band.

We ate lunch and Kay took many pictures of the grouse on a stump with

summer of dog, and we made the decision, at about four o'clock, to (81)
take the shortest way out by Essentment's field of pines, the rhododendron
headwaters, and the bank of the Humberson piece - none to short at best.
We flushed #3 from the top of
one of the Essentment pines - a nice
round of flick of motion far out.

Getting them from the rhododendron was not easy but we made it.
We walked the upper margin, enjoying every step, because of our lead
and action, with a smoky red sunset glowing behind the Chestnut
Ridge. Kay took both still and movie shots of the red ball thru bare trees.

We reached the station wagon at 5:50, dazed instead of fatigued,
and dug out the first bundle of drift gaily, then hung up on the frozen
center snow and spun. I walked to the Humberson house and phoned
Ed Essentment, who kindly came at once with his tractor and hauled us out,
refusing any payment - "You gave me a look - a good one."

Home with a wonderful sense of completed action. Good.

That night I looked at my grouse hanging by its neck, quiet,
as still as death, and thought of what it would be doing in that
moonlight on that breezy ridge - if I hadn't passed that way today.
And it didn't make me feel ~~good~~ nice!

Kay dressed the quail on Sunday for a lovely dinner. I had taken a center tail feather that measured $6\frac{1}{8}$ " , still one of my sex distinction, when Kay called me to the kitchen. The bird had ovaries.

It is the first gross error in sex determination I have made since I began observing the burnt-orange chest for ♀ and the complete throat collar for ♂. This quail had to be an adult female, but the center tail feather at $6\frac{1}{8}$ " is in the normal male bracket, the complete throat marking is also small, as was the golden upper breast bars. Yet the inconspicuous ruff and the burnt orange color, the hunted, red female.

Can there be intermediates of characteristic marking? The only other "male" without the present double mark was in 1979, I think, and unless the glands were destroyed by internal shot injury, was a first that I have observed, tho I have only begun to check for that. At least I learned not to be too certain.

Wednesday 18 February

Morrison Place

Belted: 2 prod.

warm, sunny with clouds 65°

5 (1 new) - 7 feathers

2:30-6:00 / $3\frac{1}{2}$ hrs

Heard the first quail on the south brink of the pine field hill. - Kay heard it go. Heard #2 on east area of hill, a low wild flock with Belted numbers near. I heard and saw the quail go for the woods, and we followed into woods road when, after some circling, Belted ran out it, standing at flush as the bird went left into large woods. We followed along

the test drill road and Kay heard it go far out.

Doubling back to the pine field, Kay saw # 3 flush down the ridge - no dog note. At the stream we hunted when I'd seen so many tracks in the snow but with no action.

Back on hillside beyond the pines, Kay saw Belton on point above the stoned-up spring in hill and heard the grouse go.

We hunted up them pines to hilltops where we had a grand point that poured adrenaline out my ears - beautiful, and a rabbit.

We hunted up the road toward the car and just that of when I was parked, I waved Belton into the cover on the left and he almost immediately went on point. After a few moments he moved on, and on the chance that the corner cockbird might flush out ahead of him, I hurried on to the road. As I made the edge I heard what sounded like thunder - not illogical with the temperature today - then saw the silhouette of a grouse appear to climb from the far corner coming toward me, then at its peak, bank like a woodcock and slant left into the woods and seem to scale down gradually. It happened too abruptly for a shot. Reconsidering, I wonder if the grouse had actually flushed from nearer me - the sound was loud - and go to the peak and then bank into the woods. In silhouette, it was difficult to determine. It made a lovely climax to the day.

Downy hant we saw the common downy colored gull

now come up and follow us on our left all the way
home, with a smoky sunset burning over the Chestnut Ridge.
A good day, with two productions by Belton, neither of
which I got to see. 84/80



END OF DAY

Wednesday 25 February

Partly sunny, cool, damp 40°

2:50 - 6:00 / 3 hrs

Wellhoun Squirrel

newed 5-7 fleas

1 shot - 0

Belton:

Last four days of the season coming up. Weather excellent
but a shade windy for the high counts, and so we went to this old
favorite for the first this season. At least, had it to ourselves.

We hunted up the hollow on the Wellhoun end of the run with
Belton full of videt but going too wide, requiring the much touch, which
did well. From there on he hunted like a dream - a fast dream, racing
over the cove and crossing from side to side beautifully.

We newed #1 wild from Belton's direction - could not gear a
bump or a point - they glomping the ground going up the ridge, which is in
perfect stage of skeletal timbering.

Number 2 quail was a loud flush from near the stream in the (85)
embapple/hawthorn thicket beyond the big powerline - again Belth in
the area, no way to know if he hunted or bumped. Was but seemed to
either cross the stream or go upstream.

Around the hill, we followed one of
Jim Perrow's brushhog cuttings and
this time I saw Belth run into
#3, which flushed back around
the ridge from where he had come.
Belth stood at flush, but why
no point?

Hunted to the brow of hill at powerline - good starlings here, and as to
far side was starlings - all this excellent cover but empty today.
Returned to path at bottom, ate lunch on a ~~flat~~ rock, then hunted
retracing our original path into the thorus when we heard #3 reflect
up the stream - again no point!

Walked to do "back road" and crossed to far side of stream
and started back down. In small clearing with pretty or redneck is at
last talking about it a quail flushed from bottom and bored across
to Walkman's side - I estimate it as reflex of #3. This time no
claim for Belth who was not near, but his bells may be causing some
spookiness.

In way down the valley Belth struck scent and ground - Trilled
outrageously. I sent him on with ^{George Bird Evans Papers} ~~what I felt~~ but he crashed below me
and had not covered ground in front of me when a quail flushed
West Virginia and Regional History Center

86/80
from me - a straightaway momentary glimpse that I tried
for and missed - a slim chance but it did me good to burn a shell.
That bird could have been our #2 bird crossed over but we're calling it
#1, rather than count quite that close. It went back across stream.

We crossed the big powerline and followed the path. Better
crossed from upper side and into the cove, on left and near into
#5, which must have flushed not eight feet from him. He
stood at flash, but that is not what I'm after. I know he'd point
if he got scent, and I know his nose is great, but he is moving
too suspiciously for his nose and it has got to stop. We'll need
to use the shock collar on these bumped birds.

Crossing the small powerline we came to Better on a
glorious point, high and from the lower side, pointing up the
hill. I knew it was our ground, and I walked across in front of him.
Then up the wood above the path with no ground. Finally sent
Better on with the tree. Lost whistle and he rose to the top of the
hill and disappeared. - Some the air was full of turkeys sailing
down over and across the stream - about eight.

Had two more flashes of turkeys from trees on the way to
the end of ridge. Would that they were ground. An actual day.
Cold and broke for 40°. Good ground coverage by Better but
disappointing lack of bird work.

Thursday 26 February Walter Wilburn

Belton

(87)

partly cloudy windy 35°

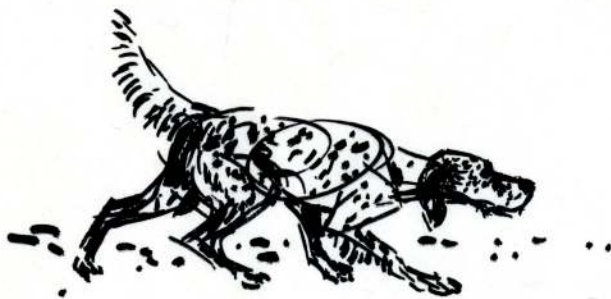
2 hrs }
1 hr } 3 hrs.

Eggs Kelly

I have wanted to try the Wilburn count all season. Today we parked at the lower entrance near the pine plantation, but we swung lower to good cover around an old field - excellent - but not a bird. Kay found an roost.

Belton developed a limp that we investigated but could find no cause unless a strain. Hunted all the way around the back margin to the Wilburn house (Walter now dead) and we planned to hunt the good area across the road but were preempted by two shots just out of sight - separated, as tho a rabbit or a squirrel. We returned to the car and drove to the Eggs Kelly place instead.

Our one plus for the day was that we had the actual counts to ourselves, excepting the shots heard at the first count. We started in the good grapevine woods above the Eggs Kelly / George Patton corner again, fine cover but no birds. At a fence line into woods found two 12-gauge and one 20-gauge shells - if not people, shots, or tracks. The weather was getting in darker and mean - little cold wind - but we hunted to the large stump mine where Belton but scent and worked very fragrant to the woods below where I ran a high blood pressure at the prospect of a shot at last. He reestablished and froze just within the woods below where I stood on the stump mine clearing. Kay saw the bird - a large woodcock, ~~every~~ ^{every} around behind me



FEBRUARY 'COCK

and fly up the slope to a corner above us, and I didn't see or hear it.

We walked the road back after trying to reflect the 'cock with no intention of shooting - good cover everywhere in here but no game other than the innocent woodcock. We found tracks of hares on the mud fresh enough to have been the day before - two a mile min. Our tracks all the way to the stub mine area and road good enough to drive our Pinto.

This wind was enough to explain the lack of birds. Talked to another of Ernest Balthus's sons - they all look alike - they are Sam. Said there was grouse here that he never saw in the area I used to find good but not this late in the year.

Our day was turning with lack of action. Pelton hunted all afternoon with the lumps but hunted hard. Finally, after numerous unsuccessful attempts during the hunting, at the car tailgate I found a half-to three-quarter inch worm ^{deep} into the web between two of the center toes. A relief to find it. He was over the lumps by the next day.

Friday 27 February Mathews Place

Belton

partly cloudy 48° moved 2 - 3

2:00 - 5:00 / 3 } 4 hrs.

3:30 - 6:35 / 1 } Arnold Humbertson

Our last day - following day rained. We drove to the old farm owned by Kenneth Jones that lies beyond Eschenbarts' and entered, to hunt the back way into the Mathews Place, the lane to that court being too muddy to attempt.

It is a long walk from the gate to the woods, but from there, we were soon at the upper end of Paul Mathews'. We hunted the lower margin of the old fields to the "Anniversary Flat" slackings when we could not locate a feather. Belton was banding a bit difficult, I thought, but a dog needs birds, as does a gunner.

Finally we started back from the far end of the flat and Belton hit scent and ground-tracked directly into a grouse that flushed about ten feet from his nose - an unworthy bit of work. I don't know if it is the dearth of birds, but it has been ages since I've been presented with a shot over a point. This puts me on edge.

We hunted back to the area where I shot my grouse two weeks ago and I saw a bird flush from the edge of the patch at the base of

the birch ridge, flying straight out the path - too far away. 90/80
This was no fault of Belton's, who was hunting somewhere else.
We had a reflex that I can hear far out in the Kenneth Jones
open woods. We hunted to the far end without further sign.

That was it for the day as goes the action. We picked our
way across wet spots to the parked station wagon where we took a
rest after three hours - eating and drinking coffee and watching
two bluebirds on power line wires, equaling our count of grouse for
the day.

As a last effort, we hunted for an hour on the forbidden
Arnold Humborn land - absolutely great cover when we were
young last year; this year nothing but a rabbit and one grand empty
point at dusk under a ^{small} power line right-of-way. This about sums up
the quality of shooting for this season - worse than last year, which
we hoped might be a turn upwards. This glorious country, lovely cover,
and so few birds it breaks your heart - Kay's and mine and Belton's.

BRIAR'S WOODCOCK DATA

	PROD.	BACK POINTS	KILLS	RET.
'69	19	7	12	—
'70	71	—	20	11
'71	93	—	21	20
'72	57	—	21	21
'73	49	—	19	19
'74	78	—	18	19 (CASTELLOW)
'75	41	—	11	10
'76	31	—	8	8
'77	34	3	11	11
'78	12	2	3	3

BELTON

'76	1	16	6	—
'77	14	22	11	—
'78	16	8	5	2

1980

COVERTS	DAYS/HRS	GROUSE/FLUSH	SHOTS/HITS	PROD./MILLS/RET	
(27)	1 3 1/2 (27/74)	1 7 (57/82)	0 (11/5)	2 (15 (1 dead) / 3 (2) / 5)	thurs 2/21
3	3/9 1/2	5/10	1/0	-	
30	30/83 1/2	62/92	12/5	15 prod / 5 kills / 5 net (20P)	thurs 2/28
30 coverts 32	30 days / 83 1/2 hrs.	62/92 flush	12 shots / 5 hits	15 prod / 5 kills / 5 net (20P)	
		200 birds/covert	41.7%		
		2.07			
(20)	(12/300)	(34/40)	(8/2)	(9/10)	
5	3/1 1/2	6/11	3/100	1/10	
(18)	(10/310)	(52/21)	(2/5)	(2/10/5)	(20/8/2)
3	2/8 1/2	8/11	2/0	1/-	13/2/2
(12)	(6/530)	(16/54)	(3/5)	(4/10/10)	(10/2/2)
10	2/10 1/2	8/8	1/100	2/10	10/2/2
2	4/10 1/2	10/10	-	1/1	2/1

WEEKLY LOG 1980

BELTON

'COCK/FLUSH SHOTS/HITS

COVERTS	DAYS/HRS	GROUND/FLUSH	SPOTS/HITS	PROD./KILLS/RET	PROD./KILLS/RET	'COCK/FLUSH SHOTS/HITS
N.Y. 5	5/14 ³ / ₄	17/21	2/1	1/1	2	4/5
5	4/11 ¹ / ₄	13/16	—	1/1	5/	8/9 1/0
10 (15)	5/12 ¹ / ₄ (9/23 ¹ / ₂)	6/8 (19/24)	1/10P. (3/2)	3/①/1 (4/①/12)	12/5/5 (19/5/5)	13/20 6/5 (21/29 7/5)
3 (18)	3/8 ¹ / ₄ (12/31 ³ / ₄)	6/67 (25/31)	2/0 (5/2)	1/- - (5/10/2)	13/3/3 (32/8/8)	23/28 9/3 (44/57 16/8)
2 (20)	3/7 ¹ / ₂ (15/39 ¹ / ₄)	9/11 (34/42)	3/10P. (8/3 [20P])	1/①/1 (6/②/3)		
1 (21)	2/5 (17/44 ¹ / ₄)	4/7 (38/49)	— (8/3 [20P])	3 (9/②/3)		
				DEER SEASON		
2 (23)	3/2 ³ / ₄ (20/52)	7/11 (45/60)	2/1 (10/4 [20P])	2/1/1 (11/2②/4)		
2 (25)	2/5 ¹ / ₂ (22/57 ¹ / ₂)	4/7 (49/67)	0 (10/4 [20P])	2 (13/2②/4)		
— (25)	1/3 ¹ / ₄ (23/60 ³ / ₄)	—	—	—		
1	1/3 ¹ / ₂	2/2	—	—		
1 (27)	2/6 ¹ / ₄ (26/70 ¹ / ₂)	5/6 (56/75)	1/1 (11/5 [20P])	— 1/1 (13 (1 dead) 3/2/5)		

10/20
then 10/24

then 11/1

then 11/8

then 11/15

then 11/22

then 12/13

then 12/20

then 12/27

then 1/31/81

then 2/7

then 2/14

DATA 1980

GEORGE 30 DAYS / 83½ HRS. (+ N.Y. 5 DAYS / 14¾ HRS)

62 GROUSE / 92 FLUSHES (+ N.Y. 17 / 21)

TOTAL: 12 SHOTS / 5 HITS 41.7%

44 WOODCOCK / 57 FLUSHES (+ N.Y. 4 / 5)

16 SHOTS / 8 HITS 50%

BELTON 4 YRS. 5 MO. (5TH SEASON)

30 DAYS

GROUSE 15 PROD.
5 KILLS (2 OP)
5 RET

WOODCOCK

32 PROD.
8 KILLS
8 RET

32
30 WV 62 = 2.07
19 LOCAL WY ~~49~~ = 2.58
13 BIG MTS. 13 = 1.0
5 NY 17 = 3.4

[TOTAL 35 COVERTS = 2.25
79 GROUSE / 113 FLUSHES]

LIFETIME '76-'80

175 DAYS

57 PROD
14 BACK PTS.
19 KILLS
(5 OP)
14 RET

LIFETIME

82 PROD
46 BACKS
33 KILLS
13 RET

1980

NUNDA

5 COVERTS / 17 GROUSE = 3.4 bird/covert

LOST DOG 020 - 0 / 022 - 2 - 2 - 0

RATTLESNAKE HILL #1 021 - 3 - 3 - 0

RUINS 022 - 1 - 1 - 0 - 1 - 1 - 0

ENGLISH HILL 023 - 5 - 9 - 0

RATTLESNAKE HILL #2 024 - 6 - 6 - 1 - 3 - 4 - 0

17 COVERTS / 13 GROUSE = 1.0 bird/covert

MT. STORM / BIG MOUNTAINS

GRASSY RIDGE

NB - 5 - 6 - 2 / DB - 2 - 2 - 0 5

REHOBETH 030 - 5 - 5 - 0 - 8 - 9 - 0 / N7 - 2 - 20 - 7 - 9 - 2

HELMICK RUN N5 - 0

RIFLE RIDGE N3 - 4 - 4 - 0 - 1 - 2 - 1 4-3

PIGEON ROOST N5 - 1 - 1 - 0 1

PARK CORNER N4 - 0

CHURCH N5 - 0

GATES N4 - 2 - 2 - 1 / N21 - 1 - 1 - 0 - 0 1

RIDGE ROAD NORTH N6 - 0 - 1 - 4 - 0

" " SOUTH N6 - 0

TWO GROUSE RUN N6 - 0

CLYDE DAVIS/EDELMAN N7 - 1 - 1 - 0 - 2 - 3 - 1 1

COVERT #1 N13 - 1 - 1 - 0 - 13 - 15 - 0 / DB 1 - 1 - 0 1

BAYARD GRAVEYARD N21 - 0

1980

LOCAL

19 COVERTS 49 ~~spms~~ = 2.58 bird/covert

PLUM PLACE	<u>029</u> · 1 · 2 · 0	1
UPPER WILDERNESS	<u>031</u> · 1 · 2 · 0	1
MAUST	<u>N1</u> · 1 · 1 · 0 / <u>J31</u> · 0	1
MORRISON	<u>N1</u> · 5 · 6 · 0 / <u>J31</u> · 0 / <u>F18</u> · 5(1) · 7 · 0	6
WHITE OAK	<u>N12</u> · 3 · 3 · 0 · 5 · 7 · 0 (Cranwell #1)	3
HOVES RUN	<u>N12</u> 1 · 1 · 0	1
HARTMAN	<u>N14</u> 1 · 2 · 0 · 2 · 2 · 1 / <u>N19</u> · 0(1) · 1 · 0	2
FT. MORRIS THORNS		
DONALD HOVES	<u>N22</u> · 7 · 9 · 0	7-6
LITTLE SANDY S.	<u>D10</u> · 4 · 4 · 0 / <u>D18</u> · 2 · 3 · 0	4
MATHEWS/HUMBERSON	<u>D17</u> · 3 · 3 · 0 / <u>D22</u> (2) · 3 · 0 / <u>F14</u> · (3) · 4 · 1 / <u>F27</u> · 2 · 3 · 0	8-7
GRAVEYARD GLADE	<u>D15</u> · 4 · 5 · 1	4-3
GLOVER	<u>D23</u> 2 · 4 · 0	2
FRANK WRIGHT	<u>D23</u> 0	2
LITTLE SANDY N.	<u>F7</u> · 2 · 2 · 0	2
WOLFE	<u>F13</u> · 2 · 2 · 0	2
WILKINSON SAWMILL	<u>F25</u> · 5 · 7 · 0	5
WILBURN	<u>F26</u> · 0	
EZRA KELBY	<u>F26</u> · 0	
ARNOLD HUMBERSON	<u>F27</u> · 0	