

Shooting Notes 1984

Saturday 13 October

Donald Moyers

Belta
Quest

Sunny warm, breezy 60's

mixed 3 - 3 flocks

3:45 - 6:00: 24 hrs.

109

October 12

Opening day! with October color at fall turning. Very warm in sun but a good breeze. This is a new experience - again, after 8 1/2 years - introducing all the wonders to Old Humboldt Quest at firminette. This is Belta's 9th season, my 60th on grass, and 1 day 52nd.

After work in training ground, we took this a main beginning for Quest, but the leaves are much too dense. The three years was round, no bees, and all as singles well separate. There are heavy grape yields this year and the hawthorns in the court are hanging red; with a good number of greenbrier berries. The DVR says if there is ever and food there will be game.

There was no points by Belta that I could see. At 8 1/2 years, he is fast and wide and we hunted him with the duck collar all day, touching it only a couple of times.

Quest made a point in a corner with an old wire fence on the edge of the stripmine. I couldn't believe a grass lying that long with no collar, but he held solidly and they got a photo. I walked in and around him and he finally attacked a yellow fencepost that probably sheltered a chipmunk.

Senous business.

It was a grand day. Quest had it and hunted well but close most of the time.

2001 Notes 1984

Monday 15 October
warm, overcast, 60's
3:30 - 6:30: 3 hrs.

Hartman Place

0
mud 2-2
0

Beltin: 1 sparrow
Quest: 1 hawk
1 hawk (deor)

Showing Quest a great covert. Color going but thickets
dense with foliage and briars. Parked at top of hill and walked in
striped road on hill to old fence road - full of weeds.

Was unhappy Quest with small Swiss bell but it proved to
load with his close range" and removed collar. Beltin soon pointed
in thorns on right and we found Quest backing. We were pleased, for
we had refused to hold behind Beltin on training trail; Key saw a flash
near of the flash and estimated it as a woodcock no sound. Beltin
followed line of flight and we lost sound of his bell and assumed a
2nd point. However, I failed to find him when I cut through to
lower path, and no amount of whistling and calling could bring him.
We tried shake collar to no avail and walked up & down lower path
whistling and calling. Finally after 15 or 20 minutes we got a yell
on upper road and at last got him to us, obviously having turned
back toward car. Never had had such experience with him that I
can remember.

5
84
far from it. We flushed #2 about 40 yards to the west - also a
flush in general direction of the first. Quert heard and saw this bird.

We hunted to the main cover and flushed #2 from a
cherry tree close to us but it was gone too soon for a shot. Quert also
saw this flush clearly and began looking in trees for more. He has
that wonderful faculty of being in the right place at the right time -
a great attribute for a bird dog. This bird went to long hummock
stand and we had no reflex, nor did we relocate #1.

Swinging south we came to the good cover along the draw and
found Bolton on a lovely point in thorns with Quert backing staunchly
from 15 or 20 yards.



A GOOD POINT & BACKPOINT ON A 'COCK

I walked in, convinced it was a woodcock and after some delay
a hen flushed climbing thru thicket and topping behind intervening cover.
I had to wait and try as it pecked, shaking thru branches and missed,
but I was pleased that Quert showed no concern for the report - but
gent shotgun experience, always best with excitement of a flush. It was
a grand piece of work by both dogs.

Later, Bolton had a second point on another 'cock - a bird that

landed in front of me before I could reach the point. Belton ran onto 6/84
it and flushed while searching - a common situation when a 'cock has
just landed. No relocation for us hunters well. Ended at south end of cove
where they met us with the car and we drove on to the Key Run cove.

Started at 5:15 on powderline with shadows falling. In the bottom
where both Belton & Brian have found grouse so often, Belton walked into
clump rhododendron and hemlocks and a grouse - rounded large - flushed
low in my direction. I made a fast runy then and felt the bird dip
out of my line of runy just as I pulled - why it pitched at only four
feet from ground I don't know but it did and I missed.

As we crossed the sound were faced on left and while I was
halfway over, a grouse flushed from in front of Quest who was already
in the low thin cover, a rising flush that set Quest wild. We followed
the flight I marked by 2 hemlocks but did not reflush it.

We had worked well ^{down} the valley and were some distance to the
south of the run in line with the bird as we were following when I saw a
grouse ^(#3) flash from Belton on the north side of the stream, flying east
and into the larger exposure of hemlock cover. We went after it, having
seen up on #2.

We were in fairly open ^{with} low cover around in clumps when I
heard I say my Phew. Here it comes! and I got a view of the bird
incoming. I turned and managed a shot as it came to our right and
at the head of some trees, firing just as it pitched and flew into the
top of the reds about us. It was a chance I could have ~~made~~ made if
I had been able to focus a second earlier. I am inclined to think

vision slows somewhat with age a perhaps hypocalcaemia in (7)
my case. My muscle and nerve reflexes are as fast as ever. I
don't feel upset about the bird not being but but I'd like to make an
occasional shot.

We hunted the hillside above where I saw the grouse appear to
land but did not see the bird. Returned west on the far side of the
run and while they wait for the car, I hunted the dogs upstream to
Sister's camp. Oddly, we saw no woodcock in about looks ideal cover.
A good day and good contacts and nice walk by Peltor, altho he
requires constant check with the collar to keep him in touch. Why?

Pleased to find the Purdy handles well after mounting drill all
summer with the $7\frac{3}{4}$ lb. Fox. No shoulder problem.

Saturday 20 October
mild, partly sunny 68°
3:30 - 7:00 3½ hrs.

Falcons
saw 2-2
0

Bella
Quest

This grand old covert - memories of 45 years - is nearly
impassable in places - blowdowns, the old log roads gone. And it is
nearly straight up, or down, depending upon where you are.

I heard a flash from hemlocks ahead and then nothing more
until after I had tried the flat bottom where it used to be possible to
work them hemlocks & woodcock down to Sandy across from Hemlock Run.

No larger.

As we again climbed the trees of log road across from 4th Camp, they
heard and saw (I did neither) a grouse flash from a gap in the trees about 100 -
very high, and seem to go straight out over the valley. They felt it was

going all the way across; I found that difficult to envision.

8/8/84

Without a watch, we didn't know what time it was but it must have been around 5:30 when we climbed to the top below the bulldozed area that DeBerry had done years ago. Then we ate on a big chestnut log with a golden tentip leaf being perfect. I had Peltin had acted as tho a green heron goes out before we reached it, but it was too indefinite to count. Light was fading as we started back, hoping to the brink of the hillside - excellent grapevines and grapes but no birds. We gained something in light when we reached the Frankhouse fields and hurried to the south to find a place to go down, with a chance we might have to take the road to the Devil's Curve, an awfully long way to the car.

Finally in a slight draw in the field I found a break in the steep bank and down we went into semi-gloom, slippery footing on wet rocks and downed branches, finally reaching the bottom in the area of deep gullies where I used to find birds. The problem of finding a passage down the bottom rhododendron took us south, away from the car, but at the little run that came past Brown's house we made it to the road. It was about 7 pm when we got to the car, after what seemed long walking on the hard top road. Disappointing not to find grass in this good area and I doubt if we go back, ever. But at 78, we did ourselves proud, climbing it the way we did 20 years ago. Not bad! Peltin hunted well but had to be brought in with the collar repeatedly. I hope Quent will turn out differently, but without enough birds to keep interest up in good ways. I may be doubtful

Thursday 25 October
drizzle, cloudy, mild ~~65°~~
1 3/4 } 2 3/4 hrs.

Gregg Hunt
0
Ben Linn
0

Beltan
Quest

The Glorious Twenty-Fifth! and we headed for the Mt. Storm courts.
Weather forecasts called for clearing, which it didn't, and we turned back at
Terra Alta heights because we couldn't see the distant ridges.

Decided to try the Gregg Hunt court and found that Jason Wilk
had sold out and someone from Baltimore (Fitzgould?) owns it. The house is
gone but all the grand haathora cover is spreading and was loaded with bears,
which Quest spent his time eating. For all the food and cover (ask the DNR)
we didn't meet a single 'cock or grouse. Beltan, working too far out, put
up a flock of a dozen turkeys.

at 4:30 we got up and went to car for lunch, then drove to top
of knob where they took a photo of the magnificent view to the south. Drove to
Ben Linn and hunted an hour in hemlock / rhododendron and in the alder
bottom on the north but not a feather. A bowhunter, local named Truman, said
he saw grouse along the road last year but not this.

Quest is still not hunting - deer droppings and hairs included -
because he hasn't seen ~~enough~~ ^{game} enough to look for. Different on quest.
Disappointment, but good exercise.

Saturday 27 October
~~partly cloudy~~, warm 75°
Mostly sunny
1 3/4 } 2 3/4 hrs.

Clyde Davis - Upper Orchard
mired 1-1
0
Rehobeth Thomas
0

Beltan: 1 prod.
Quest:

This is the time to expect the woodcock flights and
Mt. Storm is the place to find them - maybe. We approached
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10/84

the Clyde Davis road from Route 50 with pleasure and excitement,
up the hill winding above the old Kitquiller house - now vacant - and
under grapes hanging heavy, and out the long straightaway and
at the Rebekah Thomas we found a Maryland buckeye with a brown plate

"Brown" on the front, double dog tracks in the back. There are too many people.
It was still not late, and as chosen to Clyde and Lora Davis, talked
to them for fifteen minutes and got started at the old house at ten to four.

Very hot and dry, we walked a long distance, crossing many
spring seeps to the woods on the hillside. At our first clump of briars I
saw a bird that could have been a green flash wild, too far to identify. A second
bird left the same spot and I marked it as a blue jay.

The hillside woods is now grown too open but there were quercus
here and there, hanging ~~heavy~~ with grapes. Below moving suddenly into a flash
point and immediately left to watch what must have been a green flash,
tho there was no sound.

We hunted out the trace of a log road (this used to be good cover)
to the far end, then climbed up over a crest of rocky footing to the top,
looking out to where I say one year took a series of photos of Plover on a 'cuck
point - one of the pictures appeared in Gray's Journal. It is now grown
too large. Turning back north, I walked toward the old orchard. The
'small' pine planting is now a stand of white spruces. We skirted the
east end and came to the apple trees with hawthorn interspersed.

The apple trees are each in a vase of blackberry briars, and the
ground under them was in lush grass and covered with fallen apples,
worthily eaten by deer and probably turkeys. They took a piece of one tree

(11)

with a spreading ^{black} crown like a Hawthorn, loaded with red apples
against a blue sky. We ate lunch under a nearby apple with Quest
eating the fallen fruit. It is the only dog I have had who has eaten acorns,
hawthorn haws, and apples.

after lunch we hunted to the edge stand of laurel at the south end,
when I had had got photos of Brian pointing a cock I missed. I'll
always remember that place, and this entire flat top, over glorious
woodcock cover - never many grouse, tho I shot one on the way up one
fine day. I saw the thorns when I sketched Brian pointing a woodcock -

It is only memories now, gone too far out of cover other than the old
apple trees themselves, and I don't think we'll likely be coming back.

We ~~did~~ decided to get to the car and try Rhodith. Left at
5:40 and reached the cemetery at 5:46 - the "Grouse" truck having gone.

On the way into the thorns, Quest drew into a lovely point on
the rocky bank of the basin and held it staunchly while I walked
in front of him. There was no bird but from his point and his
actions on recent afternoons, I'm certain there must have been a cock.

We hunted the forest thorns well, but gave up trying the far corner,
and turned back to work the "hedge cover."

A truck with hunters drove into the far cover on the woods road,
muddy from much travel. They might have been bow hunters or turkey hunters,
but I feel this area is being disturbed.

Belton, who had begun working when we left Pt 50 and drove up
Kitzgutha hill, knew where we were from the start, and now covered the hedge
stand of cover from memory. But beautiful as it is, there was not a bird -
'cock or grouse - on the entire area.

late October time, but with woodcock you can always hope. 12/84

Kay finally went for the car which I took the dogs and covered the flat thicket well. Heard what was either a turkey Howling or a hunter imitating me. (our first new get)

at post-sunset, we saw the crescent Woodcock Moon in the south, and as I changed bats, it was like Brian's last season, with his lying on the roadside, tired but happy after, thanks to, good action on 'cock.

I know there must be better days ahead this season, but there are so many people. This was a Saturday, of course. But as we prepared to leave, two cars came out - hunters - ~~two trucks~~ came in (a local named Heffer who lives on the white house on the flat - come and hear hunter training ^{days} sounds.

Too many people. Kay talked to Dale Davis's wife who said 2 men were at her house hunting 2 last bird dogs. We saw one on the destiny - probably a Britton on the road but it wouldn't come to me. Clyde said 2 men had been there for permits last week with bird dogs - one, from Morgantown, which of the houses had been here yet. Probably Comaway.

Tuesday 30 October

Mostly cloudy, mild, fog, 62°

1 hr
1/2 hr } 2 hrs.
1/2 hr }

Riffl Ridge

0

Far End

heard 1-1

0

heard 1-1

0

Clarence Friend

0

Bellm

Quest

Much driving and little game. It seemed the correct time to try for woodcock again, after several days of rainy weather in the East, and so we started for Grassy Ridge and Stony River. About 7:30 AM, I noticed large cloud masses in

the east and later saw low fog over the big ridges beyond Backbone Mountain. (13)
We drove on and on top of Allegheny Mountain and as we were coming to saw fog
weather about Mt. Storm.

We had planned to explore the new Stephens road on Cherry Ridge to
check for 'cock cover' but it proved empty as far as we went. With the unpleasant
threatening weather, we turned back for Pepple Ridge. There were remnants of the opening
week people in the shanty cabins - one, sitting in his car at the trailer by the
gate was less than hospitable when I asked if we might park. While we got
ready to start, the S.O.B. sat watching us, finally driving off. People.

We worked the cover to the west of the old farm road, keeping to the margin of
the big open fields, I say took a whole lot of the big hawthorns when we had the
grand old and Belton's find of the species with the haw-stuffed crops in the food
days. Now, nothing. Also nothing on the little woodcock hill, and around the
west edge woods - nothing but an organized dump. I wonder if I'm wrong not to
penetrate deeper into such woods, but experience has not been encouraging.

After an hour with no success - a fair test of most good cover - we
returned to the car and drove out to the Far End on horribly road at the
extreme portion where the little Sabine 4 wheel drive was reassuring.

We hunted the excellent little woodcock thorn cover with Belton working
it beautifully but a bit fast. At the lower edge he ran onto a woodcock -
a hen, Kay said. I never see or hear game anymore. It seemed to go
up the draw into woods ahead but we failed to relocate it.

Further up the old road trees, Belton stopped and Kay heard a quail
flush. Being deaf is becoming frustrating to me. Kay heard what I
thought was a reflex from a tree. Belton doesn't point them, I don't
see or hear them, and never get about. I think it's about time to quit,
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but I'm too obstinate to do it.

We hunted to the con, drove back on the incredible road, and parked at the log stable to hunt the upper side on Clarence's Friends. It was getting on toward dusk but we tried it for half an hour and finally quit, with the feeling that there are no grouse and that the woodcock are not in. A great let-down - about par for hunting anywhere. Quest would better miss of the time but I hope he never gets as wide as Bellan who has to be checked repeatedly to keep him in sight.

13 Wednesday 30 31 October	<u>Hatched Place</u>	Bellon Quest
Partly sunny to cloudy 67° 3 hrs.	moved 7 (flashes) - 7 flocks	

This is a grand event. We had two single flocks from the left side of the path within 15 minutes. At the place where Quest saw his first two grouse on the previous walk, we turned left and hunted down the lower log road along the Fisher Run valley.

The low road is a fraction of ideal hemlock/abundant cover, too thick to penetrate on sides, but Bellan hunted it, quartering left & right. I was 20 yards in front of him on path when #3 grouse flushed on the left side below me - a flash of wings of the bird about 4 feet off ground, then pitching to the creek. I doubt if I could have got it a shot but might have been able to if I had been standing, not walking. The log road dried up about half a mile down the valley and we started to cut to the right to top the hill and reach the flat cover on top where we have hunted from the far end. What we found was an impassable cliff on the upper side and impassable abundant cover in front of us. In here, we flushed 2 grouse from hemlocks - they saw ~~me~~ #6 bird in

front - not visible.

On the way down the log road, we had seen only one dim path leading up over the hillside (steep) and we turned back until we found it.

It was steep - and had logroad traces up them (or down over) the cliff in a gap. On top it turned back west and we took it to another branch that eventually led us to the lower cleared areas where we hunted in the past. On the way we heard another grouse, #7, our last bird of the day.

It had clouded over and what sunset was evident was lowering. We stopped to eat lunch, and I carefully placed the Purdy in the crook of a sapling, cradled in my glove, and stepped ^{back} backwards. An unsuspecting piece of small timber hidden in the laws tripped me and I went down ~~back~~ backwards, my right arm somehow turned under me. The effort was like an arm twist behind and the pain was extreme. It was, I think, only the 3rd time in 60 grouse seasons that I have completely lost my footing, and I immediately thought of the second accident 7 years ago.

We moved nothing more on the way back. Odd that the grouse are not using the top where we found them in 1982. I tried swinging the right arm up as my head pendulum-style and tried mounting the gun - painful. ~~No~~ Doubt if I could have shot at all well. On the right side in the back seat, when we were not far from the car, we heard

Beltin yell in a prolonged cry and I found he had run a twig in his right eye with some blood. With the conjunctival irritation his had lately, this was not good. In spite of our wounds, it was a grand day; the birds, Beltin worked well tho we used the stick at times, and Quest saw the bird I glimpsed and heard others.

Wednesday 7 November

Early day, cold, sunny 44°

1 hr } 1 3/4 hr.
3/4 hr }

Grasslands - Conly Lewis

moved 3 (1 new) - 3

moved 1 - 1

0

Hoyle Run

moved 2 not new - 3

Belton: 2 prod

1 prod

Quart: 1 back.

16/84

Hunting without a gun - Last Wednesday's fall tore up my right shoulder and I still cannot mount a gun. No knowing how long this will last; I hope not 6 weeks as 7 years ago.

We drove to Conly Lewis corner and worked both dogs into cover where last time we moved 2 grouse. We want badly to get Quest into woodcock.

Belton covered the first area thoroughly - what a hunter - while Quest doesn't yet know what to do but tries to do it. We worked out along one of the nice little lines of cover where Belton was and saw him go berry but continue. He then swung back and drew to a check, still flagging; took a few steps and went wild with a nice high head. Quest came in and backed about 15 feet behind, very intense. Ray came around to get a still shot of the point - and - back and I suggested that she move in closer from the front. I was certain it was a woodcock, and Ray got 2 pictures which should be good.

Quest had held the back loyally thru all of this but now worked up to and past Belton, who was like one of the large stones in that covert. I tried to stop

Quest with Hold! but there was no doing it. At not yet 6 months I can't expect that. The woodcock, a hen, flushed a few feet to my right and topped out and flew across the clearing to the woods and I fired her .32 at the flush, which impressed Quest. Both dogs held well at wing and shot; then broke. It was a grand beginning.

We followed the direction of the 'cock flock', and at the edge of woods I saw heard a quiet quail flush. Belton arrived and flush pointed and there was a second flush, and moments later there was a third flush (all quail) that I saw heard. Quail got no scent at the spot but Belton was fired up.

We followed to large hemlock and rhododendron with no success, and this as hunted the entire covert rather well, had no further contacts. But that first point-and-back was worth the trip.

Eating as we drove, we moved to let Siskin land on Hoop Pole. Then at 5:15 I led Belton on lead to the bottom cover and held him with one while Quail worked it alone. He seemed to remember the spot from last time and worked carefully, at no place pointing - his tail quivering to a solid stop. They went in to try for photos but there was no bird.

We hunted out the south side with no action until we climbed the slope to the cow road. As we turned back, I saw a quail flush in the larger woods above the road. Belton came in and had only a flush point

before he went out - both probably birds we missed here last time. That was it, but it is a good covert, but oddly never seems to produce 'cock', tho there are cattle, grass, and hawthorn.

A good day, but I'm worried that I'll not be shooting my gun at all soon.

Wednesday 14 November

Hartman Place

Belton: } 1 prod
 } 1 kill
Quail: } 1 set
 } 1 kill

Sunny, ~~cold~~ cool, 44°

moved 1-1

2:35 - 5:20 / 2 3/4 hrs

moved 1-1

First day in 2 weeks to carry gun.

1M 1 shot - 1 hit

Returned to this grand covert, hoping to find quail that might have moved into the better areas. Rained at top and walked the straggle

road to the old Sumner road. No contacts until as dropped down into the hollow. 'Cock still not here but as I was whistling for Quest, I say heard a quail flush in his direction and his subsequent appearance, excited and having been running, suggests he found or saw it and chased.

Good.

The entire area was disturbingly barren of birds. We worked down the run and passed for lunch on a log in the powdermill.

Still no action on down the run until as rounded the second powdermill. A short piece beyond the "Holy Rocks" ^{along that wonderful} chance came you-lose-lose, I saw Belton check ^{in left bucket} and stand, still flogging. I ordered "Hold," though perhaps "Go on" would have been better.

He went solid and I moved into the cover and a woodcock flushed through the thick stand, right quartering. I had been uneasy about managing to mount my gun after the shoulder injury 2 weeks ago today; attempts at home had not been encouraging, soreness still quite mean

and some difficulty with movement. The focus, mount and shoot was over in a split moment and the 'cock fell - glorious feeling. I was surprised that I hit - the shoulder hurt but good. I think if all shots could be made, as that one had to be, I would do better.

Belton made the find and retreat to where I had moved into the open for 1 day pictures. Quest, who had been working on the upper edge came at the shot and was present for Belton's delivery. I rather doubt if he saw the 'cock in Belton's mouth, with a leaf gathered with the bird. Finally he saw it and after Belton's relinquishing it, Quest seemed entranced with the bird. I held it and he seemed to go into transfixation, almost pointing. I say remarked blood on Quest head and said he had been 'killed. I pulled the

woodcock's bloody mandible on Quest's cheek and performed the ceremony fully and Ken took pictures



BELTON, AS ALWAYS, DOES IT RIGHT.

We hunted to the cross road and back the main road to the car, crawling to cover the hanthoras on the west but seeing nothing else. However, the day was made by that wonderful experience, the single episode that remains.



QUEST IS BLOODED

at home, I buy the woodcock, a young male, on the outlers - our first game bird in 2 seasons. Quest was under the spell of it every time he passed. During the evening, I took it down and held it for him and then, again, seemed to be a sort of trance, Quest going ~~into~~ ^{into} point while I styled his tail up. Through the evening and again the next morning there appeared to be something ^{almost spiritual} emotional, ~~between us~~ ^{between us} - a new growing into understanding. He can't pass the hanging 'cock on the porch, he has to rise up and sniff it and seem to be in underment. A grand experience to see.

Friday 16 November

Wellkinson Place

Beltan & Quest

20/11/84

cold, sunny, windy 40°

moved 1-1

3:00 - 5:45 / 2 3/4 hrs.

0

This was not a sensible day to hunt grouse, and proved it. Wind was high, wind chill about 20°, but the lovely clear sky and sun was too much to quit up.

We stayed on the lower level of Wellkinson hollow, through excellent cover (cutover) but did not move a feather all the way to the back road.

They are stripping the top of the forest but we did not see where.

Decided to work the slashed cover at upper end, hoping grouse would be in that for cover from wind. Ate lunch in the slashed red brush.

Afterward, we pushed toward the top edge through Bellish blackberry briars with nothing more than a deer trail to follow, and not that in places.

At the top I came to the log road on edge of woods with grapes hanging from vines festooned over trees, so full they bent small saplings (or seemed to).

Walking the road toward the west (it was getting late), I saw Beltan in the edge of the slashed tangle but went and go "fragrant," but he did not point. I am so conditioned to low grouse numbers, I am guilty of not getting excited at each small sign. I happened to turn to look to my right toward the larger trees and at that moment, as it always happens, I heard a flush sound behind and to my left. Neither way now I saw the grouse, which must have been covered up in the mass of stuff. The only bird of the day.

The sun was going down as we headed down the Harroder Hollow on the old woods road, which ended at the fence. Slid down the steep bank to the bottom, across the stream at to the car at west end of the stream in beautiful cover.

Saturday 17 November

Howdershell Cutover

Bellon
Quart

(21)

Mostly sunny cool 42° moved 3-3 flocks
Unlike yesterday, no wind chill 1 shot - 0
3:20 - 5:20 / 2 hrs.

Never hunt in West Virginia the Saturday before deer season. The woods is crawling with people. Four rabbit hunters at Paul Upholds, 3 or 4 cars parked in the road inside the covert above him. We retreated to the Coffey Cemetery - the old house that had the slotted glass settlers is gone - and hunted the general direction of the old road - now disappeared to the end of the stripmining spoilbank. Pushing into the thicket, we found ourselves in an expanse of Hackberry cane - too thick to turn back, too dense to go forward. While standing, trying to work out what to do, I saw a form like a hawk sailing low almost directly over my head, then recognized a grouse with wings set, head smooth from wind swept covert. If I'd been in shooting condition without this crippled shoulder, it would have been a grand morning shot, high enough to be safe. The bird ground past about ten feet in front of me and I was making the effort to get the gun to my shoulder in intense pain and, fired blindly swinging through at left quartering, aware that I wasn't into any stalk. It could have been a lute but the bird didn't fall and they saw it glide on. I ejected the ^{empty} shell and put it in my pocket and as I reloaded, was confronted with a spent shell on the left barrel. Thinking I might have pulled the rear trigger, I took out the shell from my game pocket where I put empties and saw that it, too, was fired. I had somehow pulled both triggers ~~in~~ in the awkward mounting position, a heavy job for the little Purdey - and my shoulder. It's an example of how delicate the mounting position is.

The grouse must have been put up by ^{George Bird} Bellon was near me -

22/184



OVER THE JUNGLE.

At least, it was a guess within 15 minutes.

We hunted to the left and broke out of the briar mess, working down the hillside to cut below the slashings, which are in the stage of regrowth that is nearly impassable. We didn't know what "impassable" meant until we tried to go below. What first seemed like a mass of trees left cut down by the timber operation, turned out to be a path of the blow-down from the tornado we had on July 5th. We finally found the old path about 1000 feet Sandy that Tom and Puff and I went to take to the powerline. But now it is choked with the tops of trees, hardwood and hemlocks, that are toppled downhill. We pushed and squirmed and finally crawled under the mess of branches but had to quit up far short of the powerline.

When we fought our way up the hillside, we came to slashings from the timbering to further complicate the problem, but we got to a trace of log road and ate lunch at about 4:30.

The sun was into the trees on the horizon when we once more pushed to the powerline, the log road having died out. On the right-of-way, we found excellent low cover - grasses and ground growth and a lot of rocks. I saw the large boulder on edge that used to mark the area of the path. I lay to a fraction of the view with the large boulders in the powerline - an area I had never been in - a magnificent sweep of mountain and ^{fully} sandy country.

At the crest, we came to a clear log road with a deer stand, and started west. At an angle, calling ^{out} ~~out~~ ^{independently},
George Bird Evans Papers
West Virginia and Regional History Center

I heard a flash ahead on the left and saw a grouse box out parallel with the road - too far to try with my handicaps, but normally it might have been a long possible. Too bad Belton didn't get a point on it.

They had heard another bird on the hillside before we got involved in the tangle of blowdown, making 3 grouse. The road led us around to above Glennie McCarty's. Belton swung right, onto a point along the road that turned into a chasm that put Glennie's Siamese cat into a tree. We took the main road back to the car, getting another point on another cat - these cats are grouse smelling - and we saw a third ~~cat~~ cat on the foundation of the old "grouse setter's house."

A strange day but perhaps a new covert to try from above. And certainly an experience to remember. We're still fit.

Friday 23 November

Mrs. Burkis

Belton
Quest

Early day, sunny cool, snow 40° on ground breezy 1 1/2 hr. heard 2-3
no gun

Heavy snow load Since Sunday Shoulder still too tender to carry gun after I re-suspected it with Quest. This covert is perfect after-sharpening. A grouse flushed from Belton below the road and landed above on edge. Put both dogs to it but neither got scent. I walked in and flushed - the best chance I'll probably have for years. They heard and I also glimpsed a second bird later. Talked to young Bill Beard who said there were "a lot of grouse on the opposite ridge." (Then heard). Must try it. Cover throughout. New looks ideal.

²⁴
Saturday ~~25~~ November

Huckel Place, North End

Belton
Quest

29/184

Sunny, clear, cool, snow 44°
on ground

marked 1-1
no gun

1 3/4 hrs.

Deer hunter prospectors all around, tracks into deer camp
at far end, sighting - in shooting.

Only bird mark was from a towhee or lark at edge
of loading clearing. Neither they nor I saw it, both heard it.
Both dogs had found scent in snow just earlier but no
points. Did not follow. Saw set of grouse tracks earlier.

Loaded powerline - saw rough rocks at one place - but
no grouse or even tracks. Disappointing. but good to get out.

Monday 17 December

Howdershell

Belton

lonely, mild, cloudy 62°

marked 2 (new) - 2

Quest: 1st point on grouse ~~1st~~
scent

3:15 - 5: / 1 3/4 hrs.

Quest had his first good noseful of grouse scent (a moment
after the fact) and pointed it.

We parked at Glenora and hunted the clearest powerline,
staying on a log road at the top, circling east, and came out at Paul Upholds.
Tried the old fields and edges behind two places - much greenish - but saw
nothing. Took the log road at the top and down to the back road to Kellys place -
many grapes hanging full on the trees.

Beyond medium size woods we came to autumn olive plantings
sparsely placed. Belton was walking a bit wide trying to locate birds; Quest
was closer but on the lower edge, when a grouse - gray looking - flushed
on the right edge of the path from what I had been sitting or squatting
at the base of an autumn olive. I instinctively tried to mount, the bird



100%

QUEST'S
FIRST POINT
ON GROUSE SCENT

was no chance of a shot. The flush caused my right shoulder to pain. I am still (6 weeks +) in no condition to mount a gun.

I got Quest to me and put him on the site and he immediately went on point, which pleased me, bidding staunchly while I handled him. Belton came in and barked summarily, but soon moved on. It was a good moment. Ray tried to get a picture (16 & w film) but we don't know if the film was advanced enough.

We found a huge exposure of autumn dirt scattered over old steep mine terrace refills on Charles Kelly's place. If snow are going to eat it, this should be excellent food. There was some lot of vegetation growth on the old spoil banks.

We hunted north under the powerline and at the edge of the old plantings we've been in before. Belton found a bird (I doubt if there was a point) for we heard the flush, then Belton's barking tree. Ray went in and heard the grouse - a big one - about a tree length above but it didn't come my way.

Two grouse in 1 1/2 hours in Chen like this as from mountain, in West Virginia and Regional History Center

spots of DNR pap about our fauna, per hour being good.

26/84

This was our first WV hunt post-deer season and it was good to
to out. I say did well after his long siege with viral bronchitis cough.

Tuesday 18 December
Mild at home, cold-breezy
on top. 50°

Wayner Road

Belton
Quest

Sunny, changing to clouds.
2:30 - 5: / 2½ hrs.

This is a grand covert, big, good quopernis

near old fields, log roads, rhododendrum, rocks, small runs —
and not one quopernis. We found only 5 in 1982(?) but it seemed like
a lot.

We hunted the large coverts about old long field — good tangles of
quopernis — to far log roads — good greenbriers — out log road to the
east to hollow that transverse main mud road; then found a tree
of road to go below the cliff rocks. This would lead ^{good} down the valley, so
we tried a faint road to west, which died out, leaving us to push over
way thru fallen logs & across ravines. It became longer and longer,
farther and farther, and we no more than got out by double, what with the
clouds that moved over. A long hard trek that would have been
grand if there had been quopernis. They weren't.

Why can a great covert appear so good one year and so poor the next?

Thursday 20 December

Matthews Place

Bella
Quest

Lovely day, sunny, cool,
to cloudy 40°

2:30-5:00 / 2 1/2 hrs

One more incredible day. A complete zero as to grouse. It is impossible to grasp the barren quality of a great forest with no grouse. A possible flush on top the Greenbrier ridge, in that I saw Quest make a fast run as they had seen one, but it might have been a rabbit.

We covered the whole circle, from the mud clearing where a tractor (Paulo's daughter and husband, Matthew) was set up, to the flat (still good cover), out to far end, and up to Greenbrier top, down the graded road to Rhododendron run and down to the "boundary road" and back. A tiring experience that at least was "good for the bones." I wonder when will find birds. Bella hunted so hard, and Quest did too.

Monday 24 December

Charles Kelly East

Bella
Quest

Christmas Eve
mild, cloudy, rain 46°

scored 1-1

3 to 4:30 / 1 1/2 hrs

This was an effort that didn't turn out well. Parked below Glenn's and hunted the east autumn olive plantings on the old stripmines on Kellys. Excellent groups on vines on sprillbank edges, however on the olive shrubs, but only one "circumstantial evidence" bird - a glimpse of motion a hundred yards ahead from the sparse olive plantings, with Bella in hot pursuit. Did he bump it?

We followed to the south edge of the big plateau to where it seemed to go. Excellent cover down over ~~proprines~~ and original slash

requests. Went down at a break in the slope and went back
 along the spillbank on a sort of bench about a second high wall and
 just planting. This entire country was so cut up by the stripes that nothing is
 predictable and our "bench," descended to nothing and it was a decision whether
 to back-track or climb the steep spillbank above us. I chose the latter,
 a poor bit of judgment. It was steeper than it appeared with few saplings to
 pull up by, and large rocks, many of which shifted under weight. With
 age it was no easy trick. Kay followed gallantly - I am amazed at her
 ability to do these things. The dogs had no problems and were about us most of
 the time. Within fifteen feet of the top it became apparent that we were in
 trouble. The slope was much steeper than below with unstable rocks. I
 made a foolish decision to keep going and found myself digging in with my
 gloved fingertips, clinging to rocks to gain a hold, in some cases moving
 the loose rocks out of the way. At last I made the top after ~~hours~~ ^{hours} holding
 my gun at one point till I could crawl up and then reach down first.

Patterly Purdy in a jolt of a tree on top, I went back a few yards till I
 could give Kay the signal which I came to help her up the last few yards. She
 had come on up on her own to that point. Finally we reached it but it was an
 experience I don't want to repeat. Bad judgment on my part.

On top it began to rain - hard - and we set out for the
 return, holding to old road traces and made good time. But we were well
 soaked and got going in the heated car. There was disappointing events here and
 with a sense of sadness when I think of some grand Christmas Eve hunts
 in the past.

Thursday 27 December
mild, cloudy, damp, quiet

Mrs. Purke
0

Belton
Quart

2:40 - 4:55 / 2 1/4 hrs.

Back to Pennsylvania to try the good covert that Bill Beard Jr. described. Stopped at his house and his wife Barb fixed me up with report that Bill and friends had hunted yesterday and made 25 quons. I should have known.

We hunted, parking at Dick Brown's gate and starting below road where we made a quon on our walk before. Good brush, heaps and tangles and old roads with quon aplenty. Just set song when we heard a rapid long-long-long on the ridge as wanted to hunt. Had no further contacts, but we may have been following two footpaths. No voices, no dog whistles. Also no birds.

Hunted to big lawn south of Mrs. Purke's place, crossed to upper side and hit hard traveled road - very muddy - then to "Da. Sherry" road that comes from Ft. Necessity part road. Followed strip to Mrs Purke's road and hunted out to fields near site of her house. Found quon feathers where a bird had either been cleaned or eaten by hawk. Later seemed unlikely because the quon was there; former seemed doubtful because that was only sign of mammals and there was no tailfeather or wing feather. Question?

Ah lunch about fields and at 4:30 gear up and hunted road back to car, finding a Nissan truck parked where it had not been before, and found 3 deer remains where hunters had thrown parts, which Quart was fascinated with. Carved one deer pelvis (?) before we caught the rascal. Way took picture.

Big let-down. All reports of birds false & Quart is hunting much better now.

Friday 28 December
mild, windy, cloudy 60°
3:05 - 5:20 / 2 1/4 hrs.

Wilkinson
mowed 5 (new) 5 flocks
0

Beltan
Quest

32/184

My 78th birthday and I am in as fine health as ever. The only thing that reminds me of my weakness is shortened endurance. A 3 hour hunt is about my top, but that is not different from the past 15 years with low blood sugar.

We hunted up the steep north slope thru fine cover (had not done this before) and mowed #1 at the top, near the small loop log road, Quest hearing and seeing it and chasing. We did some of them.

Followed the bird north to the brink of the new straggle - an enormous operation that is going to chew off the entire top mount. Both dogs heard and saw #2 (we did neither) just below the top road and we followed it back with no contacts.

Nothing more, 'The Belton hunted the sides well, until we came to the small powdermill, which seems more open than formerly. Belton was about 80 yards below in the middle of the right-of-way and suddenly quail began to erupt just below him - one, two, three - from where they had been grouped in the open area. Why he does not get points on such birds puzzles me, for he has a grand nose and will point if he gets scent. Being so far out most of the time, he puts up birds that I never get shots at.

We followed the last bird, which I had marked as taking the contour over on the left - excellent rough hillside small woods but had no contacts. Stopped for lunch and then came back on a lower contour to the powdermill. Day was below me in the main path and saw Quest hit

scout and go wild, ground-trailing where one of the birds must
have landed. He repeated this at the edge of the right-of-way,
but both quons probably reflected.

Anyway it was fine action but I regret no points and no
shot. But it was a privilege to live this day in grand cover with
Kay and Pelton and Quest.

Monday 31 December

cloudy, ending in rain ⁴⁸⁰
2:30 - 6:15 / 2 3/4

Henckel

mailed 4 (1 new) - 5 flickers
0

Pelton: 1 prod
Quest

New Year's Eve hunt. Conditions at 480, damp, quiet
seemed perfect. We walked directly to the area beyond the deer camp and
in the old log roads where I hoped to find the birds, I found them. Both
degs had been working beautifully, ranging and quartering. I noticed a
great improvement in Quest's manner of going. A lot wild at times but
mostly very good.

The first contact was a flush beside Kay after I had passed the
bird. (I consider letting Kay walk first and then follow her!). I didn't move
then hear it; Kay saw it. This was followed immediately by two more. Quest
and Pelton weren't near them but had passed close. Can't understand why
they didn't get scent under these conditions. Quest came toward us and
walked into a fourth bird with no evidence of scent, but excitedly chased.
I saw none. All four seemed to have flushed next to the large woods, and
we followed.

In what seemed too short a distance Pelton pointed nicely ahead of us
at a group of logs and the quon flushed before I could run to him. This bird
I saw fly next beyond the old mud road cut up by the deer hunting tracks.

We followed, hoping to relocate all four birds but had ^{no} ~~no~~ contacts. 3rd/184
Both dogs were working too wide in this open cover but they covered the area well.
Came to a decline in the flat woods - a good corner for birds with thicker
cover but had no sign of any.

It was beginning to sprinkle, as rain always comes at the far end of
a front, and we turned back. Paused under a hemlock to eat lunch in
the dry, then set out for the car - a good 3/4 hour later away. We got
rather wet on the way. It was then excellent cover all the way, and both
dogs worked perfectly once again in thick cover, but we had no contacts with
game. Got to the car at young Mrs. Huchels (near Manthorpe) and changed to
dry clothes, and then warmed up on my home, with stop to eat some of today's good
apple sauce loaf and chamomile tea. Very comforting.

What was comforting is the lack of chances for shots. I haven't been able
to handle a gun properly because of the recent shoulder injury, but I had
my last shot (pigeon) the last day before deer season, ^{Nov 17.} - 1 1/2 months ago.

This becomes frustrating beyond endurance.

Thursday 3 January

Cloudy, quiet,

35°

2:00 - 5:15 / 3 1/4

Mr. Burkis

ward 5 (new) - 5

0

Belted: 1 prod.

Quest.

This last week of Fayette County season, we went to this grand covert
as a last chance. Packed at Dick Grover's land and met Virginia Brown's daughter -
pleasant surprise. Hunted up the ascending dog road on left side to top them good
cover but with no birds, coming out on gas pipeline. This country is hunted hard -
the pipeline cut up with vehicle tracks.

The area does not seem familiar to me from the past - appearing larger.
Topping the ridge, we followed the pipeline ^{George Bird Evans Papers} through a huge grapevine tangle

on the left produced a grouse that I say saw go down the pipeline (35)
from the dogs. Moments later we saw Quest passing down after what was an
unseen #2 bird. We followed with no relaxation (I don't seem to get reflexes) until
the right-of-way dropped into large timber about Meadow Run and we turned back.
Hunting begins with the good cover above.

Not far along, I say saw without sound a grouse flush ahead of us
and cut across and back, high. Shortly, another grouse flushed within
yards of me, loud, but no view. We got Quest in and he hit scent. From
his actions I could tell the grouse had been near me but had run out to
the far side of the tangle and flushed. These birds are hard-pushed.

We followed both grouse for a logical distance, it seemed, but didn't
miss them. I say and I feel the birds in our areas are as hard-hunted or
harder than most grouse in the U.S. and they probably reflex before we get to
them on the follow-up.

Turning back on the upper level, we prepared for lunch, and then
hunted to the pipeline on top when Belter hit scent and worked it carefully
with no bird - which had undoubtedly lifted.

Followed the pipeline to the gas well opening and Quest found
one of the countless deer bonepiles, carrying a rotten section around and
loading us. Giving up our chase, we hunted next below New Burkes'
road and Belter had a good point not far in front of me. He was
over a slight rise of ground and I could just see the top of him, solid.

There was no sound I could detect (I say heard a slight one) but I
saw Belter wheel and look at the flush downhill. It was a good point

and I hurried to him at once, but three years are not going to last 36/184
for anyone.

Winds late and we felt it hopeless to try to find the bird in the large
bottom basin, and so hunted below the road and to the car with no
further action.

A good afternoon but I'm getting impatient for a shot.
Both dogs worked well. We kept Belle under close control with the
stoch collar. This place should be hunted early in the season before too
many persons enter the lands, a poor possibility!

Monday 25 February

mild, cloudy, damp 46°
2:30 - 5:30 / 3 hrs.

Wilkinson Place

mailed 2 (1 new) - 2 feathers
0

Belton: 1 prod

Quest: 1 back

Out again after the Ice Age seize for the first since Jan. 3.
Snow gone except on spots where drifts had been and in patches in woods.

We hunted up the hollow to upper end and covered them the
creek - then over. I can save a grouse flank on the far edge of the
ravine on edge of field - about 80 yards away. Why? Neither dog was near.

We worked our way to top of Thom hill to the log powerline,
and found for a breather on the rocks there. This is excellent cover
all around, but there is little food at this season. Some old grapes on the
ground after snow has gone.

Continuing south on upper graded road, we had good ground
coverage by both dogs. Quest is working well, tho a bit wishy at times.
Belton, with the collar on, was checking with us nicely. We came to
a large pile of grouse droppings in the center of the road - evidently
revealed by the melted snow. ^{There are so many I wonder if I could}

The back valley was a mass of good grapes even on the west side - grapes on the ground, after the snow-melt, all the way to the upper end, and both dogs combed the hillside but we heard nothing - at the very top of the upper basin Kay heard a distant flush - no sight of it - and I heard nothing. In spite of my hearing aid, I seem to hear almost no flushes unless close to me, and while such distant flushes offer no shots, I would be unaware of birds if Kay didn't hear them. Makes me concerned that I am becoming ineffectual in the woods.

We came out much nearer the old ^{stable} ~~house~~ (now gone) than I expected, and the walk up the road past the house was in a cutting wind. In the cover on the flat, we stopped to have a bit of lunch after I had prepared them a briary corner - all good cover - and saw two ^{swain} ~~leaves~~ on a trail across a cornstubble (very thin corn).

In excellent grapevine cover (there was grapevine all the way up the back valley, too) I sent several rings of young fragrant but no bird. We circled the flat and came onto new slashings - good cover - but no birds.

Hunted the west edge of big top field but left because the woods was too long and cut across to the old ~~house~~ ^{stable} site and down the road. Both dogs getting discouraged but still trying.

At the bottom (good cover lower down) we heard a quail leave a pine tree but had no view of it. All 3 way more woods today. It is tiring to hunt with no more action than this. It is glad to get this work

Thursday 28 February
mild, sunny, 46°
3:00 - 5:30 / 2 1/2 hrs.

Ray Guthrie
mowed 1-3 flushes
0 shots

Bella
Quest

40/84
wounded hand

Last Day. It is disappointing that Last Days can't be good ones. I was pushing under one of my now rare metabolic imbalances and lost much of the pleasure it should have been. This great covert had been devastated by stripmining activity east of Daisy Rude's along the big powerline in the 2 or 3 seasons as haven't been in here. However a large timber cutting had changed the area - for the good, eventually.

Parked at Daisy Rude's and walked the old road - over one or two residential snow drifts (snow gone elsewhere) - to the "crossroads" at the Ray Guthrie lane, now obliterated or lost among numerous log roads. The flat above Ray's hemlock hillside is a confusion of greenbrier tangles, and all of Ray's land has been cut, as well as the woods to the west. We saw a big gray fox, very dark with red points, run from the right side, view us for a moment, then turn and dash down the road toward Little Sandy, two brush bushes, his face concerned but not in panic. at first it looked like a small dog.

We turned left onto the cleared flat on the edge of the hemlock hillside and saw a grouse flush from the flat and cross diagonally right well out. Neither dog was seen and I don't know what part it

16

up unless our sound - possibly the dog bells. I'm using the
except fallen bell in Belton, the Swiss sheep bell in Quest. We took a
log road down the slope thru scattered hemlocks and followed it along
the contour east.

We had a second flush panting down that could, and probably
was, have been our goose - this time patching for the tangled bottom
cover. The log road as we had once crossed the creek - now only
part of the bridge remains - and we worked back the flat bottom when
I recall many ground days with Blue, and Ruf, and many geese
that I didn't hit with the Fox original stock - what a shame I didn't
have the Parkey or the restocked Fox in those days!

This is great cover here - fallen tree tops, hemlocks, rocks -
but when was the ground? We did get a third flush that was only
sound - out for trees and probably across the creek - It came from behind
and was over us and gone without a view of it.

16

That was it, although climbed back to the top (no other way to go)
and to the old road with memories of that awesome trip in the old station
wagon, down the ever the rocky road with no chains to back up, and
across the bridge and up an even worse road to the old luff house with the
etched-glass settlers. Today we found for a photo at the old bridge
abutments (?) where geese Blue stood on point into the Mokolundon
on the night. We ate lunch at the rose cabin with Quest investigating

nothing.

afterwards, as hunted down the same haphazard path with little family
 rushing noisily on ~~the~~ ^{our} left, and remembered the day when we heard at
 least four or five geese coming up there that mostly untraced come
 from the crossing below Young Brothers. Quail and Bobolink found next
 in some new clearings near there but no land. In the grass, the
 very few, now so wild that we can't find them? Or were we better
 than — the dogs and I. Better dog, a better man? I'm not as young but
 otherwise I don't think so. We're simply living in an age with almost
~~no~~ no geese.

We crossed the road and went to walk from the Francis Place and
 to more timber clearings (this should be great in a few more years)
 and then via a log road and over the sloping field to the old road
 and past the Old Frankhauser place — vacant now — and the
 car. ¹⁰ They had been geese in leaves, but no grass and not the
 ground "grass" of the Bishop Place on Tuesday. Very physical
 "low" probably contributed, but I had a sense of frustration and of
 sadness on this last day of a season that has been literally disappointing.

No way to feel in this ground ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~country~~ ^{country} but can you hope for
 better next season?