

# Shooting 1985

Wednesday 16 October

16

Sunny, blue-sky day 65°

Edelmann / Davis

Belton 1 prod

3:00 - 5:00

Rehoboth Thomas

Quert

5:30 - 6:30 } 3 hrs

saved 1-2 fleas

George at 78, Belton at 9½,  
Quert at 17 months.

(Opening Day was the 12th, but our  
settlers were recovering from a week out  
with coughs.) 1 shot - 0

Going up Kitzmiller Hill in a glow of color, I thought of  
Mr. Kitzmiller's maple tree blazing in its color as flaming as though he  
was still there. It was all a sweet familiar sequence, climbing the  
winding road, turning back on itself, the pear tree, the big valley  
opening ~~behind~~ <sup>behind</sup> us the higher we went — all a precious experience  
for our new season.

Found timbering operations at Rehoboth with loading equipment  
where we normally park. Driving down to the Edelmann place, the road  
was in better condition than we have seen it. Passed our friend Mr. Jones on  
his way up and passed to greet him. "Are you going to hunt some  
pheasants?" — lovely thought.

The old Poplar House was slumbering away the Indian summer  
afternoon — its porch collapsed, looking like an old woman who had  
lost her teeth but <sup>remained</sup> serene regardless.

We sent Belton and Quert over the fence on the Clyde Davis side  
and hunted the edge along the road.

2/85

recall, ward no woodcock there.

Crossed to the good corner and Belton went over his rail fence with less usual éclat and Quest followed. This lovely covert was empty today, and after pausing to rest on the rail fence at the road (I took some photos of them and the dogs) we covered the Clyph Davis side to the far end and up to the maple tree fence (the big maple seems to be a dead snag now) and back to the car, hunting on rocks underfoot all the way. It was a long trek with no action - both dogs trying hard.

Drove to Rehoboth where the lumberman had left but found a bow hunter's truck still parked there.

Again, no woodcock, no nothing until we reached the far Thom corner where they heard a quail flush from within yards of us (I didn't. My hearing is becoming a real problem.) We followed south beyond the old log when I saw Quest appear to point and look birdy but can't count it. Cover is still dense - goldenrod and weeds - and I wasn't certain we hadn't crossed the pipeline, when I saw Belton on point ahead, doubled to the right so acutely I wasn't sure at first he wasn't having a moment! He held and I moved to him as fast as I could, losing sight of him behind some cover for a moment. It was obviously a woodcock with the bird almost under his nose, and I stood and waited while I dug took a couple of photos, moving closer. The flush - glory be - was a quail going out about 3 feet off the ground and in a wide right-angled angle. I saw my chance and fired, aware



THE FIRST POINT  
ON WILD BIRDS,  
DEEP IN GOLDENROD.

an event to remember as I fell asleep that night

Wednesday 23 October

Sunny, warm, windy  
2:40-5:20 } 3600.  
5:40-6:00 }

Bately  
mowed 1-1  
0

Bellin  
Quest

This was a glorious stage of color past the full flow, with isolated trees coming into their own, very few left, with roadside and understory now a sprinkling of gold and with sunset oaks forming the mass of foliage.

Drove the rough road to the bridge on Beaver Creek in Charles Killip's bottomland and up to the forks at the whetstone and parked. With some trouble, got both dogs to settle down enough to get started in the crabapple field that borders Beaver - hunting in corduroy shirt and vest, very comfortable in this sunshine. Bellin & Quest working well - with one ball on Bellin.

With my complimentary membership in the 1000 Acre Hunting Club, I had high hopes of action on all the game reported on this old Clyde Spiker place. Hunted the shady bottom up the tributary of Beaver that heads up at

Continued.

When nothing had materialized by the time we reached the draw up the Laurel hillside - hunting them Laurel almost all the way, below over-open woods on the ridge - as followed an old road trace to the top. There, in view of Betty's, building a stiff wind hit us with our sweat-soaked clothes that was like refrigeration. None of the old ones I remembered seemed to remain and to get out of the chilling wind, we again pitched to the bottom in masses of Laurel with no deer paths to follow.

Trying to work back downstream, I unraveled Laurel stems and branches ~~at~~ and at this, ~~the~~ I say called Groves!! It had flushed with us round from the steep Laurel hillside above and crossed the run, hidden from me by a mass of Laurel - the only bird we heard.

After a futile effort to cross the stream, we turned up the hillside and with Ray more optimistic about getting them at home it, we climbed that tangle of Laurel.

At the top, we kept within the woods for protection from the high wind, and hunted to the road from Betty's, following it down to the car. There we sat and rested - fatigue sets in with no motivation - and I decided to work the ~~area~~ <sup>area</sup> ~~over~~ <sup>over</sup> to the subject Beaver and Ray

would follow.

Mike and Jan Betty drove in and we found to check and hear that the quans were out along the ridge on the Grass River pass, where they over-  
threw with quans, including a "family" this summer. I hope they are right.  
Another disappointing day - beautiful time of year in empty courts.

~~~~~

Friday "The Glorious Twenty-Fifth" Upper Canaan

25 October  
Clear, sunny, mild 65°  
2:45 to 6:25 3 1/2 hrs.

moved 2-2  
0  
moved 7-7  
0

Bellon back

Quart 1 prod. (his 2nd)

After a rainy day yesterday, we drove to the Canaan and met Jeff Leach and Gabriella at their elaborate cabin on the brink of Canaan Mountain - glorious view - and after chatting and seeing Jake and Parker, found the old descending road (shades and memories of Mel Heath) to the floor of the valley - a good mile.

We had heard a barrage of shots and found an old car parked at the bottom. Sent Jeff & Gabriella north to parallel the tramroad grade and we hunted east till we found some aspen clumps. Bellon was working well out to one side but I came on Quart pointing in the edge of a small clump of cover - not high and hot, but almost contemplatively and immobile. I lay down and got a couple of shots while I waited in front, trying to hold my right arm in a good position to mount my gun. My right shoulder injured just a year ago, is giving me trouble.

The flush was low and out behind cover intertwining and I had no shot. Quart broke and Bellon, who had come in and backed under divers moved on. It was good to see game, and this was Quart's second point on



# 2 production

We followed but failed to refresh, but continued to hunt east-  
and-north, into succeeding clumps of aspen, almost all leafless now  
and colorless. Belton was working just in front of me but missed a  
woodcock that flushed a few feet to one side after he passed. There  
are holes - all of them.

We continued to hear blasts of shots - two men shooting at one  
bird - to the north, and one repeat to the far south.

In an open area I saw a flush crossing left from Belton's  
direction and remarked that it was another large woodcock - then  
recognized a small grouse with feathers laid back tightly and tail  
totally folded. Normally I might - or might not - have been quick  
enough for a fast shot - but with my shoulders and lack of confidence,  
I didn't even mount my gun.

We decided I should try to locate Jeff and get them into  
these aspen clumps with us and then left when I sat to eat a bit of  
chicken and both dogs followed Kay, not returning for some little time.

Once more with dogs, I hunted north into thicker now aspen  
cover at times, moving 2 more 'cock - as I was aware of as a shadow  
coming over me and, as I turned, ~~reflecting~~ <sup>the wild shooting ahead of</sup>

sway has had something to do with it, but I think the birds  
was exceptionally jumpy. (9)

The two men were hunting back toward me and on blast of 4 shots -  
they always get off 3 to 4 - was so close I could hear their voices, and  
Quest was attracted to them, and wouldn't come to me. Suddenly Bellon  
yelped, as the ducks, and I called to ask the two hunters if they had  
touched off a snipe collar. One of them came over, recognizing me and  
introduced himself as Allan Vanatter from Huntington. The other man  
- both bearded young fellows - was more interested in finding a 'cock  
that had flushed this way. They were all right - but typical.

The second one said a "woman" was calling me and I realized  
Kay was back. She had found Jeff and Gabriella and <sup>they</sup> was  
hunting me.

Once together, we hunted on out the open clumps & the  
marsh but were no doubt hunting stale ground after the other  
hunter - the Canadian is ~~more~~ private.

At 5 pm DST we turned back ~~and~~ <sup>still</sup> screamed by  
shots from the lucky two who were obviously shooting at wild flocks  
and both firing at each bird. We missed three more 'cocks with no  
shots. Parker had a snipe point that was empty, and Bellon had  
a hot one, also empty - clearly recent flocks. Jeff saw a grouse  
which Kay heard. Oddly, it was a gratifying experience even with no nests  
and only one point, but because the 'cocks were there in that grand  
place that was big and wild in spite of other hunters.

It would be good to hunt at another time. I saw a herd of road

cut across the valley as an extension of the descending road of  
Canaan Mt which could lead to more cover.

We climbed the long miles back up Canaan Mt. with the glorious  
Woodcock Morn <sup>presence</sup> ~~climbing~~ over Cabin Mt - it will be full in a few days -  
the sky cloudless and the damp smell of woods all about us. A  
good day. Orion and the Pleiades were climbing high behind us.

Stayed at their cabin for dinner and relaxation before driving home  
- arriving at 12:40. Feeling great, the Quest is found in her left breast,  
a chronic infection lately

I think most or all of the 7 'cock were hens, which casts doubt on  
them being locals, especially at this date.

The presence of other gunners is a bit annoying - especially  
with wild shooting, but in such large terrain it is not as critical  
as in home coverts of smaller size

Saturday 26 October  
sunny, clear, warm 65°  
3:30 - 6:15 - 2 3/4 hrs.

Bitely  
mixed 2 (new) - 2  
0

Beltor  
Quest

After our big trip yesterday we took this as an easy hunt, to  
try to find the abundance of grouse reported by the Bitelys. If you  
piled the two grouse, one on top of the other you might call them "thick"  
as described but that was it. We saw neither, and I heard one.

We started east along the torn-up road thru the old Ranger place,  
and Kay heard a grouse flush from Beltor's area (why can't he point  
more of them?) on the edge of the powerline. The right-of-way was  
dense with ~~thorns~~ brush and weeds and we ~~could~~ tried to follow



the forest, hunting below the straggle edge. (11)

This is beautiful cover, hanging with grapes and after Cavanaugh Valley, it looks grand. But unlike the flat Cavanaugh, the hillside is a floor of leaf-covered rocks and fallen branches and I walked on the side of my boot more often than on the sole.

There was a rough muddy, rocky bulldozed road up the side of the hill and we took it nearly to the top, finally hunting out to the small improvement in the straggle.

Coming out on top with a few trees still in color, we moved over into the top patch of woods where we once found birds.

Good grapes but no quince. We lunch on a log and then Ray took a pile of the logs and me with a "pink" tree in the evening

background.

Hunting over to what used to be good slashings - now grown out to ~~partly~~ more open woods - and hunted down to find the path I used to follow back down to the powerline. There was no trace of it and we went to the bottom in rhododendron and crossed the Padatanga run. The far side was more intermittent rhododendron but as we looked at every turn and had to climb the slope to the main road from Padatanga, now re-strengthened with heavy mine operation. A beaver dam had changed the valley and we ended at the place we used to park and walked the road down to the small run crossing. At this place, the road became pools of mud and we took the woods back on the lower side to the old henlock where the Ranger cabin used to stand. Forced to walk the edge of cover below the road, we heard the quince flash above the road. That was it. Disappointment.

12/185

The best moment of the day was on the Charles Kelly road just before we reached the turnoff to the bottom. Standing in the road, near a clump of hemlocks a lovely cock quinn was displayed with fan and ~~of~~ ruff spread. I got out to flush it and I think I could have walked up to it if I had tried. Instead, I ran at it to flush but it only ~~of~~ leaned ~~forward~~ forward, ruffs still erect, and ran into cover without lifting. At least a trace of the old magic remains.

Monday 28 October

Hartman

Belton: 1 prod

sunny to cloudy, cool, 60°

2:00 - 3 flushes

Quint: 1 back

2:30 - 5:15 / 2 3/4 km.

1 shot - 0

"The Day the Parakey Broke." I didn't expect to live to see it.

The gun appeared normal when I uncased it and loaded, and we worked thru dense weed growth at the pond and forgot bears to the old Lemox Road - lovely weather, and a lovely place with the expectation of a first day in a favorite covert. At the upper end we started down to the bottom in hope of finding a few woodcock in, and I opened the breach to ~~substitute~~ substitute a 2 3/4 - 1 1/2 - 8 1/2 woodcock load for the 3 - 1 1/2 - 7 1/2 shell in the right barrel. The breach lever opened with an odd feeling and then hung loose - "something that just isn't done, you know."

At seventy, a top lever leaf spring <sup>By fluke,</sup> has the right to metal fatigue but I still couldn't believe it. I <sup>had</sup> had a new wide rubber band on ~~the~~ her camera case and I looped it over the trigger guard and caught it around the top lever with enough tension to hold the lever into the closed position, and ~~prevented~~ ~~from~~

We were almost at the crossover and took it to the main road with both dogs hunting eagerly all the way back to the junction. There, in that lovely corner that gave us a grand memory we found nothing, as we've done in the last several seasons. It just doesn't often happen twice.

It offended my sense of taste to have the Purdy lever activated by a rubber band, like some battered Stevens might meet held together that way, but I did get me them the day. I hope it will be back to perfect order in a short while.

This event should have given us at least 3 or 4 green flashes. The hobby idiots who see every new season as "an upturn in game" are hard to fathom. — because there is no depth of thought.

Wednesday 30 October  
Cloudy, cool, 55°  
3:10 - 4:40  
4:55 - 5:40

2 1/4 hrs

WOODCOCK CORNER Conley

marked 1-2  
0

marked 1-4 flashes  
0

Hoyes Run

marked 1-1

Beltin  
Quest

Carried the Fox today with the Purdy action still at Melvin Forbes'. While it seemed noticeably more hooly, it did not seem so heavy after a while. We worked at new house on Woodcock corner (name: Meddoling) and wolf was vocal. Stated at north end and in clump of thorns where I shot a cock in 1978 with Raymond Jim, saw a hen flash toward us from Beltin and land nearby. Dogs had no pants though we flushed 7 three more times. Very dense goldwood and rather dry but seemed successful.

16/85

No contacts anywhere until toward south end of court Kay saw  
a quail sail over and land. Later, with no work on it by dogs,  
although they searched well, Kay ~~sensed~~ <sup>sensed</sup> a low flush. That was it.

Kay went for car while I hunted the east side of road up to south  
end, only to ~~see~~ <sup>see</sup> Kay walking road to me - found he keeps locked  
windy car!

We drove to Art Senter's area and started to hunt Hoge's Pen at  
4:55 and getting dark. Paused to talk to a Sanders who stopped to  
check on us (he has cattle on far side of Hoge Pen - not certain if  
he owns land) but he was pleasant enough.

We hunted east (I nearly breaking my cervical vertebrae  
coming up, under a horizontal branch on a thorn tree. Why are these  
always just below head-height? I blame the long visored orange cap  
I was wearing for obstructing view) and wallowed back  
down the bottomland. Heard a quail flush west from dense rhododendron  
and spruce cover along run. That was it. A not very nice day.

Where is the quail? ~~and what is the fun of this?~~

Just a year ago tomorrow that I injured my right shoulder.

~~---~~  
RAIN

Friday 8 November

Robert Harway

Bath 1 prod (17)  
1 back  
Quart 1 back

Sunny, clear, cold, windy, 40°  
(2:00 - 3:00)

Rehobeth Thomas

morning 2-4  
1 shot - 0

1 hr }  
1 3/4 } 2 3/4 hrs.  
(3:30 - 5:10)

Rain since November ~~10th~~ with resultant record flood kept us out of coverts. Today perfect. Would prefer to have gone to Canada but know it will still be under water.

Stopped at Mt. Storm Tavern & found a new barn built in covert #1. Talked to a boy, Jeff Henson, cutting firewood behind tavern who said he had seen a lot of woodcock on Robert Harway's place last week. It sounded like an idea and we drove there one mile on Rubin Main Road (which gets bad at that spot) and took a right fork back to Harway's. Robert Harway, a stocky man with a head like a ham, was hospitable and said to go ahead and try it.

We drove a long road back to an old barn, resurfaced, and packed, with good looking thorns on the far hillsides and in a hollow and with black Angus cattle adding to the charm for woodcock cover.

We got out of the car and into a wind that cut through to the bone. After adding clothes we cast dogs into hollow and took a washed-out farm road down. It proved to have been strewn with autumn olives on brink of a rough drop-off into stream bottom. That the dogs worked with no results. We climbed the pasture and crested toward the barn with excellent little spring cups and draws and good scattered thorn/hickory cover but no 'cock. Crested to far side and back farm road to the car. Good thorns on slope above and alders but with no birds in far we reached the car and drove to Rehobeth.

The timber loading operation is still on at Rebooth but 18/88  
the workmen were gone when we arrived at 3:30.

Still windy and cold. No action on first thorn, nor on far  
thorn or in case to the west along pipeline. At end of 1st week  
in November the cock should be here, if at all. Hunted to woods road  
and across to south woods and ~~back~~ out to hedgerow cover where Belton  
reached out a lot with but I found him on point well ahead at an  
isolated thorn in the clearing. He held beautifully ~~but~~ I reached  
him and saw Quest come sailing in and stop at my Hold! I lay  
got to Belton and got photos. She stayed but I went  
back to back woods thing I wrote in both days this ~~year~~  
in 'cock.

The bird held tight and finally Kay moved a step in and it  
flushed out my way - wonderful break - and went away -  
left wide open. Instead of my normal smooth mount, my gun  
stopped below eye level and I awkwardly tried to recover and  
fired from obviously locked barrels at the bird well out. It  
settled to the ground and both Kay & I that I'd hit. But as the  
dogs raced to it (I can't blame them) it lifted and flew to the  
cover on the north near the car.

This has been my experience on all 4 shots (1 gun - 3 'cocks) -  
this season. I can dry-mount the gun in spite of both shoulder injuries,  
but on actual shot I seem to lock up, with the ~~my~~ 8-year-old  
left shoulder injuring the most troublesome in getting the gun up.  
As a result I am blindly poking with no relation to the bird.

It is bitterly disappointing after my full-summer exercise (19) mounting the heavy Fox. There are two choices. Quit quizzing or keep trying and I'm not sorry to quit. It's important to keep in mind that it is not a fault in my ability to shoot.

We swung north into the cover I call my "winning cover" and I saw a 'cock (a male) flush over me high, coming from Quest's direction. We followed and both dogs failed to find, from not being in the right place. I walked into the bird which flushed into the ground shy toward the big clearing.

We came on Quest on point where I expected it. He has an odd way on 'cock points. He seems to just ease into them as tho' the scent had come to him in the air - no intensity as on training ground. His head is high and low tail level. Not great style but he is staunch.

Belle looked this point with Kay on hand, but it proved empty - I think the 'cock had lifted ahead before Quest got scent, which would account for this lack of fire.

We circled to where #1 had flushed near car but had no contact. That was it. Disappointing no game. Part the day was lovely and the country big. And a hot storm swept in a clear way began to flame as we topped Backbone Mountain on the way home.

Saturday 9 November

Cloudy, warm, 60°  
2 hrs.

The Graveyard Glade

Belle  
Quest

We hoped to find one or two quizes (what a commentary) and a chance of woodcock, and no hunters on a Saturday. This time we drove in the lane and parked at the old cemetery.

Kay is using the movie camera again but as in the past 20/85  
few years — and the reason she stopped — the action consists solely  
of taking the start of each hunt. Today she got the cut-off as we  
started back the lane and hunted the good dinner even at the west end.

In the swamps we discovered new cutting on the north side of the run —  
what should be good cover, but found nothing. We heard distant shots  
— possibly rabbit hunters — and had no way of knowing they had not  
been through this cover earlier. Saturday is no way to hunt.

We heard voices of youngsters and Kay saw a group of half a  
dozen in the edge about us. We doubled back to the car, following  
log and drag roads then excellent cover. I have always noticed  
that the woods will take you — leading you by way of what  
openings are present, and we ended up on the road to Mrs. Mearns'.  
We saw a nice new cabin — large — in the bottom below.

At the car we found the group Kay had seen to be a  
two- couple group with children — not hunters — all from Ohio —  
Mrs. Mearns' grandson.

The day was warm and becoming muggy as clouds lowered,  
and with no action, as we were about to give up and go home. But  
I thought what a fool I would be if there was woodcock in that  
excellent alder cover in the big swamp, and so after eating, we  
walked out to the east end of the ridge. I wish I had not.

To avoid the big field with cattle we climbed the  
fence — even the tombstones are fenced in here — and  
sought them the crabapple thicket on the left. Crabapple trees  
has a way of intertwining with dead stuff and I know of no  
worse cover to try to hunt



at the far end we cut across a corner of soldenwood field, (21) and to my the chuff of dead soldenwood was like a snowstorm in your face — and came to under built strong, horse-high, hog-tight fence. at our side a new three-strand electric fence invited a try and I was about to cross when I sensed at my touch a slight electric impulse, insulated by my rubber boots and gloves.

My tried to get Quest under the big space at the bottom but he made contact with his back and got a terrific shock — or so he said. I had difficulty getting him over it. I had had enough, so we got Belton back there to ~~our~~ <sup>us</sup> ~~side~~ under the non-electric fence at our side and then hunted down to the swamp at the bottom and back past the white pine ~~stand~~ <sup>stand</sup> — beautiful big trees — and up the field to the car. We eased the climb by estimating the yardage 270, not 300, as I had guessed.

The fact that I have concentrated on the details about says something about a season when there is nothing else to write about. Another empty day in another empty season that is a wind-down to my 61 seasons of quacking for gowen. The term should be hunting-for. This is the poorest quack population of all.

Friday 15 November

Cool, cloudy, 54°  
3:15-5:35 / 2 1/2 hrs.

Och Frankhouser

o

Belton  
Quest

An old forest, still in good stages of regrowth after timbering.

a place named for a stupid man who had no quality. This is the "Club" — and this is number two. Disappointment. Parked at old road near Daisy Radle's and found the cover above the road imperceptibly after

clearcutting, which has not yet worn me over. Had to go back 22/85  
to car and drive down to old Frankbaum house - a ruin and a monument  
as such to the little son of a bitch.

Found the bullrush field larger than I had that but we took the farm  
road down halfway to a dense thicket that should have held game. It didn't,  
and it was all we could do to fight them off. No good cover along bottom, and  
when I lay took the edge, the dogs and I worked the cover - down slanting -  
bottom type that was empty.

at north edge of the big bullrush field, we skated more  
impenetrable cover and came to extension of the farm road thru woods,  
with Daisy Duke land above and Club land forest below. This also  
looked good but dense cutting on lower side kept us from the stream, which  
I had hoped to hunt.

The woods road led us to the north end of woodland and  
within 80 yards of Rt 48 with its roar of traffic. We doubled west but  
came to more old field game to goldenrod, which is head high this year and  
gives off snowstorms of chaff when you walk thru it.

Stopped for lunch on a log near a number of "strange" oaks,  
that grow here and on far side of the stream on Scott place. Don't remember  
this tree <sup>in</sup> any other places.

It was 4:40 and threatening to grow dark early. We decided to  
hunt the east ridge back and moved up the edge to middle level and  
started south on rough rocky footing. I had been in non-agony  
with every step, from my much spasm associated with my back  
and going thru this footing with no hope of moving a bird was  
sheer boredom. This woods is too far past good cover but if there

was never present, they'd be here. !!!

at south end we came to the property line and never  
started over running from bottom to top of hill. An attempt to push a  
way thru proved hopeless, and with light fading, we worked up to  
a cleared field grown to high weeds and took it across to the  
big field that led to the car - a welcome sight in near-darkness -  
no more "overcast covert," and I'm getting sick of them -  
a big Zero. This is the worst season in my 61 years of gunning  
game.

Thursday 21 November

Donald Meyer's Thorns

Belted

partly cloudy cool, 43°

marked 2-2  
0

Quart

3:15 - 4:45 / 1 1/2 hrs.

My back problem has discouraged hunting some of the few  
mice days, and today, as a sort of walk with the gun, we went to the  
covert as a place where I could stay on a road.

We parked at east end and within minutes I saw a mouse and  
saw a grouse flush toward us in cover below road, no doubt from Belted.  
I neither heard nor saw it. We doubled the dogs back along the  
high wall edge but didn't rebait.

I was in misery from a foul condition caused by the  
medication and diet I was following for my back and at west  
end I wanted which I saw hurried back to get the car and paper.

One of those unpleasant moments that take you in the woods.

We went up to the upper level and both dogs moved out  
too wide ahead. Got them back, and started in the old grown-up  
hillside road and almost immediately flushed a grouse - very close  
and loud on my right among crabapple thorns. I only heard it,  
very distinctly, but I also saw it and marked it as going east.

Both dogs had found part within 15 feet of the end and had not been aware of it.

at the east end of Thomas on the border of the new bed area, I was pretty sure to a start and go intense at the presence of the dog and found. It was a certain place for our bird and I searched out the most open workings for a shot that never materialized. I think the bird must have left ahead of us. Why do dogs get their ability points and find to point birds that are present?

That was it. Temperature was dropping and we had gone rather than stay for lunch, cooling the top of the Thomas with no more action. No sign of haws or weather this year; they were hanging full in haw last season.

A short hunt, not bad missing 2 scans but I had no chance to even try a shot. These days when I am not feeling up to par, I wonder if it is worth coming out. My back is proving a real problem this time. Rainy weather has also wiped out much of November.

Quest took a short rabbit chase and started after a deer today.

Friday 29 November

Mrs. Banker

Belton

Drizzle letting up, cool 45°

• 1-1  
0

Quest

2 hrs.

First drive to the Fisherton court the Dellinger deer hunter told about (10 grouse). Found that high country in a cloud and drizzle. Also looked unpromising as to cover but there could be something down in the valley. Drive to Mrs. Banker and get started out the road about 3 pm. Passed 2 hunters driving out as we went in and it's possible they were road hunting and disturbed birds, if any. Their car tracks were on all the old roads.

My severe back condition has been uncertain but I found walking not painful and we hunted out the road to edge of Mrs Brink's cabin thru damp conditions that should have been perfect. Both dogs tended to wear out after their long confinement due to rain. We hunted up poplars to a rock road made by drilling exploration - thru excellent cover - grasses - patches and back to poplars. Returned to crest of ridge and took the woods back parallel to main road to the car.

Below road at last ten minutes as thought we heard a flush that could have been Bittern showing his ears. No view of bird.

Disappointment

|                        |               |                  |
|------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Saturday 30 November   | <u>Hunted</u> | Bittern 1 heard. |
| cool, cloudy damp, 48° | about 5-7     | Quail 2 back.    |
| 2pm - 5:15 / 3/4       | 0             |                  |

Yesterday was only day possible in my 5-day session but we took matter into our own hands and hunted today anyway.

Departed at young Mac's and found the old road choked with tree-top slashings, impossible to walk thru. Once beyond this, we heard a ground flush from about near both dogs - no view.

At ledge of rocks where the road lifts out we saw a ground flush from where Quail was - bird rose and uttered note. Followed and had reflex as Bittern walked into it - they heard it.

At old "orchard" corner, Bittern swung into a hot point but held only for a moment as it was empty. Why can the dog point hold on simple situations and bump when bird is present?

We took old road part ~~clearings~~ George Bird Evans Papers and all the way if the south ~~clearings~~ West Virginia and Regional History Center with no action.

a nice climb and pitch but too far for a shot. Key and both  
dogs were stopped but can't say it was a point. We worked to  
the descending path and stopped to eat. 26/85

after starting out to go down the stream valley, I  
caught my foot on the milliarth double-noted rubus stem and  
at the popping sound, Key heard a flush to our right.  
Betta came in and lost scent, pointing beautifully with  
Quart lacking - but lost after the fact on #4.

Going down slope toward the lower ledge, as saw  
Betta at a distance below pointing, and Quart lacked. Key  
felt she heard the flush, making a production by estimate."  
at bottom we followed about a disapplying deer path  
that will soon be obliterated to the brinks of the ledge below.

I saw Betta but scent about 45 yds ahead and saw Quart  
coming lacking but then so on. When Quart reached the spot  
he got fragment, working ground scent into rhododendron to  
the right of where Betta had shown sign. Both dogs were still  
working ground scent when the ground went out a few yards from  
them and pitched over the ledge. Both dogs knew there was scent  
present - but scent - why didn't they point? We count this  
a reflection of #5.

We worked the bottom by road felling now with small  
bushes to the main log road - a long distance - and took the  
latter to the Hards. Had to bypass the washings and found the  
path down to Fisher Run and the trailer house. On the way I stopped  
on a dead snag - probably not looked as big as by bank a  
mile off? This day was unusually dark and cloudy all the  
time we were out. Typical November 30 in Pa.

Monday 9 December

Walkum Hollow

Bellin

(27)

Cool, partly sunny

seen 2-3 flocks

Quest

2:45-5:30 / 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> hrs.

0

First day after deer season. Snow well gone, damp, good conditions. Hunted up bottom path, then up old hillside trail to top at end of stripmining with no birds.

Working back east along top road, we heard and saw a grouse flush near small pondline, flushing toward corner of big pondline. Learning they, I doubled back along top edge of woods into the jumble of rocks and saw the grouse flush back to its original area, going up until before dogs reached it. Its first flush appeared on its own with no dogs near and fully 80 yards from me. Am working dogs without bells, because of nervous grouse this year.

Returned to flag and ate lunch on a boulder in the pondline right-of-way with best view to north. We had a late start and with time running out, hurried over top of cover and down thru near thorns to bottom path and back down the hollow, west.

Partway past pondline, we heard Bellin's Verbeek's Thrush and moving up, saw the grouse flush down and across path to other side of hollow, but about 70 yards from me.

That was it. Two grouse far from gunshot, no points that we saw, tho Bellin could have pointed the third bird before it went into the above fern. Disappointing. They looked out to last, walking.

Monday 16 December

Falkenstein (west)

28/185

cold, snow on ground, 34°

Bellin

Quint

2:45 - 5/2  $\frac{1}{4}$  hr.

Plan to hunt with Preston Harper near Tormally was dropped when day proved so cold. Instead, we tried Little Sandy across from our land, parking above Rm of Ruttie's.

On the way down the old Nemesis Mill road, Quint came to us with a doe's head in a beautiful retreat and delivery. Poor boy has to take what he can get.

We made nothing all afternoon. Saw tracks of a large Turkey and a smaller one, with scratches, but not a trace of grouse tracks. Cover too open, but good hemlock / rhododendron cover, and excellent grassy tangles and scrapes on ground, about the Frankhouser place, but no grouse. The exercise was good but too much disappointment. Grand view south & west from top field.

Monday 23 December

Little Sandy North

Bellin

Quint

Snow on ground, melting, 35°

cloudy, damp

2:45 - 5:00 / 2  $\frac{3}{4}$  hr.

We seem to get out only on Monday. This was the 7th count in which we made no grouse.

Saw no tracks of snow on way up past the cabin. Quint found a deer hide and made a handmade, prom retreat just above the cabin. The only action of the day but it helped him.

This day had perfect conditions 35°, damp, quiet, but the land is barren. Cover ideal. One thing could have affected it - the lack of logs - the fresh all-terrain vehicle tracks that came down the valley (probably Raymond Seave on



two trap line. But there were also fresh tracks of at least 2 more (29) coming down off the hill of Buddy Shufis land and hunting dead of us all the way up, but no dog tracks also old tracks that looked like last Saturday. The place is evidently hunted hard.

We followed fresh track tracks from the old ad contact area that I think was James Seese getting firewood down below the A.C. old house. We worked up the hill at that place to the house, seeing 2 rabbits - or one time - but no grouse tracks.

After eating lunch sitting on a stack of firewood, we headed west as it grew darker (as always get late starts) and came to grouse tracks, fresh, on edge of big field at front of woods. First got very hot ground - trailing the tracks, backwards, of course. Dogs always do. Better out about made 2 grouse prints, but we heard no grouse - perhaps the tracks.

The cover on this flat or up is perfect, grassy tangle and low woods growth but only the set of empty tracks at the powderline we ran into some of the same tracks hunting everywhere. Now, the predator. Had hope of seeing something on the powderline working down but hope was all it was.

Out to the car at near dark. The moon light set us out. On the way in, just above the cabin a big red fox slipped from the stream edge into the big boulders on the left, having let the dogs pass him. I had nothing against the fox, it is the man I resent in here. (My back improved.)

Saturday 28 December

Mason Run

Beltin  
Quest

30/185

Cold, sunny, lovely 26°  
snow on ground,  
2:45-5: / 2 1/4 hrs

moved 1-1  
0

My 79th Birthday. I can't see any difference in the way I feel than at 59, other than my health is better now. But ah, the differences in the ground.

A lovely day, blue-sky sunny, cold, with 4" of snow on everything. Colder than is normally found in but we dressed warmly and made it beautifully. Decided to try the Paul Uphold country but had to go via McElroy and just beyond there, but a deep drift condition, broken down by traffic but too deep to risk with the Suborn which began to work sideways in the deep snow. Tracked out and drove to Remondville and to the Wellman road, well broken and used. Parked at top of first hill and hunted out the spruce planting "development." Saw tracks of our quinn at far end.

Hunted north to hardwoods and out to log top field in corn stalks with some left standing on lower edge. Lots of turkey tracks when the birds had been using corn. At east end of field we came to excellent quinn cover with a few quips still hanging. Deep working well but a bit wet after long layoff, especially Quest. A sudden emotion above us evolved into

a flock of turkeys that came over ridge in two and three  
with much cawking, loudly whets as grouse would to give me,  
until twelve or fifteen had sailed down over tops of trees to valley  
below. at least the dogs got a little action! I made a dry  
swing in one and think, had they been grouse, I'd have done well.

On top, we came to the old Mitchell house, log with clapboards  
falling off. I hadn't remembered it, curiously, other than to know a  
house had been there.

It was too cold to stop for lunch, and we kept going down onto  
north slope, hoping to reach the bottom - further down I remembered,  
and not promising to stay with the moderate wind would block from east.

We kept to old log road traces toward the Wellheim road - ever  
really too open now, not good enough for the birds had birds been  
here.

Quest was having his first experience with ice balls in his pass -  
why is it <sup>almost</sup> always the front feet? and as a result was moved to a  
fair range. Balto was hunting conscientiously in good range.

We came to within sight of the Wellheim road but clear out of  
the cleared hollows ~~and~~ swaths leading to the spruce on top. at  
the top when we came to our tracks coming in, we had a grouse flock -  
sound only - out of the dense spruce tops. That was all but it gives  
way one left. Why can't there be a few grouse? at least we had the  
count to ourselves on a Saturday, with no human tracks, and anyway,  
that is something. at least a few reaching on the way 79th.

Monday 30 December  
Clear, sunny, cold 29°-30°  
2:30 - 5:00 / 2½ hrs

Little Sandy South on Top

mixed 2-2 flocks

Belton  
Quint

32/85

Drifted back roads forced us to seek coverts accessible from paved roads, and we chose this one. It is good cover.

There were both truck tracks and footprints all the way. The truck seemed to have gone clear to the Ward Crane's place (shortcut to avoid drafts?) but not today. The footprints from tracks of a parked car at paved road looked fresh and could have been today in a.m. - Few coverts aren't hunted by other people these days. The DNR thinks fewer birds mean less hunting!!

There was no signs of grouse tracks all the way climb to the top. The grouse still goes up even after you top out.

In the uppermost cover, the only grouse was as found turkey tracks. If only we had as many grouse. Suddenly a grouse plopped down in the snow in front and to my left, stood with fan fanned, then seeing me, ran under and through a big tangle of grass and flushed, giving me a blink-of-the-eye glimpse that could not have been a shot. I think it had come down from the slope but oddly had not made a long flight.

I called Kay, who was on the field edge and she made her way to me. Just before she reached me, another grouse flushed above us - more sound but not too far from us. Why aren't my dogs pointing some of these? And are they flushing others ahead of us? something that seems unlikely because we don't see tracks.

Both birds had flushed east and with the dogs as follows to the far edge and brink of hill with no retractions. We turned south on top and hunted the excellent grassy cover to the end, in sight of the James Spoker house & barn below.

Turning back, we hunted just under the hilltop, jumping to eat lunch on a log, cleared of its snow. Looking north we could see the edge of our white pine top woods on the Foreman line.

We hunted all the way back, still walking on the foot tracks of whomever covered this place before us. No action until we had come down the road nearly to the highway, when I saw a quail alert, then chase what had to ~~be~~ have been a flock from the big open hardwoods above - unlikely place. I don't count this as a bird record. We neither saw nor heard it - from circumstances evidence but a bird seen so. However it was much like my seen on the edge of the highway, not during our hunt. A good luck and experience, but, ~~my God, what poor sport~~ <sup>or</sup> dog work.

Thursday 2 January - Hensbeel Pellin  
partly cloudy sun, cool, 44° mixed 4 (2 new) - 4 Quail  
1 shot - 0  
2:30 - 5:30 / 3 hrs. Due to snow conditions we took the road to Gibbons' Glade and Fast Fades. Back to the one covert I know that has a few grouse. But again today we were following ~~no~~ boot prints, probably yesterday's. Whoever was there, knew the covert so well as I.

Snow so deep at this elevation, about 5" or 6" and frozen wherever it has been tramped, although it was softening today.

We started in by the path from the trailer below. Sat. 3/24/85  
to avoid the brush piles that fill the beginning of the usual  
road.

The forest quail flushed from a nest who had perched into  
shrubland at the fork of the lower and the straight paths,  
a flush that occurred as I must have lowered my gaze to set my  
footing. I saw it only as a disappearing flash of the  
under surface of the quail's wings disappearing into dense hemlock  
cover on the right. I count this a new bird this season.

We took the uphill path in the direction of the flush but  
knew the bird had angled back. Letting deer tracks lead us, we  
worked up the hill and started the rock ledge where it pays  
into the hill and then swung to the clearing and path intersection  
on the level.

We followed the middle path that leads along the bank  
of the hill and back into the cover we usually traverse in the  
opposite direction. Standing under a hemlock tree I spoke to  
I say, vaguely feeling it might flush a bird if a bird were there.  
It was and it did, but only as sound over our heads, the bird  
going back east.

The path took us around the flat to the ascending log road  
from the top clearing, and we walked up to that clearing and  
paused for lunch. I say took a couple of portions of the dogs  
and me.

It was a pleasant day to be out ~~at the~~ - but the  
George Bird Evans Papers - West Virginia and Regional History Center

clouds <sup>were</sup> moving in and closing over when we started out again, following the deer trail down to the bottom trees to the west. (35)

In a small opening at the bottom - having again come into the ubiquitous boot prints that we had followed most of the way from the start, I stopped with the dogs somewhere to my left front. There was a loud flush in the dense thicket below me and I stared, hoping for a view of the bird showed in my direction. It crossed an opening rising right- quartering and I got the gun up and fired as it topped the thicket about 35 yards and waited for that wonderful fall that didn't come. I had at last managed to fire a shot but while I had the gun at the right spot I had the feeling I was not into the stock and my ~~gun~~ shot over it.

My shoulders, in spite of daily dry-mount practice, are not functioning smoothly. I think I have discovered that something from the correct "under-elbow tuck," I have too little power to get the gun to my cheek, something I have been experiencing in way that I've tried this year (only 2 on grouse, 3 on 'cack). I hope to overcome this by starting the mount from a looser and lower position to lift the gun with more momentum.

Shooting, I am convinced, is basically something we enjoy when it proves to ourselves that we can do it well. And I have not had that pleasure in 3 years, thanks to my Virginia Regional Historical Center.

Both Belter and Quert seemed to be on the spot at the nest and I can't say neither had been printing - without the bells, their locations are not certain at all times, but at least the flesh and shell gave them a hint. I can't say I had the second new one today.

We missed the path I wanted to take back but took a lower trail to the bottom clearing where we used to eat lunch. Again we saw water footprints - it looked like two sets but saw no dog tracks. Think they are here yesterday, New Year's Day.

We followed the trail down to the brink of the rock ledge above the bottom creek path and had signs of a flush from Quert's flush and action - no sound. This is the one we put up here on our other hunt in here.

That was it, except that on the way to the intersection we saw more ground tracks, old and new, making about 8 sets seen today, some of which could have been duplicates.

It was a good day to be out, good exercise and a few birds, good dog work re hunting, no points, and a disappointing miss, but at least a shot (my second at a grouse at 1000 yds.) The Fayette County game expires this Sat. and we want to back. I am disillusioned with the evidence of other hunters in here - part of what they print out about predators and hunters searching out every last pocket of birds.



Stone Cabin, where we ate, sitting on the edge of the beautiful stream, whose 6-foot open channel between thick ice looked clear and lovely.

After lunch we climbed the old road from the no-longer bridge we drove across our foolhardy for-off day. The memories in here, the birds that used to be!

On top the Ray Guthrie flat - gorgeous cut-over Thicket with small hemlocks and crab thorns, I saw Quest flourish, and start off as they at a flush. Such reactions are no doubt at a bird's lifting but I can't count them too certainly. We took one of the old log roads and covered the area well, seeing one set of scaven tracks.

Is it a flush, if you don't see or hear it?

We discovered a large area of clearcut Thicket on the north side of the flat - excellent cover but rough. On the old rutted road, I saw Quest standing, looking into a dense tangle of vines and tangle brush on the right, his bloody-tipped tail flagging and gradually going solid on a high headed point. While I lay to take a photo, I crept around to the north into hellish blackberry thorns and to his front. I lay finally parked in front Quest but there was no bird. Quest held beautifully and finally moved in. Better had refused to know, the ~~finder~~ Boulder, and was working on out. They almost had to have been a scaven,

but, again, you can't count it.

Saturday 4 January

Och Frankhamer

Belton

Cool, cloudy, 43°

Ray Guthrie

Quart

3:00 - 5:30) 2 1/2 hr.

Snow partly gone.

This day gave me a curious pleasure that overbalanced the frustration. Seduced by the report of 10 to 12 grouse flushed in the last day of deer season, we returned to the Frankhamer place and hunted the southern end, parking at the bend of the road near the old deserted house.

There is excellent grouse cover almost throughout, with slashings and brushpiles that seemed perfect for such a day with reducing snow cover. Most snow today was at the morning stage that invites grouse tracks, had the grouse been there.

The Och Frankhamer land is big and rough with deep ravines and old farm roads thru the cut-over woods. Both dogs worked hard, Belton giving me excellent coverage. His range is becoming more comfortable and he is checking with me. Quart requires the duck collar to keep him in but he covers ground well.

There was no trace of birds on the Frankhamer place. We retraced the old road from Ray Guthrie's to Jimmy Guthrie's that we used to walk. There is a small cornfield beyond this, and later I learned that the 8 to 10 (reduced) grouse moved had been in the thicket above this field, no doubt herded there by the deer hunters.

We didn't cover this corner but should have moved some of them in the good hemlock cover along Little Sandy that we hunted to the

Saturday 11 January

Cool, sunny, quiet 40°  
snow in patches

2:45 - 5:45 / 3 hrs.

(-15 talking to Jim Nester)

Ray Butcher

moved to new - 11 flocks

0

Belted 1 prod

Quest ~~1 prod~~ 1 prod. last prod!  
groove!

(41)

This was an old-timely day, no shots but the kind of action that makes gunning a pleasure. Weather perfect, with <sup>only</sup> patches of snow remaining, but icy underfoot in places.

Walked out the old road from Daisy Rudes, stopping to talk with Jim Nester and Peter Ruth cutting forward. Dogs working too wide from experience.

In the corner of greenbrier (border on it) near the "Fox Corner" the dogs found (and must have flushed) the grouse that flushed back north on the skyline toward a hedgerow of long trees. We pushed into the tangle to follow, only to have the dogs punt out both birds before us could get there. The dogs rule out much shooting for me by working too wide and carelessly, yet I know they will point on many occasions. One bird cut west on the road, the other south from where it had come.

We circled from the east edge and was entering a log road through low brush when we saw our bird cross ahead, flushing Jim Belton, and out of gunshot. This is the story of my hunting anyway, what few grouse we may go out beyond range and almost never flushed by my dogs. They remind me they don't get enough contact with grouse to learn, or at least to settle down.

We couldn't follow into the dense clearcut slash where the bird went, so continued to the Fox Corner.

A short distance down the west road, Belton went on point on the edge of <sup>2</sup> unstable thicket, solid but curiously with a low tail. Quest backed him, or so it seemed, but did not face him.

Instead, he pointed toward the thicket. ~~Stunning~~ ~~man~~ ~~was~~ ~~used~~ ~~to~~

Later when we saw Kay's photo I realized this was a productive point!!  
almost under my hand scent, too. I crept ahead and toward 42/85

Peltus' hand and the grouse shot me only a flash when I was going  
flash, too brief to mount the gun.

We followed into the thicket (this is where the Nestor's would  
they moved 10 or 12 in deer season) and shortly we saw fresh tracks of  
a young grouse and I say exclaimed that a grouse crossed left-to-right  
a few yards in front of me. I had no notion it had happened, and all I  
can think is that the bird flushed (silently, I say said) about the line of  
my cap's visor. Who has happened to me before.

We crept up the hillside to the old road and again the bird flushed  
without my seeing it, in much the same way, going back toward the  
Fox house.

Following the flush down into the thicket, I heard a grouse flush  
about me and turned to see it going back to the house, showing in the  
opening above us. Kay dropped and mounted (successfully in spite of  
the shoulder) and swung ahead and pulled on a locked trigger.

I had failed to push up the safety!! When I got a chance I fluffed  
it. I had a feeling when I mounted that I was shooting over  
Kay's crowded form and I can only guess I did it out of form.

With 2 grouse in the same direction and the second of the first ones  
also running up there, we hunted back and down the "bridge" road  
with no action. Stopping to eat at 3:45, we heard a barrage of shots that  
seemed close but I think was across the creek - about 8. There had been  
an occasional shot on the far side, but this sounded as the common  
- 2 or 3 men was into turkeys out of season. There were turkey tracks all over  
our route. 90% of hunters in the woods are turkey hunters.

We circled the top hoping to relocate our birds but did not. (43)  
and finally went back to the corner and out the diagonal log road ~~to~~  
and back, then up the main road and into the big field on top and to  
the edge of thicket where Kay had marked the #1 band today.

Once more we returned to the corner and again circled the  
corner on the Ray Guthrie flat - all good but rough - and again toward  
the "hedge" road. Just before we got there, I saw a grouse flushed  
right-to-left across in front of me and again unseen by me. I  
fail to see too many - Why?

at the corner (how many times was it there today?) we  
took the main road north toward the car. Beyond the place where  
the "hedge" intersects the road over, a grouse flushed  
from Dalton who was working there - again too far ahead to see  
me a shot - and as saw it patch down over the open field  
into the good cover in the bottom.

We called this #6 for 11 flocks. Counting very conservatively,  
it could have been the #1 bird returned from its ~~first~~ flush  
across the road. Likewise the #5 bird I hadn't seen, could have  
been one of the #3 & #4 birds, in which case, we only mark  
4 today instead of the 6 we counted. But you can't count birds  
so closely you wear their feathers off and I think we deserve  
6 today.

It was a fine afternoon - 11 flocks in 3 hours - and some  
of I fluffed the one chance and didn't get a shot. It was good

To the dogs and I say and me to hunt this ground covert and  
feel there was birds there. 44/88

We saw boot prints that could have been yesterday's but only  
in one place near the corner, and from where?

Thursday 16 January Charles Kelly  
beautiful, sunny, cool 43° moved 1-1  
0

Bella  
Quest: ~~1~~ <sup>2</sup> and <sup>11</sup> quest quest <sup>100</sup>

2:30 - 3:35 } 2 hrs. Hawdershell  
4:15 - 5:15 } moved 2-2  
0

We tried to find the grass Pat DeLong reported in the autumn  
dive plantings. Packed at beaver pond and hunted north in the  
plantings - barrier of beavers this <sup>time of</sup> year, and somewhat mean to  
push through. Near the Kelly gate we gave up and crossed the  
county road to the upper side and, climbing to the top, walked the  
upper woods around to the Beaver hole valley and down to an old  
stratification road and back to the main road.

On the way, a grouse sailed down from above and  
just missed Kay. The birds always reveal themselves to Kay and after  
I pass. I say I should let her walk in front!

I have <sup>no</sup> farther <sup>in</sup> the Kelly place anymore.

We got <sup>in</sup> the car and drove to Paul Upholds, only to find Bill  
Hawdershell there. It seems he is always there. While we talked to  
Paul, there was a shot behind us and a grouse sailed across the  
road and into the cover on the north side. We parked and had the dog

down and hunted into the area but couldn't find it. Found footprints 45  
when the other man had been earlier.

This is excellent cover — good grassy edges and a long  
cleared slash below the field. We found the old log road and hunted it  
west to the powdermill, seeing a couple of grouse tracks on the way.  
On the far side of the powdermill, I came to two very fresh grouse tracks  
moving into the thicker left side. We had both heard a faint rump of a flush.  
Quest came back to me and I waved him in and  
immediately he pointed, very solid.



QUEST'S ~~FIRST~~ <sup>SECOND</sup> PRODUCTIVE OAS GROUSE

I moved to a semi-opening to the right while Kay took a photo,  
then moved closer for a second photo, and the bird went out over the  
powdermill, unseen by either of us. It was a grand experience, something  
it's been waiting for so long. It seems incredible that we should have  
to wait until this second season for this — an example of how  
rarest grouse have been. But when it came, Quest handled it like  
a veteran, solid, positive and with a high head and style.

46/185

Part of the good part was that when I waded him into cover, the  
game was there, like the old days with Brian. And this point was  
Brian coming back to me.

We pushed thru the edge between pines and across to the dense  
woods beyond with Quest, and now Trotter, working intently.

We pulled back on our tracks coming in, and then out  
up the large field to the top, even when we again encountered bad points -  
they are everywhere this year - but had not further contacts.  
Back at the car with a fiery red ball of sun in the west.

Only two grouse in here and they but sounds. But it was a  
grand day - a red letter day in our lives. Quest, who  
lately has not been too prompt in following signals to go into  
cover, went in at the first wave of hand every time I motioned to  
him after his point. Good.

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Thursday 20 February  
beautiful day, sunny mild

56°

Matthews Place

moved 1-1

0

Belton

Quest

(47)

3 hrs

3:00 - 6:00

The first beautiful day for a week, the first hunting day for a month, the first hunt in our old favorite covert.

Hunted from back of Humberon house (a new house built on top) and kept below the brink of the top field edge to avoid any east wind. This is still good cover but no good. Found ourselves hunting a flat that seemed unfamiliar and uniform growth.

Quest went on point and held staunchly, that glorious high head reaching and reaching. Tail at choppy level. Belle came in and refused to back (jealousy) and moved in, with her bird, which proved his thesis, but Quest held until I walked in and finally sent him on. The dog is hungry for birds to point.

I came to the rhododendron on the Esoutrout place and realized I had come through the good corner when we used to find so many grouse without ~~the~~ recognizing it.

We hunted down to the rhododendron crossing - still the same - and up to the top and onto the Matthews land - still good cover - and passed to eat at 4:00 pm.

After lunch we hunted west on the ridge path - no birds - and down to the back field, full of pink coars and a pink track. Before lunch had heard a series of regularly spaced reports, that at first sounded like heavy ~~stamps~~ <sup>of the nest</sup> but it continued for so

long and so regularly as decided it was light starting - but 48/85  
what and when? It ended before us the lunch.

We decided to push on down to the good cover on the flat and  
Belton recognized it when we got there. Both dogs worked nicely in line.  
I had check collar on Quest all day and he did well most of the time.  
Belton is giving me more comfortable raps this year than ever before.

Halfway out the middle path I saw Quest in front and  
remembered that he was having a movement. He was squatting in the  
normal manner but his head was high, and as I watched, his  
shoulder rose portaway erect, but still down in lock, his tail  
with a floppy top very low but ramrod straight, and I  
realized he was pointing. Whether it had been a bowl movement,  
we never determined. Kay moved to him while I walked forward on  
the path. Belton came in and was going to stand in front but I stopped  
him on a backpoint by command and, surprised! he held. Kay had  
stayed Quest's tail and took two photos. There was no grouse, but  
then certainly was grouse scent and hot. Quest, again, was reaching  
with that beautiful head as high as his neck would stretch.

He held loyally, and so did Belton, until I sent them on.

We hunted out the flat and turned back on the north edge and  
I heard a grouse flush. What hearing! I miss all the sounds even  
with <sup>my</sup> hearing aid.

That was it. We hunted to the bottom path in the valley and up  
to the unsightly trailer clutter George Bird Evans Papers  
West Virginia and Regional History Center

found grouse on that lovely first-time hunt years ago. all of this is  
good cover, kept that way by rotation timbering.

We lumbered up the "border" road, faint now, and to the test-chest  
grade and over to the north edge and up the recently graded shortcut  
road to the station wagon on top, fighting a little cold east wind that  
bit us in the face. Disappointment in a year of disappointments.



THERE HAD TO HAVE BEEN ONE.

Saturday 22 February  
cloudy, windy, cold 39°  
wind chill 20°

Wrights  
mowed 2 - 2 fields

Better  
Quiet

2:35 - 4:35 / 2 hrs.

at home the day was overcast but lucky as a  
day to hunt. Back roads soft & muddy and as clear the Wright  
places, calling Steve Sebick who had seen grouse there. On that  
high ground with a stiff east wind, not nearly frogs.

There ~~was~~ frozen drops of water on the trees. Following  
Steve's directions we came to what he called a "field" - a corner of  
the Ora Wright back field, where he had been trapping. No birds,  
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but the wind would account for that. We came onto a carcass 30/85  
about the size of a fox, no horns, mostly bones but with  
a blunt head and canine teeth. Must ask Steer what it was.

at south end of the Waupel rock cliff we took the  
log road down over the ridge and found it pleasantly quiet in  
the lee of the crest. There had been timbering here a couple of  
years ago and the cover looked good, albeit with the rhododendron.

Below the cliff, which is still in tall timber too hard to  
set out, we crossed north over a jumble of rocky forest floor and  
into more recent cutting — a huge slashway that ran north into  
our old covert. It was ideal slashwood cover.

Memory of a kill with the Fox was Ploss after a slump  
with the Partridge!!

We ate lunch about 3:45 on a log among the rocks, with  
both Belton & Quert at our feet, staring and begudging. We  
heard shots on the far ridge across the valley towards Salem and  
came north toward the old McMullen place.

After lunch, we came to the original log road we used to  
hunt, partly obliterated by the cutting which continued along  
the ridge above. With cover like this it is incredible that there  
was not even two a year years in all that country.

Having come beyond the point of no return, and with no  
tracks for the cutting wind on top the ridge to go back, we

pushed on out the old log track.

Just short of the back road from Area Wrights, I saw Quert on a lovely high point ahead of me. I turned to him when he held like a rock. Belton came in and stopped at command and there they were - two gorgeous creatures.

With the moment at hand, I moved past Quert, actually uncertain how I'd handle a flush and shot after all these months.

Cal came up and took photos and I moved step by step ahead, with still no grouse. After I had reached a place ahead of Quert and stood in the old rutted road, grouse started over all around, Quert moved in and froze again a few feet behind me.

There was no bird there. It's almost too much, this constant disappointment in spite of these ~~the~~ grand points. Finally we moved on. There had to have been a recent grouse but why don't we find them?

Almost within sight of the <sup>back</sup> back road, with both dogs frantic with excitement after the point, two grouse flushed ahead and to my right, rising almost simultaneously out of a tangle of brush but just too far out to shoot. Neither dog had the scent before the flush but both saw the birds and Belton pointed ~~the~~ the scent after the fact.

I marked the birds up along the back road with little cover between us and the Wright buildings. On our way up the road, ~~we~~ kept up and expecting action I saw a quail come off the right side about us and in the dot road. Flinch and go down the ground up clearing on the left and suspect he heard a flush. It was so ~~chancey~~ chancey I hesitate to call it. Pulling was working in the area and may have put it up. I don't seem able to get relocations as I used to on reflexes.

We had been hunting in a light drizzle for half an hour and now it changed to sleet, forming on my gun barrels.

No one home at Wrights and we lit out then down to the Lehigh corner and down the main road with frozen rain beating on our backs. At the station wagon I wiped the ice from my gun barrels before using the gun, and crawled into the welcome protection of the interior of the car, knowing at least been in rugged country and rugged weather. In spite of lack of action, the one contact with grouse was stimulating and the hunt a challenge. This timbered section should be good of later than will be a brood of grouse to people it.



the area while she went for the car and met me at the lower end  
opening of the hill above Glenn's to find an log with one of Glenn's  
cats tied.

There was no grain and no tracks all the way around the  
high margin, but the view was magnificent out over Little Sandy  
valley toward the Chestnut Ridge, now obscured out by a snow squall,  
which <sup>was moving</sup> moved in on us from the north. We went to the car with some thought  
of trying the Charles Kelly autumn dirt plantings below Glenn's but the  
snow moved in and in dead hours, at least exhilarated by the break hunt  
and weather.

Friday, 28 February, Last Day Ray Gathorn Better  
Clear, sunny, cold, 30° or less. ward 1 (not new) - 1 flock Quest  
2 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> hrs. 0

This day was perfect weather, sunny and clear but that  
looked as if it would never end. Cold, below 30° at times, but we had to go.  
Went to the old W.V. court where we felt assured of some grain. Found  
the road via Charley Moxey's in fine shape. Parked at Dairy Radio and  
walked the ridge road, looking both ways the last segment as we approached the  
small granaries corner. Today there was no birds there.  
at the "Red Fox Corner", Quest moved too far out, reaching the corner  
crossed the thicket <sup>long</sup> before we did. We found tracks of the 3 grain as had  
around here last time and I had no way of knowing whether Quest had been  
out. We covered the area well, then followed in the direction of the tracks  
into a large exposure of cutover long woods with many log piles. This was  
ideal cover for snowy conditions <sup>and we</sup> but we found nothing.

56/85

Both dogs seemed to go out of control and we had to wait for  
Quest to return, but Balto evidently got separated and lost, for he  
was gone almost 10 minutes before he found us, with our calls and whistle.  
The shock after somewhat reach Quest, I ate chicken breast while we

waited, and at 4:30 started back up to the Red Fox corner to sort out  
the mess of log roads and hunt down the "country" road to the log  
road that led us left into the excellent cover on the flat.

Hunting down over the slope toward Sandy, I stopped to talk to  
King about our, and a grouse - the one grouse of the day - flushed  
from the cutover fields on the left and crossed the path about 20 yards  
ahead and pitched for the bottom - too thick to follow into. I probably wouldn't  
have had a shot but the breaks just wouldn't come.

Found old tracks of a hen grouse in the bottom of the log road,  
no doubt the same grouse. We returned to the top and hunted out the  
good cover there, ending up in a tangle of blackberry cover - you can  
hardly see the clearcutting - and had to fight our way to the big flat  
field on top.

Covered the greater corner on the way out - still no  
birds in it - and finally walked the old ridge road, pausing for a  
picture by King of the dogs and me against the enormous landscape with  
the old Oak Frankhouse place on the hillside. It was a walk out of a  
season that was the most bitterly disappointing of any I can remember -  
the 3rd one in a row without a grouse, and with grouse at an all-time low,  
thanks to a DNR that doesn't give a damn. How many more seasons will they  
be for us?



Monday 17 March (13)

cloudy, cool 42°  
3:35 - 5:40 - 2 hrs

Hunting Hills

- missed 6 Chukars
- " 1 pheasant
- " 7 quail
- " 1 woodcock
- 7 shots - 3 hits (possibly 4)

'85 (57)

Belted: 3 prod. cock  
 1" 2 ret. quail  
 Quest: 5 prod. Chukar  
 1 back " " " " " " " "  
 2 prod quail  
 1 back 'cock

There is a curious anxiety about shooting on a preserve. Although you know you will find birds and have shots, the very certainty that you will, creates a fear of missing, and you usually do, at least on one or two

This was a lot of fun. We began with Quest alone, leaving poor Belted in the station wagon. After a first short turn we found Quest on a lovely high point, statuesque, near a clump of briars. Much circling by me produced nothing, until finally a brace of quail walked out, then flushed. ~~Quest~~ <sup>Quest</sup> broke and chased, the collar fluttering to function until at far end. We got Quest back, and he pointed again in the same place. There was a Chukar that had been there throughout - a nice high flash was seen that I missed both barrels. I had been concerned about my shooting, with my two crippled shoulders but the mount was smooth enough, just the shooting laid. This poor start didn't help my state of confidence - how you can miss like that.

We worked over to the SE food patches and Quest pointed. The Chukars lie tight in these small stands of briars and brush and getting them up can mean pushing into the thick stuff, as you footstep for a shot. This bird went up and was so close I had to turn my back and wait for a view. All the while there was this clattering flush hanging over the back of my neck, and it was

moments before it came into view as an away overhead shot some distance out. The time the bird settled, but not centered, and Quest broke and caught it forty yards or more away. What followed was the classic first contact with a dropped bird - the young dog picking up but carrying off and burying the quarry. No company would persuade him to retrieve. At least this was a bit, tho a sloppy one.

We spent some time searching for the first bird I had marked. I dug marked it up over the knob - some good cover on top, but had no relocation. After that, we went back and signaled Chris, the guide at the clubhouse to bring Belton from the car and we worked both dogs from that time on.

Naturally Belton was keyed up and moved too wide, pointing on the north side of the log flat and bumping and churning a chunk out of range.

There are no more birds until we made the far bend. About the first covered strip bank both dogs showed signs of scent but found no bird. Later (probably the same bird) Belton pointed at the bank of the drop-off on the left and Quest backed. As I walked to them, they worked into the bank edge and Quest came back toward me and pointed with the chunker between us. It flushed rising over the pines and I centered it like a rising grouse flush, the bird tumbling down over into space.

The bank was steep with ~~the~~ loose rocks and I sent the dog to retrieve, feeling certain Belton would bring it up. Instead, Quest found but would not retrieve, taking it along the bottom and neatly burying the chunker at the base of a log tree. ~~It took much directing to get Belton to~~

go down, with reluctance - seeming to resent Quest's having found - but he finally did find, disinter, and deliver the chicken up the stiff climb. That did but ~~it~~ was good medicine for my ego.

Just before we passed to eat, Kay tripped on a grass covered stone and fell, painfully striking her left knee on a rock, really mean. She was very courageous in spite of the agony and remained where she was and ate her lunch. Afterward she was able to walk, and we continued.

About the center of this same field, Belter pointed into a clump of brush and brambles and Quest came in, stopping under orders but then moving in to establish his own point. It was a chicken, well covered in grass almost under his nose. I flinched it while Kay dropped low - it must have cost her pain - and then I nursed the bird quietly left and low. I did hear the rump today to see the left breast after quivering to us as well. I think on both the nurse I was spot shooting, not squeezing with the lead.

Instead of making a long flight as usual, the bird landed on the crest of the rise with the Quest after it. Having caught the first bird I dropped, he was set to catch this one, and did. Kelling it, the chicken had not made the normal long flight after the shot, and it occurs to me that a single pellet, <sup>or two</sup> may have found the mark after all. At the time I was so certain I had nursed totally.

← Having accounted for all the birds released, we started back the north edge of the big flat at about 5:20. On top, I was surprised to see Quest winding with that beautiful high headed manner of his and then go solid, pointing towards me. It was some distance and I

Belter pointed in the center of the field and Quest latched. To my surprise it was a ~~male~~ <sup>female</sup> woodcock.

went to him to find he was pointing at a <sup>low</sup> plastic-covered bed spring on  
 stakes, and as a ground shelter <sup>(glass)</sup> I relaxed and kicked the shelter but had no  
 flesh. Quail was staring at a pile of pine boughs on the ground beside the  
 shelter. I kicked this to put up the ground and to my astonishment a  
 chicken went straight up <sup>and</sup> out over the splinters like an overhead-way ground  
 flesh. I took it as just that and made a solid hit that dropped the  
 bird straight down, a soul-feeding shot. Quail picked it up nicely and I  
 thought he would deliver but for the third time today by ~~accident~~ buried  
 it in the sparse grass - wondering how he could do it in so little cover. This  
 was a small chicken, very hard hit, but a nice end to the day.

At this time Kay saw Buller in clear after a rumpuck he may have  
 pointed. Why he is bumping these birds I don't know.

Very shortly, both dogs pointed on the edge of prairie on the left  
 and we soon had a flock of several quail. There are <sup>a few</sup> ground feeders  
 on these prairie

That was our day. The dogs had a lot of fun and action, some  
 excellent points. My shoulder behaved well, & by using a loose "ready"  
 position, I managed to get the gun up - sometimes on the right place!



ALIGH AND SOLID