

# Shooting 1986

New York - Aston Belton 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ , Quest 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ , Gump parking 80.

Monday, 20 October

Baker Place

Bella

Weather perfect, warm in 60s

score 1 - 1

Quest

2:20 - 6:40 - 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  hrs

Some fences and

CS WC

There is a land of sugar maples blazing or partially  
thinned with their glory at their feet. The weather is ideal Indian  
summer or on the cool, the First Hunter's Moon was full on our  
late-night drive up to Plum Trunk's place, everything is perfect,  
but today we hunted excellent cover for 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  hours and didn't see a  
bird - I say heard one quail. Woodcock are moving down in the  
western portion of the state but not a trace here, except one 'cock Galen  
Williams shot at. Disappointment.

Quest had a point, poor tail but high head, very steady in  
open mixed hawthorn & small (Prunus white), and Belton lacked or erred.  
He seemed certain but the tail attitude gave doubts and nothing materialized.  
Possible (pedable) flush ahead of us, but he showed integrity.

at this time, I say new Canon camera failed (?) and we had to  
rely on her Argus, loaded with 6 & 8.

In morning after Galen took us to an impossible <sup>covert</sup> ~~covert~~ on top a  
mountain and we went on our own in a good 'cock corner along  
the wall, I saw Quest on point

backing Belton who was simply standing looking for me. But from  
Quart's point of view, he was doing his job.

This was not the First Day I was hoping for but we will  
try tomorrow. Wonderful to be out and in great shape at 79+.

Tuesday 21 October

lucky weather, mild 65°  
12:25 - 2:25 } 2 1/2 hrs.  
3:15 - 3:45 }

Hunt Hill

ward 1-1 1/0  
~~ward 1-2/0~~  
Preacher Road 0

Belton  
Quart

The second day of the trip to an old favorite went with high hopes.  
The cleared "field" east of State found has grown to ideal aspen clumps  
and high-bush blueberry bushes and the small pines are now large.  
Also being invaded by trash trailers - yuck.

A woodcock flushed straight at us from the deep, then turned and  
launched to Kay's left near two pine trees. No usual with recently flushed  
'cock, as got no point, tho the bird let Belton get sight on it. But we didn't  
point. It would have been astonishing shot climbing over the aspens. We followed and  
did not put it up.

Circling thru good apple tree cover to the road, we parked with them  
what seemed to be downy woodpecker, difficult walking, and Kay heard a grouse  
flush nearby from an aspen group. I didn't hear it. We tried to find it  
with no luck, and creled back to what formerly had been a good  
dotted area. It is now barren, <sup>small</sup> pole timber. No trace of birds.

Back to the car and ate lunch parked in the corner of the road.

We decided to drive down Hunt Road to Preacher Road and hunt the corner

It is now too dense with cedars to ~~penetrate~~ penetrate.

We found a good flat on the north side of Pioneer Road and decided to try it for 'cork'. Swampy land that looked like Canada. The edge cover of the woods looked good, but after we penetrated fairly far I became too tired to go on. I think lack of sleep and motivation and perhaps blood sugar combined, but I was totally out of fuel. This repeat of an last trip here and all the frustration of recent years leaves me feeling the defeated Don Quixote. We may head for the west country in a day or so.

Wednesday 22 October

Warm, Sunny 66°

2:30 - 6:20 / 3 3/4 hrs.

Hardhack Knob (Oquaga) Beltin  
Quest

mixed 2-2

To Oquaga Lake south of McClure and up a back road to Stetson. Walked a woods road and climbed a stiff hunched foot plus elevation to an old farm on top, grow back to aspen and hardhack. Hardhack (spirea) wasn't high or higher is the predominant low story growth with jungles of blackberry plants a clay second. Galin saw a grouse flush down over the ridge and being heard and seen a second time. We separated on top and followed one of the lovely old stone walls that are everywhere. The abandoned farms in this ~~country~~ part of NY are far beyond the point of return we have at home. Almost no fields as near with hawthorns, but mostly pools, red maple and aspen, the latter good looking woodcock cover but at this time empty.

The exposure of aspen/hardhack slanted downhill and we followed the right side, covering the aspen clumps, both dogs working hard and well, but with Quest a bit too wide. My shock collar ran out of power and we had some trouble keeping him in.

Near the lower end of the stone fence at a blossoming beech tree (there

④

~~There~~ are a lot of beech trees that seem to have nests (open larvae), a  
gross flush of within ten yards — loud sound but no view of it — the  
only contact with grouse that I have had to date. May said Belton  
had flash-pointed a moment before out in the thicket when she  
was and then moved on.

We followed the fence back uphill to the top and then moved  
north and angled back down, hoping to pick up the flight  
but had no action. Blackberry comes, still in leaf, covered most of  
the woods floor and made it nearly impossible to get there.

We stopped for lunch on the old stone fence (how those early  
people labored) and then hunted to the lower edge of the cover  
and turned north until we met Gabe who had moved another  
grouse, with a point. Either Guizer is a remarkably dog, pointing  
almost every grouse he sees, or he has a fertile imagination.  
She is a good little dog, working hard and fairly wide with good  
style and tail action.

We found nothing on the way back to the top and after  
rejoining Gabe, walked down the road to the bottom when he sent us  
off to the right and "down over," through fair cover but empty.

It was a long way for this time of coming — after 6:00 (EDT) —  
to an old road at the bottom. The lower corner was a good spot for inch  
whisker, seen nonexistent. He had reported more woodcock than he'd ever  
seen and a good lot of grouse before we came up from below. Once here,  
the pattern was like our trip in 1981, except we did not see any woodcock there.

Why does it always work out the same way?

5/8/6

We met Gale who had heard another grouse! and then climbed the road back up to the car at 6:20. A lovely warm afternoon - I had shed my shirt till the end of January - but again no action.

We decided to pull out on Friday for the West Country, with rain forecast for Thursday.

Thursday 23 October

Warm sunny, to cold rain

60° - 55°

2:00 - 2:20

4:30 - 4:50 } 40 min

Wheeler Road

0

Woodcock Corner

0

Beth

Quart

We had expected Edwin Pego to drive over with the print proofs, but plans changed and with lovely warm sunshine we decided to try the Plank Road but couldn't find it. Instead we drove up the Wheeler Road to excellent aspen cover on the left at the top.

I never saw a trace of dogs work ever better than Beth and Quart within miles range, quartering intensely and fast and it was a shame to find no birds - a perfect place for 'cock. There was the ubiquitous hand hawk and a small stand of grey dogwood - the white berries somewhat shriveled.

A westerly wind hit us the moment we stepped out of the car and by the time we reached the head of the small area a rain had set in. We turned back and drove down to North Sanford with gorgeous views of the mountains and the Oquaga Creek Valley.

We drove to Afton and mailed the address list to Edwin and I got gas and I bag stopped, and on our return up Melody Hill we stopped at the Woodcock Corner and ~~found it~~. The sky was dark and

threatening but we went into the spruce lower and small pine  
planting - all state lands seem to be pines of some variety.

It is interesting to observe what a change <sup>occurred</sup> in the few years since  
we had been here - the pines felled in and little ever opening left.  
Even so, it was good enough to hold each if they were in, or two  
groups which Galin said he had moved. We found nothing. Just as  
we reached the road, a driving rain came at us and we were soaked  
by the time we reached the side road and the car. Really soaked.

That was it - the first part of our NV trip a total loss as far  
birds. Let's hope the West Country treats us kindly.

Nevada.

Jossey Hill

Belton

Saturday 25 October

moved ~~to~~ 4-4

Quest 1 prod.

Overcast, mild 58°  
3 3/4 hrs

SSWC

moved 1-1  
1 shot - 0

The Glorious Twenty-Fifth, like Indian summer is  
not the same away from home. A long drive twenty miles north to  
a huge area of state lands, mixed conifers and hardwoods with  
clearing regrowth similar to Blackwater country. The miles-long  
stretches of straight dirt/gravel roads are reminiscent of Dolly Sods,  
but without the shrubby juniper and native spruce.

The <sup>striking</sup> ~~prevailing~~ flora is gray dogwood with its lovely <sup>ivory</sup> white  
globes on red stems and Mike Wood says <sup>to expect</sup> grass.

We crawled thru a stand of this that was well above head high,  $7/8$   
~~not~~ more sparse and woody with few berries. As we began a gradual  
climb, we were in thick regrowth low cover, interspersed with dogwood  
(gray dogwood whenever indicated here) with patches of birch, usually  
whites that seem partly planted partly wild.

Ray saw a distant grouse and down the hill along the edge of  
birch and some heard another. We hunted up the hillside thru good  
cover - aspen clumps, and stands of hard-leaf gray dogwood,  
and much of a woody shrub with loads of blue drupe. Also one  
high bush cranberry with its vivid juicy-looking berries.

Quest had a lovely point high on the hillside in thick  
cover, bedding long and staunchly, which we had a short backpoint by  
Blossom and no recognition by Belton. Nothing materialized, but there  
must have been a bird that lifted immediately before. On the way back  
down the long trail, Mike walked into a grove in dogwood and shot it,  
and a second one flushed near us - ground only. Quest ran to Mike and  
took the grouse from Blossom - poor little thing, who was about to retrieve  
it. We couldn't get Quest to deliver it, but instead, he took it off and  
buried it in muddy grass. Ray found it - a very efficient interment.

Walked to the car and in last light; down to the main road on  
top and I hunted two eyes, in one of which Quest had a fine point on a  
cock I missed in a close flush that occurred as I shot ahead of it.

I was disappointed in the first day. I had seen no grouse, and only ~~one~~ woodcock, hardly what I had driven hundreds of miles for. Mike had saved 3 more grouse on his last circle at the end. I never seem to be put above the grouse one, a singularly peculiar circumstance on this trip!

The "Glorious Tawny-Flycatcher" was somewhat less than.

Sunday 26 October

Mild, damp, cloudy 60°  
3 3/4 hrs.

Homeless Puffin Cove

round 2-2

round 1(?)

Belted 1 prod

Quart 1 prod

This was a long hunt in mostly unproductive cover, but good cover. Quest immediately had a hunt that proved empty but convincing. We hunted down slopes and between two long stands of tall pines, Mike and ~~Merley~~ Merley saved them grouse, one of which Kay heard. I didn't.

Later Kay and I made a short circle into a piece of cover and something shot out of the deep grass and goldcrest behind me and I turned to see a mass motion of the dead foliage - a possible woodcock? It was a dull hunt with Mike seeing to see all the grouse. Kay and I made a climb up and back thru dense cover that yielded nothing. You begin to lose confidence after too much of this.

Finally at end of day Kay and I heard a grouse and I saw it against the sky - the first grouse I saw on the trip but could not mount the gun in time to shoot, and realized Quest had been flushing it. We got separated from Mike and finally came out on the road at ~~quest~~ <sup>the</sup> long hunt thru brier and very rough irregular forest characteristic of these woods.



Monday 27 October  
Rain off and on, cloudy 63°  
Warm,  
3¼ hrs.

High Plateau  
moss' 4-4  
1 shot - 1 bird

Quest solo 1 heard  
1 k.e.p. 9/186

AF They stayed at cabin and to Numbata with Belton, who has been hunting gallantly but could do with rest after six days hunting. Quest hunts particularly well solo but I can't deprive Belton of as much as possible.

A spot of rain threatened as we started hunting but let up and, except for brief showers, gave us a good day. The big flat country is unlike ours, much more like Blacksville, with separate bushes dotted among small white pines. Mike separated from me but stayed within gunshot reach while I hunted some excellent Hawthorn and Thrush along a small run. I saw a woodcock - all hens so far - land, having been put up by the dogs. I finally got Quest in and, as always, the bird flushed when he came on it without a point. Not long after, another 'cock crossed and landed in the swampy bottom. Quest is absolutely staunch and with fine nose, but he is still exuberant and runs into some, but he will point if he gets scent and is there to stay when he gets it.

We hunted what must have been an horn before more action. Mike had heard 2 grouse flush - he seems always to be there - yet I am covering as much ground and hunting as hard. He also had moved some 'cock. In an edge of aspen and other cover, I came on Quest on point, shot, head high in the middle of an aspen copse. The country is interspersed with aspen but oddly has not produced 'cocks in them until now. I walked

in, feeling the shot unlikely because of aspen trunks. The 'cock flushed (18) and climbed up and away and I waited until it was topping out and fired right-on and, with that glorious feel, saw the bird fold. My shoulders have

been anything but smooth in my mounting and I am beginning to feel my gunstock too long with my shoulder problem. Today I resolved to mount with a shorter fore grip and it seemed to help. Quetz was hunting ecstatically, working hard but too wide. At last I found the best - beautiful thing, when I shot I aimed to and after much searching, Quetz but scent and found, pointing with his nose within inches of it. I had some doing to get him to let up until I reached down and touched the bird, when he took hold of it, at first seeming to rough it up but actually didn't.

He began to carry it off and I saw what was coming and touched him with the shock, at which he dropped the bird. But he didn't hesitate to pick it up when I encouraged him and once more carried it around but would not deliver it to me. When he laid it down and seemed about to ~~bury~~ <sup>bury</sup> it, I went to him and took it. It was his first wild bird shot over his point, and it was a good moment for both of us, ~~with~~ after my long spell without a dropped bird - so long, it seems hard to realize. Mike took a couple of pictures and it was good, but for long not being there.

We headed back in a general direction, and I stopped to set in a net. Thicket, when, regrettably I shocked Quetz when I leaned over to pick up



THE MOMENT

wet leaves to wipe woodcock blood from my fingers. The shocker in my game pocket was squeezed and it gave the hen-bog a hard jolt. I tried to soothe him with some of my chicken breast and I seemed to ~~work~~ help.

Mistwood for the car which I worked Quest down the small stream to crossroad. On the way I halted with Quest elsewhere but he hit the scent when he came in and held steadily until I sent him on.

In the last hour, we drove to another cove where I hunted what Mather called his 'Ace in the Hole'. ~~Formerly~~ the hole was empty of acs. I hunted among [Toints] much gray dogwood, red with stems and ~~the~~ white berries but so far I have yet to meet either game or 'cock in any of it, altho Mather feels it is excellent.

Mather came for us at 5:30, getting dark, having shot two corks in his area. It seemed hard at times on the drive to the cabin.

Tuesday, 28 October  
~~partly cloudy, sunny~~  
Sunny, mild 60°  
2 hrs 23 hrs. AM

Wincey Hill Far Ridge  
mowed 3-4  
0  
mowed 3-3  
1 shot - 1 hit

Bottom 1 perd 1k  
Quest 1 perd  
2 perd  
1k  
1 hawk

Mike left us to hunt out a flat woods road and drove back to his Graveyard caret where he mowed 10 acres & shot 2, by hunting a vast distance. (It seems odd that we weren't part into birds like that.)

We had been out only ten minutes when 2 quail fledged on the left edge of the road, one-two, and disappeared into the spruce within seconds. I wheeled ~~in time~~ to see the first, having walked past it, and could not mount the gun in time to shoot. The second bird was only a flash glimpse. They had set both deep woods points on the far side of the road.

We found a 4-wheel parked at the far end of the spruce when we planned to hunt but no evidence of the turkey hunter (a bow-dog). The area looked good for both 'cocks & quail but like so much around here, was empty.

We stopped to eat in a small aspen copse and then walked the way back to the spruce corner, when I took a color picture of Kay and the two boys by a big gnarled beech trunk.

after the good start with a double flush, the let-down put a drag on us  
about with so many days hunting without action, and at the car we took a rest  
by driving out the road to find a dairy farm on the south edge, and a view  
of distant ridges to the southwest.

CS WC

at 4:00 <sup>(EST)</sup> we parked at the #2 corner when I hunted in the late  
evening on Sunday. Today we walked further in and at a cove of  
dogwood (spray) I saw Quert stop and cluck, flogging, and then move in  
as a grouse flushed from the far end. I was surprised that he didn't  
point but I know of he'd had the scent he would have. This was the  
first grouse I saw to flush from dogwood, the other consisted of top  
corn.

It was that wonderful time of late afternoon when the sun is dropping  
and shadows cool and we pushed deeper into edge corn in the far side.  
I saw a woodcock land - no doubt moved by the dogs - and in a moment  
it reflected. Very soon, they called grouse and said ~~Belton~~ <sup>Belton</sup> had obviously  
been pointing it. I neither saw nor heard the flush.

As we worked back and down the hill thru spruce aspen / hardwood  
I heard Quert's bell go silent and began looking for him in front, when I say  
saw her wraith and I turned to see her indicate a clump of aspen beside  
her when Quert was on a very high-headed point. I worked in from  
in front, then stopped when I could cover both open areas on ~~the~~ either  
side. I say took some pictures, then moved in and flushed. The cock - a male -  
came out at me and above, rather close. I have been concerned with my  
inability to mount smoothly due to my shoulder problem, and I

turned and took the shot ~~at~~ right - crossing fairly about heart height, feeling myself have trouble but swinging fast and fired, with the impression I was not a lot ahead, but the 'cock folded the way shot - at birds as supposed to fold, and Belton was in the blackberry tangle almost before the bird had hit. He walked, ~~staring~~ the only trace of him being the movement of the foliage, then came out in a lovely retrieval, with the 'cock almost covered up by that big mouth of his. It was the first wild bird he had retrieved since the 'cock in the Hartman Place in 1984 and he ~~was~~ savored it, as I did. He sat to deliver and I lay got a bird and a color pig. Quest was on hand, excited about his bird but with no valour. When the 'cock had flushed it made a flutter almost like a quail and when I called that I'd hit it, I know she that I had at last shot a quail and exclaimed exclaimed, and I hope she wasn't disappointed, but it was a good moment for us all.

Working down the hillside we came to a dogwood clump where Quest promised but Belton kept moving in front of him. Finally Q moved in and was now in front ~~in~~ a few yards ahead; then I saw Belton frozen in the middle of dogwood and realized Quest was backing him. The 'cock went out when I had been standing, with no chance for a shot.

We moved on to the Willow Court at the top of the hill and hunted it for the last 15 minutes but saw nothing. Nabe had saved 3 grouse the morning he had been in it. This was a good day with at least a view of grouse, and some excellent dog work that pleased them as much as it did us.

the bottom then open aspen with gold on the ground and that strong <sup>17/18</sup>  
pungency so hard to describe.

Quest, exhausted, ran into the next 'creek' and later  
did the same to the same bird. We also had a wild fawn (from  
whom?) or another, one of the woodcock. At the far end, near the  
tall pine planting (NY has thousands of acres of tall pine timber stands  
used for game birds) I ran took a color photo of junco, dog, and  
bird in front of a large aspen trunk with gold leaves in the foreground.  
Her <sup>new</sup> Canon camera had failed to function early in the trip and she  
was using a K12 furnished by Mike - a good camera but it seemed to  
double fire with the least pressure on the release button.

We hunted up the slope and had a solid point from Quest  
with a good back by Belton, but were unable to flush a bird, tho  
Quest couldn't believe it.

Not far beyond, he made another point - high head -  
and as yet Belton stopped and after more failures, I ran flushed the cock  
that offered ~~no~~ no shot, but a good experience.

We hunted to the top of the hill and the car and, eating as  
we moved, drove around to the covert we hunted on Sunday. (The  
"Homeless Puppy"). It was getting darker in the last hour and  
we hurried through the two blocks of pines to the far clearing with  
much gray dogwood and wet ~~underfoot~~ <sup>not far from the corner</sup>



FIRST RETRIEVE!

When Quost had pointed the grass on Sunday, we heard what was likely the same bird, flush in the thicket ahead of us - the only evidence of game in this excellent place.

It was a long push out of them, on the west side of the point, crossing a small run in a deep ravine. Finally reached the road near the place we had come out on Sunday, but this time we knew where we was. That was it, the last of a two week trip that produced very few looks at quail but at least gave us some good shooting and points that were good for both dogs - and us.

This is large country, mostly level a gentle slopes, and while there is considerable semi-clearing much like the Blackwater country with lovely aspen copses and the ~~substantial~~ gray dogwood that is so characteristic of this western NY cover, it has thousands of acres of useful tall pine forests. I have never encountered so much - almost constant - of the fermentation odor I love so well, blended with aspen pungency, and it would almost seem identified with the gray dogwood, if it were not <sup>in a smaller way,</sup> part of our own environment at home with no gray dogwood present.



19/86

There are no doubt quail in small numbers in these large coverts, but  
oh so thin, and to move any amount would require nothing less than  
labor, which is not what I go out to do.

I am certain that during such flights these open clumps would  
hold them, but as seem to have come along later than the woodcock, or  
just in between. I hope we haven't missed them in the <sup>quantity</sup> big coverts back  
home.

The trip has done a lot to restore Quest, please Belton, and give me  
a sense of confidence in my shooting and the lovely Purdy. Now to  
start living back home. I feel I lost Indian Summer this year,  
leaving it at O of Henshaw. We saw gorgeous color at the start up here -  
after the trees thinned shockingly - but it was not our Indian summer,  
and I have to accept it as sacrificed this year in an effort to find  
years that disappointed. I ~~do~~ doubt that we ever take another trip -  
they never live up to expectations - which may enhance our coverts for us.

HOME:

Monday 3 November  
cloudy after fog, 50°  
1/4 } 2 hrs  
3/4 }

Corinth #2  
moved 3-5 flocks

Corinth #1 } Pray Dogwood covert.  
moved 1-1

moved 3-3

Belton  
Quest 1 prod  
2 prod

Drove home from NY on Friday, Halloween, to a raining Indian Summer  
with all but a few residual trees bare, but these few were just for us.

Today we started for the Mt. Storm events to try to catch the cock flights if possible, but heavy clouds that was almost low enough to be fog over the Brierley gave us warning and at the Maryland line beyond Aurora we hit a drizzle that turned us back via Oakland to the covert at Corinth. We drove out of the drizzle and found the Corinth area a quiet, heavy damp condition, ideal for gunning.

We explored the road beyond the woodsland covert and on the left fork came to the one unposted portion — a lovely old field with hawthorn <sup>at the far edge</sup> that needed <sup>we parked near a roadside clump of gray dogwoods like NY!</sup> gunning. As we got out of the car, I can hear a grass drum somewhere in the pines on the right of the road.

Both dogs were too wild and too cold, but we got them settled and they did a thorough job of covering the hawthorn. In the far edge, just inside the mud-sign, ever we walked into three grouse that got up one, two, three without more than a flash glimpse that tagged them as grouse, not 'cock. Delta lead but scent just beyond and Quest arrived to so excited at the spot — a small humlock — but there was not a point to warn me. One grouse bored into cover, the other two took the outside edge to announce ahead.

We followed the latter and heard one go up inside the woods. Before following, ~~we~~ we checked the cover beyond — good edge ever, with too dense humlock and large woods birds. We found a good looking bottomland along a stream and let the dogs take it but saw nothing.

Working back east, we climbed the steep woods on rough 21/86  
footing of stones and fallen logs and branches and came to Quest  
pointing uphill into a tangle of brush under hemlocks. I hurried  
toward him but the bird lifted without a sound by two actions -  
a short break that indicated it had angled to the top. It was a  
lovely point, stanch and high, with tail just above level. We  
followed after eating a bite but did not refresh.

at the site of the original triple flush, we looked inland  
to an woods clearing with more Hawthorns, hoping to find  
the first bird but had to give up and go to the car in order to  
hunt the 'cock corner before dark. At the car we heard Belter  
yelp in the distance and saw him en route on the road looking.  
He hobbled to us before we could draw a line, and I found a  
long thorn about  $1\frac{3}{4}$ " unbarbed about a quarter-inch in his  
left paw and easily removed, relieving the situation.

at the underch corner we parked, leaving Belter, and  
hunted up the sloping road thru the thicket to where Quest  
made his first production on 'evch best season. Today we  
passed that place and hunted down over to a powerful  
and more steep terrain where Quest went frequent and began  
ground-trailing. It's odd that he does this, considering the stylish  
way he takes scent high on the point. He eventually brought a

opens out on the dense ~~ground~~ growth of shoulder-high trees —  
a flush I can hear. She gives Quest a touch of marks that should  
be a good lesson.

Working down to the stream bottom, we were disappointed to  
find nothing, altho Quest gave us a stunning point that  
lifted my excitement to the breaking point. It was so hot and  
solid I have to believe a cork had lifted without our knowing.

at the main road, Ray left to set the car and I hunted  
the creek cover with an excellent point on the right of the  
road. Quest's point was lovely and total, reaching high.

QUEST



after walking in with no result, I moved ahead and a large 'cork  
went out beyond — a "long" point. The bird showed for an instant  
topping out thru the trees but with no chance to shoot. I sometimes  
feel I have passed up a chance on this type of flush but actually I  
think if it had been a chance I would have shot. Judgment has a  
lot to do with it, and banging at an unobtainable, split-second take

is not good wing shooting.

We crossed the road to the rather open cover, larger trees, and then Quest ran into a 'cock and within minutes ran onto a second one. Odd when he is so staunch and has such sense. I have to give him credit for not doing it deliberately in any way. On the last bump he came in to me, showing contriteness. He is a good dog.

I lay head down up and as loaded up, leaving much good cover on the far side of the stream to be tried another day.

A letter from Bill McClure said they moved <sup>"lots and lots"</sup> ~~loads~~ of ~~cocks~~ <sup>cocks</sup> ~~in the water~~ in Ontario from Oct 21 - 31, which should mean more coming thru here a little later, perhaps in 2 weeks. McClure is an interesting person.

Our day was a good one tho not a shot fired.

Thursday 6 November

Some sun, cloudy, 50°  
1 1/4 3 2 1/4 hrs.

Corinth Dogwood forest  
mowed 4 <sup>(1 new)</sup>/<sub>6</sub>

Bellon 1 head  
1 back  
Quest 1 back

Corinth #1  
mowed 1-1  
mowed 2-2

This was a slightly irregular day, starting with a spell as I walked down the flagstones under the Weibach, my rubber boot heel slipping on the slippery wet stones and then going down on my bottom

with my right elbow striking my sleeve - eared Purdy. No (24)  
harm to gun <sup>or</sup> man but it wasn't pleasant.

Clouds were low over the Trieries and we saw no more sun for the  
balance of the day. Oddly, as we approached Cornith, Kay saw a  
small lot of gray downed along the ~~road~~ highway, almost as though  
our NV experience <sup>conjured</sup> ~~conjured~~ up the skirt here in WV.

We parked at the Dogwood covert and because I wanted to  
approach the 3 quans we had found Monday with some ease, we left  
Belton in the station wagon to his dismay. We worked the far edge  
of the hawthorn clearing but moved nothing until we turned back  
and moved inside closer to the large hemlocks when both Kay and I  
heard what sounded like a quans flash.

As we came out on the inside hawthorn clearing - good looking  
I saw a Quail to a cove of coppen when he stopped almost  
on point but stood flapping - not like him. As I approached  
he made a short break as tho at wing but not neither saw nor  
heard anything. This must have been a flash, possibly a woodcock,  
for he returned and excitedly nosed the ground in what could have  
been the roost.

Rather than follow, we hunted around to and over for us, the  
large hemlock/hardwood on the far side where Kay heard 3 quans  
soot - no doubt the trio we'd found on Monday. We followed  
on a lonely woods road for a few yards, then down on in what  
might have been the direction of the flash with no action. *Swinging*  
George Bird Evans Papers  
West Virginia and Regional History Center

back uphill, as camp to the far end of the log road and one 25/86  
of our quons flushed from a tree above me and pitched down into  
cover on the south side. It was a shot that, in retrospect, seemed  
a possibility but actually was over and gone before I could mount. I'm  
inclined to think that on the retina some birds seem possible but  
that instinct is the factor here and you either shoot or don't shoot  
on that basis. Kay heard a second tree flush with no view. We  
had marked the first bird rather well as landing shortly but I  
suspect it either swooped up or <sup>had</sup> quickly reflushed, for we failed  
to locate it.

after a circle in the direction of the second flush, we  
returned to the car and drove to Cornth #1, parking at the  
side clearing beside the road and hunting into the cover toward  
Snowy Creek. Belton was first in covert and after having a movement,  
walked into a 'cock that crossed in front - a nice chance, had it  
been a point.

Soon after, I came on a double point - Belton pointing with  
quart intensely on backpoint. Before I could flush, Belton  
moved in and bumped the 'cock, sporting the only possible  
shot of the day.

Soon afterward, Quirt gave a stirring point - solid, high,  
and perfect, with Belton backing away, except there was nothing

present. We've had several such points from Quest this (26)  
season, inexplicable unless <sup>that</sup> the bird - most likely a 'cuck' - has  
lifted just before Quest struck recent.

We were near the bank of Survey Creek - a deep, normally  
slow stream but today at high water with a powerful current.

Quest approached and I warned him back. Moments later, Belton  
did the same but in spite of my loud warning, jumped in.

There was the ghastly sight of him sinking under, hanging there  
a couple of feet beneath the surface, then coming up struggling.  
He soon was swimming ~~out and~~ <sup>instinctively</sup> away from me toward the  
far side, carried downstream by the heavy current. I called and  
finally in midstream he turned back and swam toward me but  
going with the current. I headed by my gun, loaded still, and  
got to the bank, stop here, trying for a hold on something as I  
kneelt. Belton was near but just out of reach and being carried  
downstream along the bank. I tried to reach his nape, then got a  
grip on his collar (thanks to for his collar) and somehow heaved  
him up on the bank as the dead bank I was holding to with my left  
hand broke away. I managed to keep my balance as Belton shook  
and sprayed me with cold water. It was a narrow squeeze but  
it was over.

We made no more 'cuck'. <sup>George Bird Evans Papers</sup> ~~The I hunted~~ <sup>both</sup> miles of the stream  
West Virginia and Regional History Center



27/186

Crossing on the bridge. Ray went for the car while I took the  
 dogs on the east side. I was disappointed to find the cover was  
 impossibly dense with alders (~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~all~~ <sup>all</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~desired~~ <sup>desired</sup> ~~thing~~ <sup>thing</sup>). Finally  
 came to some larger woods and from a small thick cover along a <sup>little</sup> ~~run~~ <sup>run</sup>  
 followed on large ground just too far out to try for. We ended up  
 on the east side of a swamp that became a problem as I tried to  
 skirt it and come back; with ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> light fading we made it to the  
 large field outside Cornish with graded cows in the center, almost  
 saw Ray coming to locate us. It hadn't been a good shooting day,  
 but it had its moments, ~~too~~ <sup>too</sup> I could have done without.

Monday 10 November  
 Perfect, sunny to overcast  
 cool 40°

3:20-4:20 }  
 4:35-5:35 } 2 hrs.

Poplar House

o  
 o  
Clyde Davis  
 o  
~~now~~ 2

Robert Thorne  
 o  
 o

Belton 2 backs

Quint 1 prod  
 1 back

This was the ideal weather as I'd been wanting for, clear sunny,  
 cold, and we took off for Mt. Storm seeking woodcock. What we found  
 were people - a van with 3 hunters that pulled off at the Poplar House  
 gate to let us pass. Proved to be a man from Maryland - Dehman -  
 and a sleepy looking man - Beamer - "the only licensed guide in WV"  
 who was proud of having hunted "your corner with the rail fence."  
 They had been hunting mostly in the far east of Maph. Pen and said they'd  
 made 9 'cock "all still there" and were ~~very~~ <sup>very</sup> ~~good~~ <sup>good</sup>.

had to look at a dog Dehman had got from Hannon who had sired his  
Old Hunkle blood — ~~was~~ Puff in the 4th generation. Puff's genes had been stored  
in with a lot of courses into Hannon called Pyman, the result being a less  
than distinguished product. The poor dog seemed nice enough in disposition,  
but, oh my!

After this delay our set started at 3:20, too late for this country.  
There was nothing in the rail fence corner except a lot of red haws on the  
ground — no telling how many cubs had been pushed out, but it seems that  
cubs are never here anymore.

On the Clyde Davis side I saw Belter locking Quest in the  
lower cover and came to a lovely point by Quest that showed empty,  
a pattern as seen to run into recently. I sent him in and soon  
saw him strike point, low and hot, and within seconds saw him  
break at an obvious flash, but at least a production. We might  
have moved more in the lower margin along the swamp but time pressed  
us and we turned up the hill toward the car. Belter ran into a 'cub', a  
large hen, and I was pleased to see him stop shyly at flash.

We drove to the Reboeth Thomas and found the car of two low  
numbers still there (a third bow hunter, McLaughlin, had told us they  
was low numbers on our way past earlier).

In the lower covers we had worked Belter with the stack collar and  
used the dummy on Quest, and a few touches of restraint had shaped  
Belter up nicely. At Reboeth we matched collars but both were overcast  
and moved too wide. Well into the Thomas I found on Quest on a

nicer styled point that proved to be backing Bellan. But again 29/86  
 there was nothing there but a lot of fresh whitewash, all too rare this year.  
 I have never had so many empty points on hot creek scum and I am  
 forced to think the birds are lifting a head of the dogs. Too much  
 hunting persons?

We covered that lovely coast out to the south Thomas and to  
 the poplars - grow up to blackberry comes in places - and back in  
 near dark to the hedgehairs cover without a sign of birds. How they  
 abandoned this coast or how they not yet come? Hunting animals has  
 become a process of logistics more than shooting - loading up  
 gear and food and driving to far coasts with very little action.  
 My only shooting so far was limited to 3 or 4 days in NV. But I am  
 still hoping, and so are the dogs who are hunting logically.

Wednesday 12 November  
 Cloudy, cold, 40°  
 3 hrs.

Grassy Ridge  
Pegion Root Road  
 moved 1-1

Bellan 1 per  
 Quest 1 per

Cornier Spruce  
Mail Boxes Thomas  
 moved 1-1

Mt. Storm Coast #1  
 moved 2-2

We left Old Hundred under heavy clouds, drove into something around  
 Terra Alta, and on Big Alleghany Mt. came under a pall of cloud, partly  
 fog and partly smoke from Vespa. Starting at Church corner we also drove  
 in a total blackout of yellow. No *Buteo* notices with no identification.

all the way to and including Pagan Point Road. We pushed anyway  
 behind a new substation of some sort - a small cabinet with propane gas  
 tanks actuating a mechanism, God knows what. It sounds a good indication  
 for the little Subaru station wagon. There was a ~~very~~ low-hanging fog cloud  
 over Pagan Point Ridge and the Stony River Dam, nearly obscuring the  
 stacks of the Vesper plant and there was drops of water on all the bushes  
 and trees, suggesting a frozen condition overnight.

We crested the south end of the rocky woods and walked down  
 the east margin into good grass when among bushes we had seen a  
 lot of woodcock on the one good year we found them there - how you  
 cling to those single memories. Today there was nothing but rocks and  
 a lone grouse that I can see so up without sound ahead of Better.

After 50 minutes, we left and drove out to the Corner Spruce  
 and I can dropped me off at the road on top and drove to the lower  
 road to pick me up. I used Quail alone - with the black collar -  
 and hunted both the west edge, thorns and the spruce tuff with no results.  
 At one place Quail stopped on the edge and stood, tail flapping, as his  
 taken to doing this same for no reason. I can fathom and I tracked him  
 with the hood, a discipline he is going to get from now on.

We returned today and drove around the corner past the gangster of  
 smalltraps and both both deep into the good Hawthorn cover below the  
 road. It comes down to a large bottom, changing from thorn to  
 another growth that at a distance looks like spruce or alders but we  
 didn't try it. They saw a woodcock near from when the dogs' bills had  
 seen quail (I'm giving them credit for points, somewhat generously)  
 and I got a sense of movement as the birds seemed to drift out for

ahead. We had trouble getting dog work at the next spot, as 31/196  
we always do, but finally covered the area with no bird. Mystery!

There were some red haws on the ground (very few) but most haws in this  
country seem to have been "blasted" — dried up on black in the stems.

We left after 20 minutes and drove to Mt. Storm. Soon after leaving  
the mailbox there I saw a grouse in the road, moving from west to east.  
They get out to flush. It and it finally did was below the road.



GOING PLACES

100%  
and p 195

It was 4:35 when we got started at Great Hill and the light just failing.  
A ~~new~~ recent house built in the flat to the east has cut into the  
good thorn cover and we could see it thru the low thicket. Both dogs  
were working to work and out in the alder corner and Ray and I  
had crossed the wire fence and approached the big big snag, thinking of  
the days when we had shot one or two a thin creek by the time we'd get  
thru the fence, when a brace of grouse flushed — one — two — near the  
fence on our left and rose thru the lower trees. It was too late to  
get off a shot, altho there was a time when I would have snuffed and  
probably missed. My shoulder handicap keeps me from doing it now.  
and even tho that makes for more rational shooting, I still feel  
frustrated, and irritated because my dogs seem never to get me  
shooting over ground points. Instead of tearing around at thirty  
yards I wish they would not pass up birds near me.

There wasn't a woodcock within 20 miles and not a sign of one having been. (32)

It was getting too dark to see well when we turned back at the north end of the dense hawthorn thicket, and I took the more open woods back. Coming out on the small clearing sooner than expected.

I then got away to a steep impulse and cut diagonally thru the big timber in a line hoping to find the two grouse. The forest floor isn't "rocky" — it is rocks, and after they left me to go to the little stream and meet me, I struggled over rocks that never ended, leading me away from the stream. Was about too dark

to see by the time I managed to stumble across and at ~~last~~ <sup>last</sup> reach the stream. I could see the light of the Tavern to guide me, but Belton had managed to get separated from me and no amount of whistling and calling would bring him to me. Finally I heard my calling and knew my head Belton with her. We got to the car at the Tavern mostly by feel at 5:35 and dark.

We appear to have missed woodcock while in NY, as often happens when you leave home. These grouse moved and we seem crossing the road seems great action these days but in the first four weeks of the season I haven't had a shot at one.

As I write this on Thursday, snow is in all bushes and the ground and I feel winter is here. Actually, we'll have some good weather later on.

Saturday 15 November

Cool, cloudy 40°

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

Corinth # 2 Gray Dogwood

1 (not new) 2 flakin

Corinth #1

0

Belta 1 back

Quest

33/186

After snow and cold yesterday, the temperature rose to 40° and the snow melted, even at the Terra alta altitude. I stopped at the new house on the Gray Dogwood Cove and met the owner named Sampson who was pleasant and gave permission to hunt.

We covered the first margin when on our first visit as noted the three groups - odd how often the first trip is the best; is it that the birds become wild having been disturbed? Both days showed intense interest but did not hunt at the edge when the farm road had entered and coming out we found very fresh whistlers.

In the long hummock ever beyond the second clearing when we missed the 3 groups on our second visit, we finally got a flash from a tall tree but all we saw was the movement of the branches ~~and~~ long as the bird left. Soon afterwards another flash from a tree above us repeated the scenario and we caught a glimpse. I got a view of the distant bird and wondered he fled but we had no further contacts, then we followed carefully. Relocations are rare these days. I that we had come out on a new clearing, only to recognize the first long open area and the Sampson house in the distance. I'm still uncertain how I got there!

After a thorough search of the inside clearing and edge, we returned to the car and drove on out on road to explore.

(34)

There is no really good cover on the next fork, where we took for nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile until the place we turned when we found a hunter's car, no doubt a bow hunter. Cover here looked better.

We returned to Cove #1, where we found a young man and two girls shooting at targets with rifles, creating a nuisance racket. We entered where last time Bolton had jumped a 'cock. Today we had no contacts we could see, although Quest appeared to have seen a bird. We were hunting both dogs in here without bells and it was impossible to keep contact with them. Both dogs do well on the rare occasions this season when we get into game but without it, they move out of range, trying to land birds.

What is the advantage of gunning ~~the~~ anywhere? The feeling that there will be birds and dog work and action. It seems incredible that any land can be as barren of game as ours is now. At least this season seems to have the greatest display of winterberry we have seen. Perhaps I should renounce shooting for totony.

Monday 17 November  
Cloudy, cool, 50°  
2 hrs.

Hay Miller  
0

Bolton  
Quest

We had gone to try to find the Green Jim Nests he described near Roy Dwight Smith's, giving up when we saw the difficulty of reaching the place. Being in the area, we tried the Hay Miller place, described now, driving on the long farm road and up to the place the house had been, occupied now by phlegmatic cattle, that stood unmoving until the car bumper almost touched them. Tom has a strange way of making distances enormous, with everything farther away than it was.



35/86

I took a short turn over the hilltop where Ray and the dogs stayed at the car. I wasn't hunting, merely trying to find a place to hunt, but thro' the cover at one edge of a patch of woods seemed fair, I had no way of knowing how soon it would run out.

And so we drove - Ray driving - back down the hill to the angle of the road at the bottom, and hunted out the lower piece of cover following the woods road that leads to the old homestead - or so we hoped.

Short of a small clearing where some sort of excavation had been, I came on Quest pointing very solidly and intense just above the road. Pella came in from the lower part and backed him on the left of the road. I waited until Ray came up to us and took some photos. Finally Quest moved in excitedly but there had been no flush. These odd empty points seem to be characteristic of these days. In these ~~same~~ situations the backing dog gets a credit, while the central actor gets none - odd.

We came to the little show where Ray and Raff and I had our moment of glory with a point and a one-two but could a double retrieve. As tho' to count the years ago it had been, the difference Raff came under with the second guess ~~was~~ was then, but there was no trace of the humlock where the two birds had flared. Is it all only memory?

We tried the hillside, which had good cover, especially in contrast to the large ~~woods~~ <sup>cover</sup> everywhere else, and followed a faint logging trail that died out in thicket good enough to hold birds that weren't there.

Over more on the main woods road that curved unfamiliarly north, we came to a deer ~~tree~~ <sup>stand</sup> ~~in~~ a small <sup>cutting</sup> in a tree.

I couldn't accept this as the old farm site but found no other  
traces. all day was still open cover. I saw that as had come to the brink  
of Little Sandy valley, too far north for the old Miller farm site. It was  
getting a broad fine o'clock and light fading and both days both this time  
to was out of contact. We wanted and tried to reach Quest with the  
shack but with no results. At last Belton came in below us and came to us,  
but it required time and efforts with the shacks to at last get a screen  
out of Quest for below.

at quarter to five we started to retraces our trail back to the car.  
We came to the fork in the woods road when we had missed it by  
taking the good cover above. The lower road obviously was the one to the  
old Miller homestead. I regret not seeing it again but I doubt if I  
go there anymore, with one more old covert grown out and gone to Texas.

I realize I do something to myself by concentrating on trying to  
find woodcock during the first weeks when they might be found - this means  
losing it by trying in New York and missing it there as well. Now that it  
is time to center attention on grouse, the deer season will ~~uninterrupt~~  
two weeks beginning with next Monday. (wraps out)

Wednesday 19 November  
perfect, sunny, cool 40°  
2 hrs. CS WC

Rehobeth Thomas  
o mixed 1-1  
o quiet

Belton 1 bird.  
2 tracks  
Quest. 1 bird  
1 track

This was one of those sunny cool days you simply have to get in  
the car and go to far places. We chose Mt. Storm. We drove out the  
road to Clyde Davis's land and found a long water tube gate numbered

37/86

"Stony River Hunting Club."  
We came back partway and parked at a former landing clearing where the large timbering had been. We'd been told there was some grass there.

It was an expansive cutting with many logs and stacked piles and much blackberry growth and we began exploring with dogs. This was an unusual day, starting out as grass hunting and ending ~~as~~ as a search for woodcock.

The top flat was excellent stacked even with no food other than poor quality greens, but over the bridle into the Arnold Basin we came to a large area of excellent hawthorns. On such a day grass, if any, should have been there. They weren't, although the dogs covered it well and we fought through low hawthorn branches to the lower margin — typical of the Arnold Basin.

We hunted this month until we recognized the cover and the "gap" on top, where Quail goes as a stopping point in the semi-open growth, pointing toward a large log that looked ideal for either grass or 'cock. Belton came in and barked on command and while I lay took several pictures, I walked all around in front with no fear.

It had to have been a recent bird, like so many such situations this season. We stopped to eat lunch on the log.

We worked to the top opening and the back cattle road that leads to the old Arnold homestead. There they went east into <sup>the</sup> hawthorn edge and the log woods, striking out for the main road and the car, and arranging to meet me at the Robert Evans Papers.

courageous thing for her to do at that late hour and into strange (38)  
terrain. She made fast and was out of sight by the time I had got well  
on, obliquely opposite toward the "back throws," which I could see  
far below me to the west.

The sun was down in the tree skyline and a better cold set  
in, permeating my clothes. I put my redneck dicker over my  
other garments around my neck and used a plastic rain head cover  
to cut the cold under my caps and with my warmest gloves set  
out on the long hand to the bottom.

On the brink of the slope I saw Quest far ahead, standing  
on a high point in a separate clump of thorn, then saw Belton in  
ahead and realized Quest was backing him. Just then he broke and  
I knew a bird had probably lifted and suspect Belton had perched it.  
Moments later, Quest was on a very low point, his front end  
tipped over and his eyes staring and Belton came in and backed.  
I have two thoughts: either there were two cock, or the one cock had  
lifted and dropped almost immediately to one side. Certain of a  
chance at last, I walked in to Quest and on his right, trying  
to cover both left and right openings in each notch of the center  
hawthorn. The cock lay tight until I was within a few yards,  
then cut out sharply to the right about 4 feet off the ground  
and stayed behind the low growth, headed toward the  
edge of cover beyond — a beautiful escape and I could not see

Saturday 22 November 1966

perfect, cool, sunny 46°  
2:20-5:20 3 hrs.

Ray Guthrie  
mud 1-1  
1 shot - 0

Beltin  
Quot

4/186

The old Ray Guthrie Place is a classic specimen of the abandoned homestead with its shell of a distinctively undistinguished house and one pear tree, it is almost peninsular in its isolation, cut off by ~~a large stream~~ Little Sandy at the end of two roads to nowhere.

Rick Gyka had reported mowing 11 grouse which den was hunting early in the season and we were boarding it as our first de resistance until today. We tried for the first time driving the mud truck road through the huge grouse-up field and got within view of the house and a lot of scenery up Little Sandy Valley before we was stopped by washed-out gullies and rocks.

I wondered aloud to Ray if the great red oak was still standing and that I could see its top above the thicket woods on the hillside.

The old place had been spared the stumpmin' shovel for lack of coal but three-year-old clear cutting had almost surrounded it with impenetrable blackberry thorns and white growth. We followed a deer trail through this briar hell - a sort of deer-length tunnel - to reach the good knob cover on the creek hillside, working down over the excellent cover with grapes above and on the ground until we came out on the log powerline at the stream, which is high and wild and beautiful.

Grouse should have been in George Bird Evans Papers this if they  
West Virginia and Regional History Center

know what ~~space~~ they were supposed to know, but being ground, <sup>that</sup> they know better.

The hollow was too dense in hemlocks and too steep to worm along the stream bank, and so we turned up and climbed on easy ~~down~~ path over rocks in the evergreen woods. When the hollow became twice as steep, Ray stayed with the deer path in what I considered an impasse and I tried to find a way up toward daylight over hills of treetops, started and thrown down over a gully. The branches were nearly all too rotten to hold me when I tried climbing on them and I resorted to searching out <sup>fallen</sup> ~~hemlock~~ <sup>hemlock</sup> trunks (small ones) to hang to and step on.

The jumble of ~~trunk and branch~~ <sup>branch</sup> piles became more complex and I found myself in a place where almost every step let me down to my waist, or rather crotch since <sup>my other leg</sup> I was still wooded with the last tangle. Doing it two-handed would have been bad but holding a gun in one hand made it close to impossible. I was past the point of no-return and kept seeing what seemed an opening about me I kept finding more of the same in front. At one place I was in the full depth of my left leg and had to make four giant heaving tries to at last get both feet on a slippery dead hemlock body and follow it, four-footed monkey ~~foot~~ <sup>in</sup> fashion, to the next problem. At last I reached a growing hemlock <sup>in</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>firm</sup> and managed to get to the top of a simple blackberry whipsaw stand where Ray found me after his own steep climbing

ordeal. We came out on one of the log roads on top that got us out of 43/180  
the clearcutting and into the normal deer stuff & the main old  
road. ~~Downing~~ That one time in the dim part we actually drove our first station wagon  
down to Little Sandy and across the shaly bridge and up the far side.

Before parking we stopped to eat lunch after having spent the best  
part of the afternoon uselessly. Rick had moved the gears in the Nash piles  
across from us and after our rest, we started to hunt that area. Even  
those ~~branch~~ <sup>branch</sup> piles were killers. ~~and~~ I had followed my logging trace  
out to the road and was walking it uphill when a flicker sound  
near the dogs on my left became a grouse crossing right ahead of  
me. I got my gun not quite up when my shoulders refused to get  
it further and I fired with the ~~stock~~ stock on my arm and blew  
my face, merely pointing with both hands and of course saw the  
grouse fly on and sail over the thick clearcutting and away. Was  
the first shot presented me, and a good one, in four weeks of getting this  
season and I was engulfed with frustration, puzzled why, after a  
year of dry-mount practice those shoulders should still nonfunction.  
At such times the stock seems too long and impossible to mount and I  
keep wondering if I'll have to have it shortened.



Making that shot would have done my soul a lot of good - not just to shoot a grouse after four years of hoping, but to know one more that I could.

We hunted the rest of the afternoon with the same in our eyes ~~clear~~ <sup>clear</sup> days as nice to be in the <sup>coverts,</sup> woods but had no vision. There was no other trace of grouse in that entire area. We doubled back and came to a <sup>red</sup> pickup truck at the crossroads. It turned out to be a man named <sup>1</sup>Frayer from Fairbairn who owns the Guthrie land now and who cut it three years ago. He was looking it over for deer hunting and very nicely gave us permission to hunt anywhere.

We worked the area for the one grouse and failed to near it. At the last fifteen minutes I covered the Quebec corner and found nothing. Where are the grouse the other man report? We took the big field thru waist-high goldenrod - an amazingly long way to the car which we reached well after sunset.

Today was handled the wrong way - the wrong way in, the wrong decision to get cut off ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup> the powder on the creek, the loss of the only shot I've had all season. We'll go back later and do it right.



Monday 24 November  
cold, raw, afternoon 40°

Henckel P. once North  
0

Bellon  
Quest

45/86

2:45-5:10 / 2½

Pennsylvania Week again. A late start after a rainy morning, and we went to the north end, covering the back country till tomorrow. Conditions were perfect, cool, damp, cloudy with hope of clearing, which it ~~never~~ <sup>never</sup> did. Also hope of grouse, which never were. We hunted from the downline out the mud road to the clearing and all the way to the south run and down the path, to come back up thru the rock gap (lost the track in here) and stopped to eat, then out to the clearing once more and to the end - no ever left most places - and not one feather all the way. Bellon was hunting mammals, as was Kay & I; Quest was mostly hunting and too far. Quest started his new kink; standing and wagging his tail as if listening to celestial music, a crazy quirk that will have to be corrected before I lose my mind. Has never had one of my dogs do this. It began in NY. Why?

A great disappointment as a day.

Tuesday 25 November

Henckel South

Bellon

perfect, sunny & cloudy  
mild 50°

heard 5-6 flushes  
1 shot - 0

Quest 1 prod (flush)

2:00 - 5:30 / 3½ hrs

This was a grand day to hunt, with sun in the first part of the afternoon. We spent some time wandering about slashed huts that blocked the road at the beginning.

at the forks we took the lower road along the base of the cliff through gorgeous humbuck/bleedeland cover with only a suggestion of game when Belton seemed to bark trees below us, a sign we did not count.

Turning back, we climbed the steep path through the rock gaps and hunted out the dim traces and up to the flat on top, where I saw a quest coming toward us on the left, so solid as a quoniam flock. I count it a point by a stretch of terms. (My judgment says it was a stop at ground.) I say marked the quoniam by a low humbuck topping the brush and we put it on hold till we made a further circle.

~~the~~ Quest was on the right and I saw him make a dash, as if breaking at wing and I count <sup>it</sup> a quoniam that seemed to have gone toward the top of the hill. It was time to eat and we stopped near our usual place and I sat on a rotting stump and I say took a couple of photos, one in betw and a couple in color of the Pendergast being in a sapling fork, reminiscent of what happened near here in '84.

We made a big cast following the flight line of the quoniam flock through low greenberries toward the brush of the flat and ended up tall open woods without a contact. I say found a dim woods road that led as back north and to the <sup>usual</sup> low cover — a magnificent brush with spotted small humbuck — perfect ground cover.

As we came near the "back" road that passes the "deer camp bus" we turned uphill on the narrow trail to the top clearing. I stopped while the dogs worked the area, and remarked to I say about the group of 7 we flushed there several years ago. There was a quoniam flock behind us

47/186

and I wheeled a took a fast shot as the grouse topped out  
straightaway and disappearing. It missed but was at least a successful  
mount-and-fire, an achievement with my encumbered shoulder  
action.

It was late, but as retraced our path down the narrow trail with both  
dogs searching frantically and me hoping a thin hope that I might  
might have hit the bird. On the bottom road, it flushed below and I lay  
quiet — I neither saw nor heard — proving the grouse was not down.

In both the flush and the first flush above, neither dog got scent, tho  
they had passed within yards of the bird. It seems strange, but I think  
they neither hunt carefully enough; too much dash and speed.

after passing the deer camp, a drab looking affair, we passed  
at the road corner to put on our <sup>open</sup> flannel shirts against the growing  
cold. It had clouded over and the sun was down, with cold setting in.

at 4:35 we started up the parallel trail to the top clearing where  
at 4:42 we took the top trail to cover the upper cover on our way to the  
back clearing and eastward. I had scarcely started in when a  
grouse flushed from the path's edge and showed against the opening  
about 100 — a clear view but too brief for a shot. However after it,  
I lay and a second ~~the~~ bird cross from left to right in front. I did not  
see a hour it. I felt neither dog was where it belonged and would  
have been finding them birds — I mean to get no dog work on

48  
ourselves and asked Ray to touch Quinn with the stick. It was then that she found she didn't have the checker.

Feeling certain it had been dropped when we put our extra sticks at the lower corner, we turned back and hurried down the direct path but found no trace of the instrument. With only one faint chance that it had dropped out of Day's camera <sup>bag</sup> ~~case~~, we started up the parallel path trying to see in the fading light. I found it at the big mud puddle near the top, lying just in the corner on the left - a beautiful sight. Odd, how circumstances can make an ordinary object lovely.

Our more complete, we hurried out the top trail, very dim now and growing closed, and found our way to the back clearing.

At 5:15 when we should have been getting out of the darkness woods we started the long trek back, feeling as much as seeing our way over rocky footing with the two white wretches that were the dogs giving us some help ahead.

Placed by the stupid traps thrown into the main road, we found the back woods trees that eventually led us to the string of muddy trails at the bottom, only to find the land to the west a series of deep pools we couldn't walk. At last we came to Susan Mae Henshel's place with their outside lights turned on to guide us and reached the station wagon at ten minutes to six in almost total darkness.

The day had been good, with a few small clouds. By dark

of joints disturbs me, for I can get any no help from my legs to make shots more possible. The experience getting off a shot at all seems out of proportion in a curious way, to a man who has shot over 750 game, but life eventually distills to such limitations that the simplest act seems all there is.

Last Saturday I failed to buy off a very good chance because my shoulders locked; today they click on the straightaway, but I am still faced with the decision as to whether to have my stock shortened - a serious move. But I found that the <sup>distance</sup> length of pull from the rear trigger is much easier, making the mount more comfortable and less stretch with my <sup>double</sup> handicap of shoulder injury, and I think I will take measures next week with Nelson Forbes, after consulting David Trullinger if I can reach him.

at least, my legs are not crippled, thank G. Two people who can take the kind of walking in that cover at eighty are in damned fine shape. Day is magnificent.

Thanksgiving Day  
27 November

A. J. McMullen Place

Bella 2 BACKS

Quart

Early, sunny to cloudy 46°  
1 1/2 to 2 1/2 hrs.

Dinner Bell Corner

On word from the two Pa. deer hunters from Markleysburg that they had moved a few acres on the State Game Lands near the McMullen School, we drove there, but, to avoid ~~confusion~~ <sup>confusion</sup>, parked at the ~~school~~ <sup>school</sup> ~~center~~ <sup>center</sup>

found the cutover McMullen land best looking, with regrowth (50)  
clearcutting about head-high and very dense. There were odd water holes  
among stumps and rocks where we started but we found log roads leading the  
over. I suspect we tend to accept ideas as facts, and like all other  
clearcut cover that has looked good to me because I have heard and read  
that it is, I was found it barren. I couldn't help think what a good story  
it would have been - "Letter to an Old Friend" had we found it stuff with  
grasses.

We covered a good portion of the area which must have been 75 acres,  
mostly an hawk. We came to the mouth of Brown Creek Valley and larger  
woods with *quercus* leaves and some *barro* grasses but not  
enough cover to justify the climb down. A State Game Land road borders  
the north edge of the cutting and we turned back after following it a way.  
Finally came to fresh footprints where two men had hunted the last  
portion behind the McMullen house. Couldn't help think how period there  
would have been to have known ~~the~~ what had happened to the woods, even  
tho it was changed to what should have been good cover, but isn't.

We came out behind the shanty new church and hurried to the  
car and drove to the Dinner Bell corner which looked much the  
same but slightly more tall. It was after 4:00 and clouds had  
~~not~~ getting dark but we hunted the perimeter edge and up to the  
top flat, now infested with trout heaps. Quail gave us a good staunch  
point and Belton lacked what I say got pictures but tho I tho it  
might be a 'cock, it proved empty. Don Quail trees so hard.

I finally got us to the good grassy corner where the two dogs located a dead doe, killed out of season, unless it had been wounded by a bow hunter. I got them away from there and as we walked up the cover, Quert went on hunt in a dense tangle of various weeds and Rabbits backed. I walked around to the left and after taking more pictures, I lay moved into the tangle and a rabbit shot out between Quert's feet. He just missed catching the poor little thing but after a chase he returned empty-mouthed, thanks be. I can't recall him for pointing a rabbit when that is the extent of game!

We hunted each other over with both dogs working hard and well.

We drove back the way we had come, via Flat Rock. Just beyond "The Poor Man's", I lay ~~could~~ saw a woodcock flickering against the log sky, with a lovely sunset glowing over distant Chestnut Ridge. Woodcock Mountains well named. Pity that the only moment of truth in a day "great seeing" is a woodcock sighted on the way home ~~or~~ a rabbit pointed by your dog.

Yet there is so much to be thankful for on this Thanksgiving Day.



78%  
73%  
top p 209

Friday 28 November 14  
Cool, cloudy, 46°  
3 hrs.

Hemlock South  
moved 9 (4 new) - 13 flocks  
0

Beltin; lost  
Quest 3 prod.

This was another "survival day" - this time I lost Beltin and Kay.

We concentrated on the high portion of the covert, having moved across than on Tuesday. From the "back clearing" I took the straight path and turned north on what I thought was the top trail to the high clearing. Instead, I ended at the deer-camp clearing.

We had become separated from Beltin, who was moving towards, and we spent some time at the apple tree corner, <sup>whistling</sup> ~~calling~~ and waiting for him. Kay heard a grouse flick at my voice - they never show themselves to me - then a second, and when I spoke again, a third, all were round in the direction of the deer camp. Still without Beltin, as many Quest toward the direction of the flights but soon came to the drop-off into the hollow that runs generally north. In the bottom below me I heard the sounds of wings and saw Quest run in the direction of a reflex.

Turning back, we started toward the deer camp road and Kay heard another flock - #4 grouse that seemed to go toward the top clearing. We had seen one fresh woodcock droppings and when Quest pointed staunchly I walked in, expecting a 'ack, but nothing materialized.



Too late to follow it, we worked the path toward the deer camp with <sup>55</sup>/<sub>182</sub>  
no trace of the second bird. Once more we turned up the deer trail to  
the clearing at the top, where at 4:45, we separated, hoping to  
locate Belton.

I sent Kay down the shorter trail to the deer camp clearing,  
where we agreed she would take the lower trail and meet me at the  
back clearing at 5:00 with barely time to set out before dark.

I took the top trail to the far cross trail near the cliff where we had  
last been in touch with Belton. Now I turned left and reached  
the back clearing at 4:55 to await Kay.

When she didn't show after five, I started out to meet her  
on the lower trail, beginning to whistle and call for her. I  
heard her response <sup>distinct and</sup> far away, and calling to her to stay where she  
was, I hurried on. I could tell she heard me and at one place  
I was calling to her, as I saw Quirt show interest in a clump  
of low tangle on the right of the path. I looked up in time to see a  
form disappear over a hemlock on my left and realized it was the  
one grown of the day I had seen glimpsed. It would have been a first shot  
but a possible one.

Hurrying on, I realized that Kay had taken the "parallel trail"  
back to the top clearing where we had parted, and calling her to stay



them, I arrived to find her, wondering whom I had been!

We got started along the top trail once more, dim ~~in~~ <sup>in the</sup> uncertain light, and

at 5:15, reached the back clearing again and started what was now a familiar trek in the dark. It takes half an hour and we ended at the small dump trailer in the bottom to which of Peltan had been there. It proved to be the home of Bob Nedron's friend Pat Carter who had heard all about us and our ruttles. Peltan ~~had~~ <sup>was</sup> not ~~there~~ there, but as we reached the highway we heard him working and found him waiting at the car <sup>for</sup> how long? It was a joyful reunion. The Huchels were not home but fortunately we had waited loyally for us. These wonderful ruttles eat what we go through because of them.

It was a good day, the best this season near without doubt — 9 quans for <sup>13</sup> ~~12~~ flukes with 3 prod on snow by Quant!

Saturday 29 November

Henrievell South

57/86

perfect weather, cool, sunny 42°

moved 6 (3 new) - 6 flocks  
0

Quest: 1/med.

3 1/4 hrs.

Pennsylvania Week has given us grand shooting weather. This was our fifth day gunning with only Wednesday raining. I did something today that bothered me: I left Bolton at home for what I believe was the first time in his life, and I felt badly, but it was good for Quest and much easier for Ray and me to keep track of one dog. Mostly it was to give Quest a chance to show what he could do, and he responded well, handling at a good range and checking with us. He Quest made a new grouse below the road on our way in, which could have been a point. With deer rifles being sighted in most of the day as distinct popping sounds, we hunted to the back clearing when we could hear a chainsaw grinding up firwood at the deer camp. We stayed away from that area and took the top trail to the top clearing and down the log road to the southwest end of the peninsula. Hoping to meet the grouse we had flushed on our first day in here, we turned back and followed a dirt path thru thickets. The flush, as usual, gave me no view but Ray marked the flight and we followed back along the slope to the big woods at the base of the cliff. We gave up when we ran out of cover. I've never hunted what could be good Woodcock down over the cliff and I saw a faint trace that may lead over but felt as had not the time to try it. We ate lunch sitting on a log in the open woods and Ray took several photos of Quest and me. We moved on NE and had reached the edge cover

when I saw Quert, <sup>close</sup> to my left but went but not point as a grouse  
 flushed with a loud sound, staying behind what could best be described  
 as a ganglia of trees, showing only as it went off them the tall trees too  
 far to try for. This is the story of my gunning chances this season, a  
 pattern that makes for misery. I say saw it clearly, and once more  
 we remarked that I should walk second-in-line and let I say walk  
 in front, and I wonder if I should. It was too late in the day to go  
 back after that bird which probably pitched over the cliff like the  
 first. There was a thought that it could have been a reference of  
 #1, but we count it #2, which doesn't throw out an overall count for this  
 covert as there, or it, are part of the 3 we made here yesterday.

Soon after, in a day - heard the #3 as a distant flash in  
 the large woods to our left. Grouse are so flighty this season that it  
 is difficult to know what puts them up.

According to the activity at the deer camp, we took the trail up to the  
 top clearing once more. Quert had had one point on our first entry at  
 the top clearing today - a honey in the deer cover near the peak of the  
 knob and on the right of the road down over. We were certain it was a  
 productive as both I say and I moved in, and it was - a rabbit that  
 lay tight, tearing out through the greenbrier and giving Quert a chase. I  
 can't blame him for pursuing them.

We worked the top trail ~~back~~ to the back clearing and  
 decided to make a cut across the shoulder between the two hollows  
 and head for the log road on the ~~low~~ shoulder. By doing it we saved

Wednesday 10 December  
cloudy, cold, 39°  
2½ hrs.

Hardershell  
mud 2-2  
0

Beltin 3 back  
Quest

68/86

after deer-season layoff and 2 days of rain we took a short hunt, parking at Glennis and climbing hill to the clearcut area at the powdermill. Hunted a log road down steep rocky muddy slope thru dense whip-regrowth — I question the value of clearcut ever — and then worked west to the old road trace as done years ago in a few horror experiences.

1 boy called "groser" and I saw a form disappear hunting from over the treetops. Quest came dashing down from the jumble of stripmines unreplaced piles, now grown to rough cover. We found the ancient trace, now mostly a gully, and worked down and below the clearcut area and thru boulders and larger cutting now comes back to excellent grapevines and log-pile cover.

We located a log road with easier footing and was working up a gradual grade when a grouse came across from the right in a streaking cross flash at good range for a shot, but was gone before I could mount. My experiences this season ~~seem~~ seem to be limited to such flash views, and I wonder if I am getting slower in visual response. I find myself raising my gun pointing at the bird as a good type of mount, but in doing this, and with my ~~shoulders~~ <sup>arms</sup> failing to set the gun all the way to my shoulder, due to my shoulders' failure. I feel if I restrained the mount until I see the grouse and then brought the gun up all the way in one

motion, as I do in dry-mounting to color my shoulder problem. (62)

I would have a chance to shoot. However, these flash views at crossing birds are scarcely long enough; quartering a straightaway flunker would be easier but are too rare. From off Hellish shots.

It walked over way thru magnificent Remick rocky started over to the powderline, and then climbed the powderline right-of-way over rocks and ~~brush~~ low cover up an impressive hill - at least we got exercise. The views from the climb were stunning, - looking down at Little Sandy below the Ray Gutter ridge, and from higher up to the distant blue Chestnut Ridge. Faraway we saw a huge tractor trailer moving like a toy along the throat of Mt 48 and grabbed the address of this land over you on back of the highway.

At the top trail, Quest had a point that had to be a grass but wasn't - a repeat of a point he made earlier in the clearing growth of blackberry covers with rather lacking both points. They were not even a rabbit. We had a third such point in a clump of great hanging with blue berries in the powderline clearing on top again, with Belle lacking (he at least is getting backpoint credits) and again nothing.

We feel there must be hot scent from grass preferences that ~~have~~ left us in arrival. Quest tries so hard and so do Belle and us, but we can't seem to turn them into grass. It was a grand day, cold and ungrating - and beautiful. Give us more.

Thursday 11 December  
cold, cloudy, sprinkles 38°  
2 1/2 hrs.

Ray Guthrie

mailed 3 (2 new) 4 flowers  
0

Bellon 2 backs  
Quest 1 prod.

63/86

With forecasts of snow flurries we dressed warmly and headed for the  
good covert, only to have drops of rain show on the windshield as  
drew out rd 26. With low-hanging vapor clouds looking ominous, we  
gave up our plans and drove to Lower Hog Run, only to find the  
place heavily plastered with yellow notices: "If you can't afford the fine,  
don't cross the line." There was something ominous about the  
sight of them and when we saw a signature, illegible but not  
the name Lewis, we turned back and, with the sprinkles abated,  
went to the Daisy Reed road, where once more the rain "pinkled the  
puddles" and we sat in the car to wait it out.

It let up shortly and we got started out the road to the  
Guthrie place at 2:45 with a cooler quality about the air.

We found nothing in the good greenbrier corner on the left —  
plenty of berries there year — ~~not~~ in the opposite corner of  
thorns and log piles where last season we found birds. A brief  
shower stopped us and we waited under the protection of a hemlock,  
where we ate lunch and kept the dog with us.

As we worked the area, Quest made a solid point  
near a log pile but to one side and over again I wound up tight  
and walked in front and around him, only to be let down again,  
with adrenaline unspent as I let down almost entirely this year.

I can't comprehend these empty points - points that never produce.  
You can almost count on them not being a bird, but each time I get  
wound up.

Finally, as we hunkered down the slope above Little Sandy on a log  
road among cuttings and scattered hummocks, I lay heard a grouse flush  
above us. After letting the dogs work the hillsides, we turned up a  
log road to follow the flush sound toward the top. This is glorious  
terrain on the flat - Hawthorn and crabapple and hummocks and a  
few patch pines. I can remember the days when a few grouse used it,  
but mostly I found them in those days down on the hillside and rather  
along the creek. It all looks as good or better, than in those days.

Working the numerous paths, I lay heard a flush and saw Quest  
move a few steps from what seemed a point, then stop and watch the  
flight to the west. We followed.

I lay was behind me, leading Deltor who had been running out of  
control after a good start at comfortably range. Quest looks better when solo  
but he failed to find a grouse that let me walk within four feet,  
then flushed from I lay who had found on the path. Again I did  
not hear the flush, a secret; ~~and~~ I seem to be unaware of 90% of the  
action. It is an unfortunate situation, depriving me not only of  
the excitement of the hunt but placing me in a sort of void of  
seeing or hearing, and robbing me of all sense of assurance.



We soon had a point from Grant in front and at our feet of <sup>65/186</sup>  
the path near a hemlock - again empty but a backpoint credit  
of Pelton.

With Kay's usual marking of the last bird, we turned back and  
followed the line past a stand of pitch pine to the upper edge of  
cover and the impassible clearcut thicket, then worked to the right  
and then hemlocks.

I was on a deer trail thru clumps of low cover and at  
a brush hut and granular with blue berries, took the right side -  
the wrong one. Quail came in from the left and walked into a  
grove that flattered low left-queering in the open part near hemlocks.  
A point would have alerted me; as it was, the bird was still in range but  
gone before I could mount. I found myself with the gun halfway to  
my shoulder where it seems impossible to mount smoothly. There was  
a time when I would have got off a fast shot, but no. Today it left  
me frustrated.

There could have been 4 or 5 pairs of quail by a loose count, or 2 by a  
tight one; conservatively I count them 3 for 4 flocks. We hunted out to  
a log road about the upper edge and east to the big barner field and  
then to the main road, and back in half light to the car. The weather  
behaved well after its dripping start - ~~dry~~ drizzly - and then was at  
least active, but unsatisfactory in the sum of shooting and confidence  
in myself and my gun, which I have just had shortened to  $14\frac{3}{8}$ " full.

Monday 15 December  
mild, sunny, 42°  
1 3/4 hrs.

Paul Uphold  
march 1 - 1 flash  
0

Beltin 1 back  
Quest

(66)

We got a late start, getting into the woods about 3:00 and parking at the usual place above Paul's. The log road was deeply rutted by tracks from the doe deer hunters last Friday & Saturday, and the frozen ground was thawing, to create a gummy surface unstable to walk on, so we turned left into the good cover on the east.

This is excellent ground cover with grapevines and the ground covered with grapes. Both dogs were working well and at a nice comfortable range, so often the case when they start out full of expectations like their summer. We had scarcely got started when Kay heard a faint grass flick in front - neither dog at the place, but rather close, for I saw Beltin stop at the flick.

That was it, for the day.

16 We worked east to circle the dense grapevines, and as we approached the house on the road we heard a chicken squawking, and knew Beltin was in pursuit. I reached the spot quickly, while Kay held Quest on leash, and before long Beltin came to me retrieving a coal-black chicken, definitely different. He sat at command and I removed the bird, identical with the one he killed last year at Paul Uphold's, and I proceeded to the house with Beltin on leash and a four-pound dead chicken in hand, prepared to pay damages.

To my surprise, the house was vacant with a yard full of poor enough trash to have filled the rooms. Not one to argue with

success, I laid (tossed) the carcass nearby and returned to Kay and Quest who was waiting to join the fun. We have the

conviction that this was one of Paul's black flock, gone wild after  
dogs had scattered them last winter. Belton had a sense of having  
at least achieved something and if I'd had the suspicion to know a  
blackcock when I saw one, we could have counted on day a success.

We hunted west through grand cover but with the sun in our  
eyes (a sunny day is always pleasant to be out in, but can play the  
devil with vision). At the descending log road we crossed and  
entered the old stripmining area. Charley Robertson had got away  
with murder here — no replacement to speak of and now it is  
a blackberry well that cut up Quest's tail immorally. I had  
tried bandaging it before we left (he'd had a bad condition long day as it  
been out) but he tore it off immediately.

Quest had a solid point into a mess of blackberry canes,  
backed by Belton. I tried to unravel it but couldn't get all the way  
in. He holds these empty points staunchly and I am puzzled —  
suspect rabbits in certain cases but only a few materialize.

We ate lunch on the slope above, then walked thru good cover  
to Paul's ruin of the farm, where greenbrier berries being blue, but  
with no grass. If I seem to dwell on trivia, it is because there  
are the small details we live by these days, not gunning. I know  
Bill Howdrosell hunted this cover hard for years (about did he find?)  
but since he had a stroke this summer I hoped that would change. However,  
Paul tells me he was back with a friend before deer season. He  
doesn't have the sense to get up a better idea myself.



BELTON RETRIEVES A BLACKCOCK.

Wednesday 17 December  
sunny to cloudy, cool 42°

Ray Guthrie  
mashed 4 not new - 4  
0

Belton  
Quest

2:30 - 5:40 / 3 1/2 hrs.

Again to this grand covert, walking out the top road and covering the first corners with no contacts. My vision giving me some difficulty. We lunch sitting on a rock on edge of the old road we negotiated with our first wood-bodied station wagon in the 40s when, and now, this country was, and is, remote.

Afterwards, we hunted the good flat where we sawed birds last time, and at the place where I saw a grouse on the edge of the path, a grouse flushed (a noise flicking round of wings) and seemed to go thru the same group of pitch pines.

We hunted out to the tangle of groundric where we flushed the fourth grouse last time, and nothing made a grouse so out,

then a second, and moments later, a third. Ray saw two of them,

I scarcely heard more than one.

The dogs seem unable to pound and pin birds, yet give us points or empty scent, the grass being fiendishly wild.  
We worked back, trying to locate the last flock, and then hunted down over the hillside above Little Sandy in the hope of moving the two that seemed to have pitched down over. We didn't, but hunted out the good flat between the hillside and the stream, a large area we had seen one day from the far side.

Back on top, we tried hunting the flat to where the 3 had flushed and had a good point by Quest, whom I saw but scent, flugging and then went in and froze at the edge of the original flock. Feeling one of the guns might have moved back in an unlikely chance - I pushed ahead and let Belter work in instead of stopping him to back point, with no bird materializing.

It was late but I kept ~~pushing~~ <sup>going</sup> on out following, a deer path then the brain felt further and further until it died out in a cul de sac and we had to retrace our steps and find our way to the main road in fairly light.

10 On the way, Belter came to us and lay down unlike him. He has been working like a four-year-old all season, and today had hunted hard. This seemed almost like a blood sugar drop with some appearance of confusion. We gave him about 10 brownie yeast tablets and walked him on a leash for reassurance, later giving him some "special treat" sunflower seed butter, and he walked with Ray to the car where they helped him in. At home he

seemed fairly normal and larked for his supper, which he ate with fervor, but both he and Quest showed fatigue. Bellin's pulse was about 120 all the while he slept (It had been fast when we noticed his tiredness, but so was Quest's.) <sup>at home,</sup> Resting, Quest's was 72, but Bellin remained fast. Considering that Bellin is past 10 1/2, he has been phenomenal, and a situation like this seems surprising but I suppose is not reason for concern. But, as Dr. Norris said, we are "feds about our dogs."

Monday 22 December  
Cold, sunny, 32°  
3:00 - 5:30 / 2 1/2 hrs

Liston  
Paul ~~Ward~~ Ward  
mowed 2 - 2  
0

Bellin  
Quest

It has been years since I've been to this cove. The road in looks the same, the area at the high wall mine the same; there is the same trashy junk including a dog's hide - face and ears and all.

We found a jeep parked close us that was a DNR vehicle with a Paul Ward, who was driving out and stopped, recognizing us from our photos in TUSL. He was inspecting the old mine entrance, and, like all DNR, had time on his hands. He had walked out the old woods road and mowed 2 acres - about the only 2 in the cove. He was finding birds in Kennison County (the no one else was); that guess just couldn't be shot out but couldn't understand why there weren't geese in the good grasses in the ridge above the mine.

We followed his tractor for a piece out the ridge side and headed for the valley on the west, hoping to get to the area back of Roy Dwight Smith's. Quest and Bellin whistled like angels, mowed & turkeys down on us in beautiful overhead flights that geese never offer. As Ward gave consideration to the numbers of turkeys in

relation to the two-week fall season vs 4½ months on grass? 7/1/86

The further we walked around the ridge the more open the cover became, until we gave up trying to find the Smith land and climbed to the crest of the ridge under the stripmine on top and began hunting larch through increasing numbers of gopherwrens.

Suddenly there was the loud sound of a flash behind my left shoulder, but as almost always this year, the grouse was gone with no chance to even see it. We came to a ditch extending along the stripmine for as far as we walked, flooded and with cattails.

We got away from it at the first break in the mass of blackberry canes below (I can't remember such oceans of blackberries as we've got into this season) and worked down to a small clearing with some apple trees - a place I remember fondly. It looked good but proved

empty. It was late and we sat on a rock on the lower side and ate lunch, then after a short restie farther out into masses of gopherwrens, turned and started to hunt the ridge lower down. I hear people say they find grouse "in gopherwrens." If you then are grown in gopherwrens, they would be in them, with proper recognition on the ground. There are instead of grass, rocks recognition on the very steep, but today. I hadn't remembered the grade as so steep and would if I used to hunt only around the upper level.

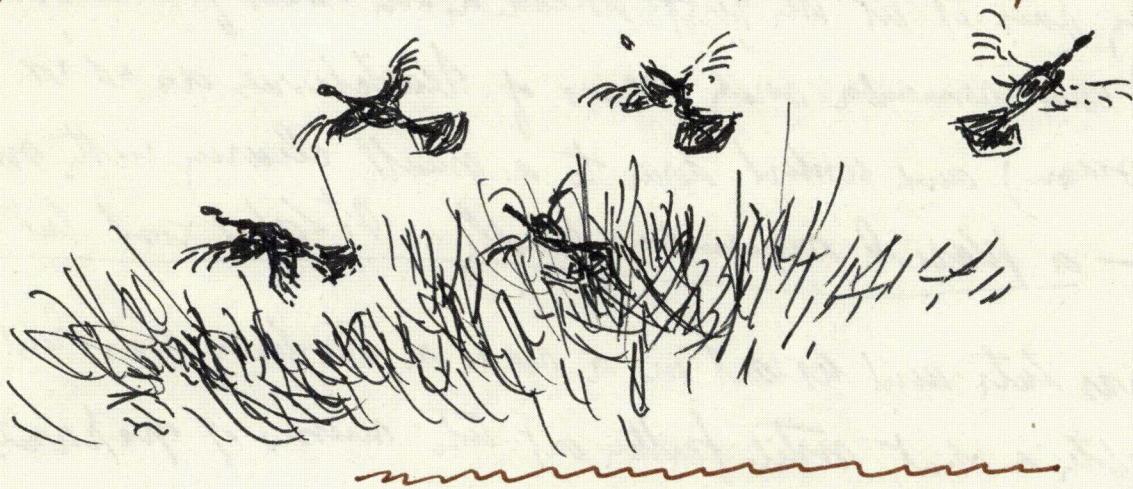
We had started, and it didn't look any less steep above, and rocky as it was, was becoming a problem to negotiate in the gathering dusk. This seemed to be so by road and danger of falling

made walking tricky. But there were masses of quail  
everywhere, many black on way.

(22)

at last I found a log road, years old, and I took us around  
the ridge and at last joined up with a down-going road  
that took us to the lower level where we had come out at first. I  
heard a quon flash ahead — one that probably was one of the two  
Wes had put out.

It is a magnificent event with quail for a hundred  
quon, but all us were two. And first 8 turkeys sailing over.



Tuesday 23 December

dragging, cold, 38°

2:35 - 5:35 / 3 hrs.

Wellborn Place

meat 2-2  
0

Pelton 1 head  
1 back

Quail

Yesterday we tried waxing the hair on the tips of Quail's tail with  
paraffin, which soon wore off with a tip as bloody as ever. Today I made  
another attempt to wrap it with Dermacel and adhesive tape and did a good  
job. It stayed on all day. Part of the trick is to wrap it at the last minute before  
starting hunting, with Quail's mind on things other than removing the bandage.

Opposite to last evening's descent on pretty terrain steeply down,  
today we started up, really up, to gain the top of the ridge.



brink of the stripmine. Taking it in zig-zag contours we made  
 it but came up against an almost vertical barrier compounded  
 both of logs, treetops and mud. I hauled Kay my unbraced gun and  
 clambered up, then pulled her by the gun. To my dismay, I found  
 yellow clay imbedded in the checkerung on the head of the Purdiey  
 stick in a nasty mess. I discovered it when the breach lever wouldn't  
 close normally, blocked by a partial of mud on the breach face of  
 the right barrel, <sup>fouled</sup> ~~fouled~~ by my right glove when I reloaded. I had  
 grasped a stone coming up, transferring mud when I later took  
 the gun from Kay. <sup>later</sup> At home I removed the dried clay from the  
 checkerung with a ~~stiff~~ toothbrush, but not readily.

We found the stripmine extended east along the top but  
 leaving most of the excellent cover. Kay heard a grouse flush up  
 ahead but couldn't tell if it was from one of the dogs, who was  
 working handsomely. When there were two birds last year there was one  
 this.

We ate lunch on the bowline, restraining Quast from  
 wandering while we ate. It was after four when we moved on, going  
 down over to the back road with no action in cover that should have  
 provided birds.

On the back road to the Wellman hill in a thicket at the  
 hillside field, Quast was standing high on point from the road.  
 I hurried to him with a short brass whistle to let him know I  
 saw. He holds like a rock, one of the staunchest dogs I've had. When  
 I arrived he moved into the cover and George Bird Evans Papers  
West Virginia and Regional Historical Center

I edged around to the left, squeezing between the thickets and the fence. Still he stood, and Belton came in and looked what Ray made in for some photos. I wanted, almost certain it was no good, and was hoping cravenly for a cover of grass, which I <sup>think I</sup> would have shot at, showing the condition I was in. Ray pushed into the dense thicket edge, from the inside, and when Quest held in spite of my order to go on, Belton moved in and then pointed in front of Quest, and a rather small rabbit shot out past me. I'm not yet at the extreme where I will shoot at rabbits but nothing could have stopped Quest from a long chase, and I can hardly blame him.

We were pressed for time but I worked up to the point looked northwest up the far valley, following log roads until it seemed as hard to press left up the hill if we were to get back before dark. Partway up the dense cover I saw Belton on point - less than a solid point with tail level and straight out. It must be at age six or ten that tail carrying on point goes down, but near the intensity. I couldn't get around to his point so had to try from the rear but the grouse didn't care for any. I lay head, my saw, it go, and I saw Belton break flush - and down this it was only that, it was everything - Belton's grand point that did him and us good, with all the effort to get through the tangle. Ray followed a deer path, a low and narrow deer, and I managed to get through to the log end on the upper edge, with

masses of grapevines tangled in the tops of the tall woods about -  
someday we must hunt it. As it was we pushed for the bottom and  
took the lower road down the Wellman hollow in near gloom,  
working around the frozen stream and reaching the highway and  
the car in almost total darkness. All our hunts seem to be "survival."

Two grass in cover like that is ridiculous. I say said the  
ground in the far basket when Belton pointed was purple with  
grapes - "a winery."



LOYAL BELTON.

Friday 26 December  
cloudy, quiet, cold. 35°  
2:30 - 5:00 / 2 1/2 hrs.

Hartman Place  
mowed 5 - 7 flocks  
1 shot - 0

Belton: 1 prod  
3 backs  
Quest: 1 back

The Second Day of Christmas.

As we turned off the Woodan Mill Road, we saw a fin-size  
dog kennel (behind the new church ~~with~~ black/tao shepherd dog)  
lying in dignity on top his kennel, totally content with life.

It was not a small kennel, and had a steep, slanted roof with several  
cleats someone had nailed on to assist the dog to reach his perch.  
That dog is white on a chain, <sup>that he</sup> had it made.

We've been blessed with a record ~~back~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~  
George Bird Evans Papers  
West Virginia and Regional History Center

(76)

it was a perfect hunting day with the ground saturated from the drizzle yesterday, and the temperature at mid-thirty. We pushed at our usual place with the ground strewn with candy wrappers from the deer hunters two weeks ago, and walked across the rough grass area leading the dogs on the left yag to keep them out of cover ahead of us.

We had scarcely got onto the old Lenox road when Ray heard a quail flush from Quail's direction - a good sign. Both dogs were hunting hard but too wide.

Not far ahead we heard (Ray) another quail go out, again from wide dogs, and I got up tight from lack of hearing or seeing or getting a shot at birds the dogs put out.

Just beyond the turn-off dumbbell, I came to Belton on point on the left side of the Lenox Road, turned into a tangle of grapevine. When Belton points, I count on action, and as I took a position to cover both sides of the situation, Quail came in and looked nicely.

Belton took another step and froze, and still almost unable to believe it, I heard an explosion from the grapevine and a quail came at me, crossing the road about

77/186



four feet off the ground and going places. It forced me to turn right and try for it out in the trees and again I seemed unable to mount and get the stick to my face, shooting helplessly, knowing was far behind the bird. Without my shoulder, handicaps in normal shape I might have missed but it wouldn't have been so clumsy.

There was no more birds out the road and we crept back to the forks and hunted the good bottom cover where Quest had two empty points, both cold. Later in (1 day) heard two ~~separate~~ flocks that seemed to go east, and we followed and had a tree bird as didn't see but judged from Bell's barking. Better is hunting like a young dog - too young in range, and we changed the hot letter to him and let Quest wear the dummy.

After lunch we got on the woods road above and hunted back to the head of the swamp and to the middle road, where we followed down with another flock. 1 day heard that could have been the first bird we would come in. It is a loose count, but as felt them over has

been 5 separate years in 7 floras not ~~perfect~~ spectacular but  
 in these hard ~~Republican~~ <sup>times</sup> Republican times, a good day. Quert  
 had another wheel point at the main road above the car, and when I  
 let him and Bolton, who backed, work it out, I lay flat the car and  
 came for us. A good afternoon in spite of my discouraging shoulder  
 problem - pain. (We heard shooting, likely birds, in the west edge.)

Saturday 27 December  
 Cold, clear, sunny 34°  
 2:30-5:00 / 2 1/2 hrs.

Charley Seese  
 moved 1-2 floras  
 1 det - 0

Bolton 1 back  
 Quert 1 prod

This was a glorious day, colder than I realized when I got started.  
 Both deep working beautifully tho a bit wild at times. We parked at the  
 Guthrie barn and started below it to the <sup>woods</sup> ~~side~~ road that seemed to  
 lead into a (gummer's ideal) cover. The lower level is too long and  
 open part of the way but denser regrowth farther around, and then, as  
 we approached the Scott place, I spaced somewhat too much again.

79/86

We had heard a beagle on the ridge about us and our blast of bang bang - bang - two men shooting at once. Saturday is the day to run into other hunters. (It turned out to be Dale Sees with someone.)

We came to the back road climbing to the "Bruce" homestead, and stopped for lunch on ~~the~~ <sup>some</sup> foundation stones, ~~to~~ to discover that Belton had rolled in fresh deer fawnets and had trouble keeping him from getting too sociable. We ate to the roar, and view of traffic on Route 48 - ~~stay~~ change.

After lunch we took the ~~the~~ <sup>(upper)</sup> level road back until it lost elevation, then pushed into the magnificent grapevines that crown the ridge, with grapes almost covering the rocky ground. Walking is hazardous over the boulder floor, covered with dead leaves and strew with old logs, with blackberry canes wherever there are no rocks.



A FOUR-BLAST WHISTLE,  
AND A BANDAGED TAIL.

Suddenly I heard Kay blow the four-blast signal and looked up to see Quest pointing about me. He was headed right toward a large mossy log and he was transfixed, the only odd thing was his drooping tail, which I later realized, when Kay reminded me, ~~it~~ was caused by the heavy bandages to protect his tail tips.

Bolton came in and backed (qualified by flogging) and after Kay had taken two photos, I said "That's in." I was standing on ~~the~~ relatively firm footing between boulders and when the gress flared (glory be) I had a fair shot crossing left and rising. I did it right, bringing the stock to my face, not my face to the stock, and was aware of swiveling them fast and firing, but the gress went on. Sometimes they do that!! At last I got off the shot and managed to mount <sup>my shoulder</sup> without locking up, which was something.

We followed and had a well fleshed out the ridge with no view, but even with only one bud, a producer makes a day. Quest is a good one.

X

X



Monday 29 December.

Cold, clear, sunny 40°

3 1/4 hrs.

Hewchell Place S:

mixed 8 (1 new) - 8

0

Belton 1 each

Quest 1 prod.

8/186

Yesterday being Sunday went out my birthday hunt. Today could not have been more perfect weather - cloudless until late afternoon. We parked at the lower trailer (Pat Carter's), a more convenient way to start and avoid the downed tree tops in the main log road at Mac Hewchell's. The Lab greeted us and we left a note to say who we were.

The woods road from here is much the more direct way in. at the first clearing where last time Quest pointed a grouse on the bank above the short decline, what was probably the same bird flushed on our left and I got a short glimpse of it. # at the forks just beyond another grouse flushed, also in the hemlock/mixedwood on the left. I heard it, but I only had a fair look at it. Both grouse flushed down the bottom path along the stream.

We climbed to the break in the rock ledge and hunted the low path to the deer camp clearing with no contacts until the dogs put out a grouse in the draw below the "orchard corner," too far for me to hear.

Hunting out the deer camp road we came to a bearded boy on a 3-wheeler with a muzzler-loader on his lap, hunting the back roads by vehicle - unlawful. He was a great-nephew of Mac Hewchell and his mother owns the McMullen Five Forks place. His name sounded like Doug Veltoro, and we learned that we

were hunting in the Penna. flutlock deer season, which (82)  
accounted for the shooting as heard on the far side of Fish Run.

It is typical of a DNR to have simultaneous deer season to start with  
the short late season after Xmas. The mechanized deer hunter said  
he had never shot grouse except 5 in his lifetime, shot along roads.  
"They're delicious."

We parted, and soon after I saw a grouse flush left across  
the road ahead, but out by my dogs. They were working well but  
too wild. We followed the lowest path back toward the brushline  
clearing and I saw 2 grouse flush far ahead, but out by Belle's  
who was on a tear today. This is why I don't set traps and I'm  
getting fed up with it.

We ate lunch on a log in the thick brushy cover, and when we  
moved on to follow the two grouse into the long cover on the west, we  
changed the mark collar (to Belle's from Quest). Unfortunately,  
either dog works best with the collar, and I suspect that once  
used to it will need it always as I found with Brian.

We had no luck finding the two grouse, Belle had moved,  
and we circled back across the south clearing to return  
along the "base path." On the way, a grouse came zooming  
over Kang, just missing her head - again it had to have  
been flushed by one of the dogs. I can't understand why  
today neither dog was pointing them. As usual, I neither saw  
nor heard it. Grouse seem to display themselves & sing, which

I with the gun wander blindly and deeply thru the woods. 83/186

We took the top trail from the upper clearing across to the far trail and to the back clearing where we ~~took~~ paused for a breather, then set out at 4:49 on the last jag in.

We had no further contacts until we started down the woods trail toward the car. at the pile of trash near the spot where we had the hot empty point last time, I found a nest on a loose strand, flapping at the ~~very~~ base of a small hemlock on the very edge of the pile of debris. As I watched, he went solid, head low, and tail drooping (the tail-tips <sup>tail</sup> ~~lance~~ lance style on point).

I walked to him faced with the choice of moving in behind him or circling the dense hemlock (to the left around). I chose the former, and the grouse exploded from the far edge of the solid hemlock. I felt, by sound, that it was already well gone, then got a short look at it as it tumbled about the hemlock, too late to try a snap shot. I doubt if I could have got off a shot even if I had known the bird was climbing straight up the hemlock, but if I had taken the left side of the tree where Quail was pointing, I might have had a view enough to shoot. There are the decisions that can mangle you, and this season I seem not to have the breaks. The shoulder problems don't help, and I hope I won't age. Paul & Wendy releaved a day

that seemed not to happen right. But then were birds, and it was a grand day, and we were alive to live it.

Wednesday 14 January  
cloudy, mild, 46°  
2:50 - 5:25 / 2 1/2 hrs.  
snow going.

Ray Guthrie  
mailed 6 (2 new) - 9 flocks  
1 shot - 0

Bella 1 bell  
Quest 2 prod.

My shoulder has kept me from going hunting, together with snow and icy back roads, and today was our first time out since December 29th and in the new year. The snow was softening and bare spots were showing but back roads are still slippery.

We found some small drifts in the road back to the corner. In the granibrier corner Quest worked ahead with Bella nearby, and I saw Quest stopped, tail flagging and winding into the dense thicket, then go solid in a nice high position but with tail not high. Bella appeared to get scared but didn't back out at command, and I worked my way around to the right, trying to pick my footing in the deep ruts of an old track. I didn't hear the flush but saw Quest going in and I saw a bird head some out.

She was out on the main road at the edge of the field, and saw a second grouse flush from the margin along the road and cross the field into the cutover cover on the NW corner.

I had heard the flutter of wings and had seen Quest stop at flush. As I proceeded inside, both today and I saw a third grouse top out of the main cover and go toward the thicket to the south,

in the direction of the first bird. Three grouse in fifteen minutes 85/86  
was something like it.

I joined them at the corners and we started down the  
right road in the direction where they had started #2. On the  
right in the short cover I saw Quist again stand and fly  
as he intakes scent, then go solid on point, with his head up  
as before but, as before, with his tail not about level.

I moved down the road a few steps and heard the grouse  
flush from the left edge well ahead. ~~It~~ It was sailing down the  
road too far for a shot by the time I saw it but I shot anyway  
at about 60 yards. Of course it went on, but I had the satisfaction  
of getting off a shot and managing to mount the gun, which I've  
been unable to do well with the bad right shoulder. The recoil  
seemed exceptionally and I wonder if it wasn't because I may not  
have put my tender shoulder into the stock as I normally  
would have.

We had a third ~~flush~~ <sup>flush</sup> on this bird in the thorny  
thicket on the left, only sound and followed down the wooded  
slope among a lot of brush heaps and several mounds in an  
area <sup>where</sup> I had never been. We had no further contact but as we  
looked up the hillside toward the back road we heard 3 flushes,  
separately and indistinct - birds we did not relocate.

On the back road that leads to the "bridge" we ate  
lunch on a mole when we had stopped earlier in the season, ~~when~~

we once saw a big red fox run ahead of us when this was still (86)  
in timber.

We changed dummy/shock collar on the dog with the best  
one put on Quest who had been wearing too wide. <sup>Paper started today!</sup> I had covered his  
tail tip with Nexaband, a preparation Leo/Stretch had sent, hoping  
it would protect the heeled tip from further damage. It was worthless;  
the tail tip was a bloody mess within the first half hour. I'll  
have to go back to <sup>a</sup>bandage, which spoils the position on point but  
protects the tail. I suspect the injured tail tip of causing the  
low tail position on point.

At 4:10 we started to hunt the excellent cover on the  
flat where we've been moving some of the birds. Today we moved  
out very distant grass that I dug out - I didn't cut that  
was a reflex I think of one of our first runs.

That was it. We tried the grander cover again, hoping  
the last bird had put in there. I found a nice opening thru the  
center that helps cover that area but no action. Better, tried  
to get us near on the upper edge where he pointed staunchly,  
but I suspect it may have been, <sup>being</sup> scared from the first  
birds.

To avoid the snow on the road as both the old field and the  
high knob we had never tried, and tho we didn't find birds, we  
found a magnificent view of the big country <sup>to the south</sup> and a glimpse  
of our own prairie on the Forquah <sup>side</sup>. A good day

Friday 16 January  
cool, cloudy 42°  
2 1/4 hrs.

Prairie Place  
0

Balton 1 back  
Quest 1 back

57/  
86

We started for the Hartman Place with the snow gone except in our lane and on north slopes where it remained as ice. We found the steep hill a mass of ice, and, while we might have been able to make it up with the help of <sup>the</sup> rough stones, we knew that coming down would be drastic, so turned back and crossed the Millstone road toward Valley Point. At the Prairie lane we found no ice, and drove in to the forest house, a rusty rickety shell now, and parked.

The hill about the house is still good cover with lots of grapevines and grapes everywhere on the ground, although the trees are now on the large. Balton found something dead and ate it in spite of our admonitions.

We came to the Prairie bottom, stripped snow and all the hill about it, and with <sup>a</sup> roads connecting the strip area with Valley Point and Mt Morial Church, as we learned.

at the edge of the bottom road, Quest pointed, very high and solid and Balton lashed, but nothing materialized.

We met a covered pickup with an older man named Marsh Linton and a young man with a toy dog, the older man a grandson of Osburny. There were notices of the A. D. Boward Gun Club everywhere, a local group. The notices were signed by two <sup>George Bird Evans Papers</sup> ~~Lawson~~ brothers.

Parting company with our acquaintances, we followed a wide stripmining road, now gated, up the hill, where we found a <sup>black</sup> shotgun shell. The road was too icy to walk comfortably, and we followed a woods road trace I say now. It led us around the hill to the right with a double of empty shells in excellent grapevine cover. The entire valley side of the ridge is put-back strip and is now being used to dump ash from the Allbright Plant. The top of the ridge is stripped and we were told it covered the whole ridgetop. A station of beautiful grapevine cover led us back to the hillside strip road but we found nothing but big woods on the NE exposure, where we ~~sat~~ <sup>stopped</sup> down for lunch. Found another empty shell nearby. Was someone <sup>dreaming?</sup> with no cover about a mile ahead of us, we turned back to the Peain bottom. The Lister man said the Rockwell Mining Co who own the land had burned the Peain house the previous night, to keep "the young people" out of trouble.

We worked the north side of the <sup>west</sup> hill. I followed a loose-boweled cow ~~to~~ <sup>through</sup> woods a bit open but with good grapevines. Belton had a point that I just backed with intense style, again an empty.

at the top of the hillside I say took a picture of a large cairn of stones, a trace of some po' soul who tried to make a living here at our time. Further around we topped out to a woods flat with dozens of small stone cairns, ~~I have never~~ <sup>more than I</sup> ~~has seen anywhere.~~ This should be called "Cairn Alley" and



would be if there had been any grouse but there weren't. 89/186

Jim Cross later told us the hunting club was deer hunters and wouldn't object to our bird hunting. I think they should pity us.

The Peavias are long since gone, the whole crazy brood of them, and now their house has gone up in smoke. Even the cow left ~~only~~ traces of herself, but they will go, unlike the stone cairns.

Names are strange, outlasting their namesakes. Mostly it is the stone and concrete, like the spring and well at the shell of the house. As for the grouse — what is a grouse?

POD 1/95  
Thursday 5 February  
perfect weather, clear  
sunny, snow gone 45°  
2:35 - 5:05 / 2 1/2 hrs.

Ray Guthrie  
march 1 - 1  
0

Bellon  
Quart 1 prod

This was the day we were waiting for — snow gone except in spots, cloudless sky most of the day with sunbursts. The road back to Daisy Rude's surprisingly open. One trace of a drift just beyond her house turned us back to park them.

We walked the old field instead of the road and approached the greenbrier corner from the east. Ray reformed Belton on the lead and Quart "neered" a few feet ahead of me very nicely until I sent him in and I followed into the center path. He was on point within a minute, a nice high lead (tail tips banded with Form tape kept his tail level). I saw him

takes the scent standing, the way he does, then slowly freeze. (90)

I moved to him, forced to approach the point from behind, altho I was looking at him left profile. The bird didn't let me reach him, flushing left-crossing rising. I glimpsed at them the deers tangle and saw it level out then the opening on the path I had been on. And I stayed on that I would, how at least had a split-second shot. You never seem to get <sup>in</sup> the right place for these rare chances. The grouse appeared to be a <sup>yearling</sup> ~~youngster~~ or a hen. It went for the clearest on the south and that was it.

We hunted the next corner and then the good flat - greenbrier barrens everywhere - with no trace of the birds I knew were somewhere about. Paused for lunch sitting on the summit surrounded by this grand world.

Today I was aware of Belton's amazing condition at  $10\frac{2}{3}$  years, hunting with such vigor and strength, punctuating the dense blackberry tangles like a youngster, moving at a break speed, quartering left-and-right across the log snags, hunting intensely and loyally long moments with more a set-up, crossing the log snags at just the right distance ahead if Goss would have maintained his pace properly. It was a joy to see him, - and quiet hunting so heard - even if we weren't finding grouse. This sportsman's sense to enhance the

9/1/86  
pleasure of seeing the dogs enjoy the sport and I really  
believe, in all the lack of grain, do something to make both  
Pellon and Grant the magnificent hunting dogs they are.

We didn't try the valley along Little Sandy - we've had  
no luck there this year - and we ran out of cover on top. We  
tried the densely cleared corner on the northwest of the crossing  
but it is simply nothing.

Walked the road back with Pellon costing clear down the  
big hillside field to the bottom like a two-year-old. What a  
dog! What a brace of dogs! What a couple!

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Friday 6 February

13

Hartman Place

(92)

Beltan 1 pair  
1 k  
1 net

perfect, clear, sunny to cloudy  
470

moved 4 (2 new) - 7 flickers  
1 shot - 1 hit

2:45 - 5:15 / 2 1/2 hrs  
dark red ruff  
shot at 5 pm

Yearling cockbird: solid tailband  
crop: 35 red hairs / 3 pcs. small (crabapple) (brown) greens. 1 net (" " )  
Quail 1 k (1st quail)

Tonight, as I had hoped, as I had almost ceased to hope,  
a grouse hangs on the new-log wall of the porch under a  
half last Hunter's Moon - a gorgeous red-ruffed yearling  
cock bird, its plumage perfect, its solid tailband as red as its ruff.  
And as always there is that remorse in killing anything as  
grand and wild and rare.

Can many people realize what it has been to hunt the  
1983, '84, '85, and '86 seasons without shooting a grouse? To have had your  
77th, 78th, 79th, and 80th birthdays without shooting a grouse?  
Frustration to the degree of impotence.

The mild weather finally gave us a chance to get back to the Hartman  
Place. We found the steep hill opened enough on the former glass of ice  
to drive up in 4 wheel drive and, other than recent bootprints in mud,  
we had this magnificent coast to ourselves.

I hunted up the lower road below the <sup>old</sup> Lemay road and  
within ten minutes of leaving the car we moved our first grouse -  
a sound only, but I can see Beltan is active and felt he'd had the point.

We hunted to the head of the ~~road~~ <sup>George Bird Evans Papers</sup> and up to the Lemay road  
and all the way to Thomas & ~~to~~ <sup>West Virginia and Regional History Center</sup> within sight of the Hollister barn.

13 Both dogs were hunting beautifully, with Beller <sup>[was crossing]</sup> crissing as Q nest crossed, ideal ranging. As we turned back down the hollow - a place to look for woodcock next year - Beller swept the far slopes, taking his responsibilities seriously.

We stopped to eat in the large rocky woods before we reached the flat, and then hunted the bottom with no trace of the birds I knew should be there.

We turned up the thorny slope and just before reaching the lower road, I lay heard a grouse left ahead of me, with no dog near. The sun was still well up as we started down the old Lammox road, hoping to meet the #1 bird. The dogs searched well, both sides and up to the crest on the right; it always impresses me how thoroughly they cover ground.

At the lower end, we circled the house and walked to the car, and took a breather sitting on the tailgate. We had Beller with us, but Q nest, ever questing, was hunting the stem of thorn thicket on the west side of the main road. I reminded to I lay that of all the times I had covered that piece, I had never only one grouse from a point of Beller's at the corner of the powerline, and then I lay heard a flock from where Q nest was. I could hear only the flock of a wing or ~~two~~ branches.

As we started south in the cool of the shadow, Q nest came to us, obviously strung-up from contact. I share with the sun below the thin bare treetops. I changed to my clear shooting clip - one and walked in front of I lay with the

dogs keen.

Suddenly there was a close flashing sound and I should 94  
regret to see a quail leaving a tree. My gun barrels was on the  
proper spot beneath it as it showed through the haze of  
a treetop, my finger almost on the trigger and I didn't fire.  
Why? I feel certain I would have had it, yet that uncertainty  
Alaric Watts spoke of so succinctly ended me, and the  
flash-moment was gone. Too many seasons without a hit,  
undermining <sup>the</sup> assurance I take to be a quail shot.

I walked on, muttering self-incriminations, and at the  
powerline, turned right, hoping to find either of the two quail  
somewhere along the edge. Quail was hunting on the east side of the road  
and it took a bit to get him to us. As we worked the semi-clear  
right-of-way through deep dead grass and lumpy footing, I lay  
called that we had seen the quail far ahead, leaving the right edge  
and heading for the <sup>old</sup> stripmine creel in part.

Quail, unaware of the flash raced up the steep spoilbank  
and ran head-into the quail in the very skyline. The bird  
must have been almost under his paw as it flushed right  
and landed in a tall bare tree when it watched Quail running  
in circles without knowing where it was.

I was blocked by some medium sparse saplings, and  
Kang moved past on my right and circled to beyond the tree when the  
quail still watched Quail, its neck and head extended.



I don't think the bird saw me - it must have finally been aware of my -  
 for after a long period of my watching waiting for a flock, trying not to  
 accept the fact I might miss, the quon came off the branch and  
 directly in line for me, a high one. The new gunstock adjustment, the  
 new <sup>chokes</sup> ~~pattern~~, the new <sup>even the shoulders</sup> ~~me~~, were all exactly right. The quon took the pattern  
 about ten yards in front and above and came some-sawting at my head. I  
 ducked and it missed me by a foot or two and hit the ground behind me, dead.



When it came, it was hard to believe. I called to Kay I got it!, and heard her wild exclamation. The grass was about ten feet behind me, its reflex fluttering died to stillness, and I watched it while Kay came to me and we called the dogs. Quert reached us and after some rather bawdied cooing caught scent and saw the mangled bird, taking it in his mouth and starting to carry it. His first move was to start to bury it in the dead tan grass but he stopped at our command. Next he stood with the



quoss looking at me but unable to bring <sup>himself</sup> <sup>to</sup> deliver it. He started past Kay to climb the spoilbank but Kay got <sup>his</sup> <sup>letter</sup> and we finally got him to bring the quoss to me. It seemed in a haze, grasping the quoss but not clearing it, and Kay got some pictures of him sitting beautifully with me.

Beltin finally got to us - I don't know where he'd been - and after all the photos we wanted, I took the quoss from Quost and put it out for Beltin to Ireland deliver, in style. Eruston ran high, examining this lovely quoss, a yearling cock with deep red ruffs and absolutely solid tailcocks. It couldn't have been better.

The <sup>with its blue Trousers across its mouth, its big feet,</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>continuous</sup> <sup>coast</sup> <sup>has</sup> <sup>given</sup> <sup>us</sup> <sup>good</sup> <sup>moments</sup> - <sup>Beltin's</sup> <sup>early</sup> <sup>well</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>point</sup> <sup>at</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>far</sup> <sup>end</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>that</sup> <sup>distant</sup> <sup>part</sup>; the grand chance - and hit on the quoss that crossed this powderline right - <sup>my</sup>; the woodcock shot over Beltin's point and dropped in the middle of the road under this very powderline; the woodcock <sup>in '54</sup> <sup>over</sup> <sup>Beltin's</sup> <sup>point</sup> shot two weeks after I hurt my right shoulder - the 'cock that blooded Quost; the dud shell that, I am sure, spared a quoss on our, was it 5 of the? Anniversary; the top level spring that broke last season and ended with my meeting Melon Forbes. And this glorious end to a four-year dry spell with Quost's first quoss kill and quoss retreat. No one who has not lived like that can ever know.

I carried my tent - <sup>George Bird Evans Papers</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>car</sup> <sup>when</sup> <sup>West Virginia and Regional History Center</sup>

Kay fed a new roll of film into her camera and took some more pictures, when we realized I had ~~the~~ left Quarts' shock collar lying in the powerline right-of-way. I went back while Kay stayed with the car with the dogs.

I found it, and judging the distance across the thorns a short way to the car, circled the corner and came out on the road to an empty spot where the car had been! Kay had locked the station wagon all the way to powerlines to pick me up. We got together, and drove out of this wonderful place, on top of the world - us, and the crew.

C'est si bon!

Wednesday 11 February

Donald Mayers Thomas / Ft. Morris Thomas

Belton  
Quest

perfect, clear, sunny, 42°  
snow on ground

heard 1-2 flocks (partridges)  
around only  
o

2:45 - 5:25 / 2 3/4 hrs.

The snow was going at home with only a couple of inches left on the ground, but at this higher elevation there was just a six inches and an uncomfortable condition to walk in. Kay got the little Subaru station wagon through some deep snow ruts on the hill to the top and we parked at the east end, although the road had been traveled well (who goes where? for no air lives in here anymore. We later saw a truck <sup>come</sup> ~~go~~ out of the Lake Noel area.

We started up the many log road on the east end through ~~scout~~ thick cover coming back after the stripping of several years past ~~but~~ but did not see a sign of a ~~ground~~ <sup>ground</sup> ~~road~~ <sup>road</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> the way to the

99/180  
properly corner on top; nor on the flat where I could count 3  
years I had shot in years past. We hunted north on the top and  
not until we reached the edge of the clearing above the road did we  
see a track — two ground tracks of varying age that looked like our bird  
on different days

We ate lunch at the corner where we usually park, sitting on  
a (small) tree for want of logs in the area. After eating, we  
walked down the hill to the Ft. Moore Thomas and for the last half-  
hour hunted through the log field and in sight of the historical  
marker, which looks too much like a tombstone:

Kay heard a ground bear a tree and after following to the  
east edge, she heard it retreat, again from a tree. This was our first  
visit in this flat for several years, and I felt it is growing out-  
cave to sit through but opening up a bit too much. It would  
be a good event for woodcock if only we had woodcock. I felt  
that the cover on top is also growing out, with the exception of the  
cutover east end. It may be that it is the late winter season that  
makes it seem so open, for certainly there are loads of Hawthorn still  
growing on top; and it also may be the death of ground bear makes it  
seem barren. The south edge of the main road is still full of  
paperwills. We saw where the ground bear had laid the tracks on top  
had crossed the road from below, not far from where we had eaten  
lunch. Late winter is not the Cheery time to hunt, although  
it was a lovely day to be out in good air and sunshine with exercise.  
and the dogs

Friday 20 February  
partly sunny, 40°  
2:30-5:30 / 3 1/2 hrs

~~Ray Guthrie~~  
~~moved 1-1~~

Belton  
Quest

The snow is gone except for drifts in depressions in fields and shady areas. This is magnificent cover

Thursday 19 February  
clear, sunny, 40°  
snow in bottoms and shade.

Brown Place  
moved 2-2 flocks

Belton 1 back  
Quest

2:45-5:15 / 2 1/2 hrs. Packed at the old Handlen house - a wreck with a happy

couple living in it. The old road to the Brown Place is a nice old lane to nowhere. There was icy snow on parts of it and we walked almost to the old farm with the dogs moving too far ahead. We cut through some of the pine plantings - long, trees now - to a hawthorn clearing on the east end to the rear of the empty house - glass and track everywhere - and finally came to quail tracks on snow patches among spruce.

On the road once more, I headed toward the tumorous flat that was the location of the big drumming log when I got to her Gun Dog cover photo of Brown in 1975. We saw some flocks (I say saw it) across the road from Belton's direction.

If my dogs would work closer to me I might have a few shots.

There was a long stand of spruce on the north side of the flat, and the flat itself has grown open somewhat but should still be good enough cover.

We searched for the drumming log but could find nothing except some mossy remains of logs on the ground. It seems unlikely

that such a large log could have disintegrated in less than 12 years. 101/186  
The Hawthorn hillside as remembered on the south has filled in  
with young Hawthorns and today held too much snow (with exposure)  
to hunt thoroughly. The hillside above on Pomeroy Road seemed  
too open to try hunting and the late hour turned us back.

Turning back wasn't so easy. The cover in the flat was more  
extensive than we had remembered and it took some doing to penetrate  
it. At the edge of the log spruce we followed the east of Pomeroy  
and stopped to eat, standing. Betty had gone off on her own, and we  
soon had turkeys coming down off the ridge over us - four of them.

After our blue rascal came in from his turkey hunt, we turned  
around the spruce and worked east over the undulating foothill toward  
the road. A grouse flushed after I had moved on, giving 1 call & look  
at it - the usual sequence.

On the road we walked back to the car in shade of the ridge.  
Went to see this event once again but discouraging. It is plastered  
with notices signed by someone named Smith.

---

|                        |                      |        |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------|
| Friday 20 February     | Ray Guthrie          | Betty  |
| partly sunny, temp 45° | meat 1 (cut man) - 1 | Q nest |
| 2:30 - 5:10 / 3½ hrs.  | 0                    |        |

Saw some except in depressions in fields and shady spots.  
This is a magnificent event but it was a discouraging visit. We  
moved exactly as given far out from Quest about 5 pm. Followed  
back into the wallnut cover as'd be George Bird Evans Papers  
West Virginia and Regional History Center

found the bird, which must have reflected.

The day was nice as a walk in invigorating air but then late-summer  
traps are mostly just walks and cleaning an imperfect gun when I come home.  
Hard to realize I did that a year two weeks ago today, which took away  
a little of the frustration.

We saw fresh footprints in mud and snow which could have  
been laid yesterday or this a.m., which might have moved the birds, but it  
is too unlikely that the same happened last time we were here and  
ward only us.

We hunted hard today in rough cover, not only on top but down  
on the ridge toward Little Smoky through tangles of logs and  
branch piles and thorns that punished dog and man. I got a  
thorn puncture on my nose that just wouldn't stop bleeding (aspirin)  
for half an hour. A nice winter day on the walk out, but this isn't  
what we came for. This is not game hunting, and I'm getting  
damned tired of it.

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Thursday 26 February  
odd, cloudy, 40°

Mathews Place  
mowed 1-1

Belton  
Quest

103/  
'86

3:00-5:30 / 2½ hrs.

I took a photo of me and the Mail Pouch thermometer on the Mathews house. This was no doubt our Last Day. We went to one of our old favorites, and it still is excellent cover, with continued forward cutting by Paul Mathews. There is snow in the back trailer now, no trace of footprints in the packing three-inch snow cover, and we mowed one grouse and saw tracks of two more when we should have mowed ten. Winter hunting - searching is a better word - is not easy. The dogs soon began moving too wide trying to find game that wasn't there.

The one set of fresh tracks was at the far end of the good flat, still excellent cover but no grapevines. However there were greenberries almost everywhere it was today.

We finally got on what I've called the Middle Log Road - a nice woods road through good cover and Quest began making game on the upper side and Belton reflected his reaction but neither pointed. We found fresh tracks leading from left to right into the area and I ~~was~~ expected action that didn't come. Both dogs had moved on ahead and I heard <sup>exclaim</sup> they ~~was~~ behind me and wheeled to see her "pointing!" <sup>to</sup> the lower edge of cover and saw a grouse rising close and headed back the other direction. It might have been

a possible fast shot but instinctively I restrained myself from shooting <sup>so close</sup> ~~across~~ in front of Kay. The quail, the way they do, angled well out and crossed the woods road <sup>right</sup> - another chance for a long left barrel if I had been behind Kay. I seriously think if I walked behind Kay I might get some shots at birds that ~~seem~~ seem to flush after I pass, but it seems a stupid way to hunt.

I marked the bird as going toward the large field on the upper side of this woods or perhaps across to the hill woods, and we circled out and back about, hoping to pick it up. Once there, I had trouble keeping Quail hunting when I wanted him; he seemed intent on quartering the <sup>base</sup> ~~lower edge~~ of the hillside woods. There were two nice draws woods and recently marked when I shot the bird might have landed but we missed nothing. Peltor was hunting mostly with a trotting pace instead of Quail's fast hops and covered well.

We had not too much time left at 5:00 and we ~~went~~ worked the hillside base to the north corner of the big field and took a woods road (more open now) along the ridge to the head of the hollow and down to the bottom road. On the way back we saw another set of quail tracks (where are the birds?)

It was nice being in here, but at end of season what are left in the way of birds are at the low point of the year and winter hunting is not enjoyable. The Mail Pouch thermometer on the house <sup>was 39° when we came back, which seemed generous.</sup> The Suborn of W <sup>was 39° when we came back, which seemed generous.</sup>





"NY = 92 6/c

| Covits      | Days/Hours           | Summer         | Shots/Hits | WEEKLY 1986     |            | BELTON<br>Prod. Ducks 10/25 Ret. | QUEST<br>Prod. Ducks 10/25 Ret. |     |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----|
|             |                      |                |            | Cock            | Shots/Hits |                                  |                                 |     |
| 1st 6       | 4/6 3/4              | 4-4            | 0          | 1-2             | 0          | 1/8-1/2/2/1/1                    | 1/8/1/3/1/10/20-10/30           |     |
| 2nd 7       | 6/19 3/4             | 8-10 9         | 0          | 14-15           | 4/3        | 2/1/1                            |                                 |     |
| 2           | 2/4 1/4              | 5-13           | 0          | 5-5             | 0          | 1/1                              | 1/1 11/3 thru 11/8              |     |
| 7           | 3/7                  | 3-3            | 0          | 3-3             | 0          | 1/2                              | 2/1 thru 11/15                  |     |
| 3           | 3/7                  | 1-1            | 1-0        | 1-1             | 0          | 1/2                              | 1/1 thru 11/22                  |     |
| PA 4        | 5/14 1/4             | 12-25          | 1-0        | 1/2             |            | 5/1                              | thru 11/29                      |     |
| 17.12       | 15/40 1/4            | 24.38          | 2-0        | PRE-DEER SEASON |            |                                  |                                 | 7/1 |
|             | 8/18 1/4             | 9.17           |            |                 |            |                                  | thru 12/13                      |     |
| 1           | 2/5                  | 4/6            | 0          | 1/5             |            |                                  | thru 12/13                      |     |
| 4           | 4/10 1/2             | 10/13          | 2-0        | 2/6             |            |                                  | thru 12/27                      |     |
|             | <del>1-1/3 1/4</del> | <del>1-8</del> | 0          | <del>1/1</del>  |            |                                  | thru 1/3                        |     |
| 1/1         | 2/4 3/4              | 2/9            | 1-0        | 1/2             |            |                                  | thru 1/17                       |     |
|             | 2/5 1/5              | 2/8            | 0          | 1-1.1           |            |                                  | thru 2/7                        |     |
|             | 1/2 3/4              | 1/2            | 0          |                 |            |                                  | thru 2/14                       |     |
|             | 2/6                  | 2/3            | 0          | 1/1             |            |                                  | thru 2/26                       |     |
| thru events | 37/95 3/4            | 55/104         | 6-1        | 5/17/1/1        |            |                                  | 13/2/1/1                        |     |
| 38          | 10/26 NY             | 12/13 NY       | 0          | 4/17/2/1        |            |                                  | 13/4/3/1                        |     |
| PA NY       | 6/10 1/4 PA          | 13/33 PA       | 1          |                 |            |                                  |                                 |     |
| 21 WV       | 2/15 2/4 WV          | 32/58 WV       | 5-1        |                 |            |                                  |                                 |     |

1986

GEORGE (79) 62nd ABRAM

37 DAYS / ~~44~~ HOURS 38 COVERTS  
95 3/4

MOVED 58 GROUSE / 104 FLUSHES  
6 SHOTS / 1 HIT (16.6%)

" 24 'COCK / 26 FLUSHES  
4 SHOTS / 3 HITS (75%)

TOTAL 38 COVERTS / 58 GROUSE

1.53 ~~1.57~~ BIRD / COVERT

WV: 21 " / 38 " = <sup>1.57</sup>~~1.53~~ b/c

NY: 13 " / 12 " = .92 b/c

PA: 4 " / 13 " = 3.25 b/c

BELTON: 10 1/2 YRS 11TH SEASON  
35 DAYS

GROUSE: 5 PROD 1 KILL  
17 BACKS 1 RET  
'COCK: 4 PROD  
7 BACKS  
2 KILLS  
1 RET

LIFETIME '76-'86

348 DAYS  
139 PROD  
33 BACKS  
26 KILLS (6 OP)  
21 RET  
154 PROD  
55 BACKS  
49 KILLS  
28 RET

QUEST: 2 1/2 YRS 3RD SEASON  
37 DAYS

GROUSE: 13 PROD  
2 BACKS  
1 KILL  
1 RET  
'COCK: 13 PROD  
4 BACKS  
3 KILLS  
1 RET

LIFETIME '84-'86

91 DAYS  
15 PROD  
5 BACKS  
1 KILL  
1 RET  
15 PROD  
10 BACKS  
4 KILLS  
1 RET

12/13 = .92 6/C

1986

NEW YORK

4/6 = .6 bird/cant

BAKER 10/20-1.1.0 1

HUNT HILL 10/21-1.1.0.1.2.0 1

PREACHER ROAD 10/21-0

OQUAGA 10/22-2.2.0 2

WHEELER ROAD 10/23-0

WOODCOCK CORNER 10/23-0

8/7 = 1.14 6/C

JERSEY HILL 10/25 4.4.0.1.1.0 / 10/28 1.1.0 3.3.1/10/29 0.1.1.0 4

LOST PUPPY 10/26 2.2.0. 2

HIGH PLATEAU 10/27 4.4.1 2

FAR RIDGE 10/28 2.2.0. 2

GRAVEYARD 10/29 0

ALDER RUN 10/29 0

HIGHLAND HILLSIDE 10/30 5.6.1

MT. STORM

3/7 = .43

POPLAR HOUSE 11/10 0

CLYDE DAVIS 11/10 2.2.0

REHO BETH 11/10 / 11/19 0.1.1.0

GRASSY RIDGE 11/12

PIGEON ROOST 1.1.0 1

COSNER SPRUCE 0

MAILBOX THIRNS 1.1.0

COVERT #1 11/12 2.2.0 2

13/4 3.25

4/13

PENNSYLVANIA

~~3/4 3.25~~

HENCKEL NORTH 11/24.0

" SOUTH 11/25.5.6.0

o McMullen 11/27.0 | 11/28.9(4).12.0

o Dennis Bell 11/27.0 | 11/29.6(3).6.0

12/29.8(1).8.0

13

LOCAL 1986 ~~11~~ 30 (14) = 2.14

#1 CORINTH 11/3 1.1.0.3.3.0 / <sup>11/6</sup> 1.0 / 11.15-0 1  
#2 " 11/3 3.5.0 / <sup>11/6</sup> 4(1).6.0.2.2.0 / 11.15-1.2.0 4  
○ HOY MILLER 11/17.0 [ 2/5.1.1.0 / 2/20.1.1.0 6  
RAY GUTHRIE 11-22.1.1.0 / 12/11-3(2).4.0 / 12/17.4.4.0 / 1/14.6(2).9.0 /  
HOWERSHOLT 12/10.2.2.0 2  
PAUL UPHOLD 12/15.1.1.0 1  
PAUL LISTON  
CURTIS MINE 12/22.2.2.0 2  
WILKINSON 12/23.2.2.0 2  
HARTMAN 12/26.5.7.0 / 2/6.4(2).7.1 7 6  
CHARLEY SEESE 12/27.1.2.0 1  
PIAVA 1/16.0  
DONALD MOYERS THORNS 2/11.1.2.0 1  
BROWN PLACE 2/19.2.2.0 2  
MATHEWS PLACE 2/26.1.1.0 1