

Shooting 1987

Monday 19 October

16

Hartman Place

Belton:

Warm 65°
sunny to cloudy

heard 3 - 3 flocks
no shots

Quest:

3:00 - 6:30 / 3½ hrs.

Starting another year of these wonderful notes, this was 63rd season at 80, with Kay and Belton 11½, and Quest 3½. This October has been the ultimate in Indian summer glory. If there has been another like it, well, it's hard to remember. The season opened on Saturday last, as usual, in pursuit of Opening Day hordes and because the foliage, grand as it is, is too dense to hunt well. Also, Belton is recovering from his operation for tumor on his right hip less than 2 weeks ago. He is in grand shape at his age and in spite of the tumor incision, which is still swollen and draining, is moving as normal and full of himself.

We found the road up the ridge from the Wooden Mill Pond a horror of large stones, not gravel, unchanged from last year. Parked at the old house site - no sign of old chimney - and took the rough field path the pond to the ^{old} Forest Road, a muddy swampy passage. The heat was so intense both Kay and I removed our shirts or jerseys and hunted in jackets only.

(2)

The color is beginning to thin today, with yellow spicebush ^{along} along the old trace but with no red berries. The stagnant mud was even muckier and seeped insistently at our boots. Quint and Belton was ecstatic and hunting hard but we moved nothing all the way to the fence line at the upper end of the valley.

This is a good Hawthorn cover - lots of ^{small} red haws and grassy draws for woodcock that went here today. We turned back down the hollow and in a patch of cover that looked no better, if as good, heard a quail flush to my right point and saw the back-work of dried leaves but no bird. Quint came by and, sniffing the scent, froze for a moment, but Belton got no reaction from a different direction. Odd, the vagaries of scent.

We walked down to the lower large bottom with no action when, a few years ago, we'd had those lovely woodcock. All the way up we had passed under grapevines but with grapes on only one. This doesn't appear to be a grape year.

Both dogs were hunting well - Belton is amazing - and finally in a tangle of dried grass and dead brushy cover a quail flushed with only the hint of motion as it looked out - no chance for a shot. There is a grand bottom for 'cock but of empty when they aren't here. Perhaps later in the month. ^{Quint} ~~Belton~~ had his first point today at the upper edge of this bottom and I moved in, certain it would be a 'cock. His tail was out above head but his head high and he was gloriously staunch but no bird.

We hunted down to the "rough field" and the tree stand where I expected ^{to} find the grouse. Walked our way across the little run and up the steep porcelain nose and stopped to rest and eat lunch on the same gray log we had used before.

We saw a jeep parked at the pond - probably a bowhunter - and while we watched, another jeep pulled in behind it and a bowhunter came across the rough field toward the tree stand. This place is popular with deer hunters early in the season.

We had been out 2 hours with 2 fawns that were near sound and a hint of motion - the DNR calls that good. Down on the steep then over to the little stream and Quist pointed almost exactly where he pointed a 'cock, as if by memory from last season, when I took a shot and missed, with the Pounding's top level held in place with a rubber band year before last. Quist held beautifully while I walked (crawled) in but Belton, the best, refused to honor Quist. There was no bird and I wonder if this - all these empty points - is why? Quist has a great nose but I've never had so many empty points as he has, and I wonder if he is simply driven to it by the ~~lack~~ ^{lack} of birds. These points are all in perfect situations, yet I can't believe the birds are lifting without our hearing or seeing them. It's a crazy world these days.

We walked to the upper porcelain and hunted almost to the Holy Rocks and gave up. I'dy took Belton on leave to walk him to the

(4)

road which I hunted Quest thru the cover about the right-of-way. He
hunted it thoroughly and I got to the road and started car ward
when I lay called from the powerline. She had walked into a grass that
flushed from a low shrub out from the woods. Quest reached her
and went in point at the site, but as near seem to get points
when the birds are there.

I lay joined me at the ~~powerline~~ road and we worked the
powerline to where we got our ground shot last February. Belton
was huddling up well but we fell by stones to walked to the car.

Quest and I hunted the edge of thorns when Quest had a
hot point that said "woodcock" but wasn't telling the truth. I
walked in point, certain, but again, an empty. I can't believe it.

I rejoined I lay at the car and we decided to try to go out
the road to Crab Orchard, to avoid the rough stones on the hill, but
we were turned back by the awful holes and after all came
down the rocky road to the bottom.

It was a good day to be out, color still vibrant in
certain trees but less than we could have asked for action. Such
weather! but clouds moved over at end of day.

~~~~~

Thursday 22 October

Homer/Almy

Bellon

5/87

Perfect, cool, sunny to cloudy  
44°

Quest

3:30-6:30 / 3 hrs.

Delayed by low tire pressure on 3<sup>rd</sup> wheels, which took us to Princeton for attention from Mark Murphy. Opinion: recent cold weather let air pressure leak around rim. Properly inflated, we got rolling half an hour later.

A return to paradise, only <sup>to</sup> find it lacking what paradise most needs.

Parked at Donald Haffman's and walked up the old path, now a recent log road, through glorious varicolored color and in an Oriental rug pattern of fallen leaves. Woods on right grown too large for cover. Forest stretched longer than I remember.

At grapevine corner - no sign of grapevines except one on the way up - I failed to find a trace of the tramroad. Continued and came to log road taking off on right where I felt it had been the tramroad.

~~Started~~ Started south on it but found the cover too tall and open. There were some traces of tree cuts and downed trunks and branch piles, but none of the timber slashings James R. had reported. Turned back after we got Bellon's needle on way. He is doing beautifully just 2 weeks plus after his tumor operation on his hip. Shows no evidence of limitations. His range is nicer in terms of being closer to us, but he still reaches out somewhat far at times. Algy is mellowing him. We are so pleased with his

condition.

Back at the forks of the roads we could find no sign of the tramroad on north side, so took the old Ore road up the slope. There was no evidence of the tramroad grade, which seems to have been deserted by Time. The Ore road climbed and climbed through woods too long and with only scattered remnants of spotty cutting - disappointing - but the color is still glorious <sup>seen on the mountain</sup>, just past the

full foliage stage. Both dogs hunted thoroughly but there was no grouse, and it didn't look as though there should be.

Heading well up, I searched for the two old Matthey fields that should have been partway. Finally the road topped-out after a half-hour climb. There isn't hunting but was beautiful in terms of an autumn walk. At last I found the two fields clear on top. Both were cropped close, but no cattle present. How they reach those fields is a mystery. Suspect a road from Orr. There was more ~~the~~ cutting here but still limited to selective cuts - horse cover.

The top field is a big one <sup>well fenced</sup> - I'd forgotten - and evidence of cattle in the cowpads from summer. We crossed and passed in the woods on the north edge to eat on a large oak log that had been down for years. There was waterhard down in profusion and those gorgeous "blood-spattered" red maple leaves red-and-gold.

It was 5 pm (fast time) and the sun was dropping behind the shoulder of the mountain, but I took the water drainage down the northwest slope to try to find the Lost Valley. It is still lost.

We were higher than I expected and though there were two forks that joined and then went underground, I couldn't reach the place I wanted. In one place I went into black mud to my pants bottoms - no warning - and must-sucked my way out. Why do you always go on, not back in such situations?

At last we came to <sup>George Bird Evans Papers</sup> ~~some old abandoned~~ and I thought we had reached the <sup>West Virginia and Regional History Center</sup> ~~camp~~, but a big rock cliff on the

left threatened to turn us too far northwest, and we saw 7/87  
up and skated it on the left, with no trace of Trails a old  
log roads — just woods and woods and more woods. It was what  
I think of as half-grown — too tall for cover but not long walking.

The sun was below the ~~shoulder~~ <sup>tree tops</sup> and trees with some sunshine  
showing in areas ahead and I kept in a westerly direction,  
plodding on and on. Finally found ourselves in shadow and  
dropping ~~cooling~~ temperature. At one place we were blocked by a large basin  
of big rocks too rough to tackle and we swung to the left to  
skirt it, only to be headed off by <sup>a</sup> down Rhododendron ledge.

I felt us were about the Smith house but couldn't get down well to  
reach the road to Tom Huffmans, so kept pushing left and  
down what seemed endless steps. The heavy leaf carpet concealed  
small boulders that tangled our footing and in places the rocky  
forest floor made walking bad. The only game we saw was a half-sotted  
gray squirrel Quest delivered proudly. There was nothing in this area  
that looked like grass.

At long last, when I was getting concerned about reaching it before  
dark, we came to what looked like a clearing ahead of us in  
sunshine. It was the upper edge of Tom Huffmans' big field. It  
was mowed along the woods edge — a welcome long walking and we took it  
to the. Our road and down to the car at 6:30. The day was barely a walk,  
but we were out for more than that. One more memory gone.

Something had let the ~~Bureau~~ <sup>George Bird Evans Papers</sup> ~~down~~ but I  
resent it.

Monday 26 October

Rehoboth Thorns

Belton: 1 prod

Beautiful, sunny to cloudy  
cold, windy 55°

0  
moved 1 - 2 floras

Quest: 1 back

3:45 - 5:15 / 1 1/2 hrs.

On our way to a work in Canaan. Last night was the night of the Glorious Twenty-Fifth. Color is almost gone at home - residual leaves but beautiful. Got a late start, almost with loading up but arrived at the Rehoboth Thorns at ideal time and with no one there, including my workmate. Reports from Maine tell of plenty of 'cock but mild weather, and it may be some time before the flights reach us.

We hunted the usual areas of the Thorns but moved nothing. There appear to have been no cattle on this area of the Arnold Place and I am having misgivings as to whether that may have adversely affected the use of this terrain the last year or so.

Belton was ecstatic and I gloved in his pleasure at being in his coverts. So good to see him so well and his old self. The incision is healing well with only some remaining swelling ~~and not much more than~~ <sup>just less</sup> 3 weeks after surgery on his right hip.

We worked the Hedgerow covert last at about 5:00 (which seems late now as it is in season again). Found nothing when there should have been so much, until I reached the south edge. Icy had gone for the car, as usual, and I was working Belton & Quest, both doing handsomely. I came on Belton pointing into a thick clump of hawthorn from the inside. Quest came racing in and froze, tilted over, at the sight of Belton. Faced with a choice of left or right, I took the latter but didn't get far before I saw Belton flick and Quest break and I merely sensed a motion - no sound - of the 'cock going out the far side. ~~My gun was out~~ It turned left



and out the edge toward the road but both dogs wanted it otherwise 9/87  
I let them work the big stretch of scattered stones and to the next cove -  
both fired up from the contact with game.

at last I got them moving back toward the road and put them into  
the thicket on my left. But I was the one who walked into the woods, a  
male that flushed within yards of me - a nice chance against  
the sky, had it been a point. I got both dogs to the side of flush and  
neither got the slightest hint of scent, convincing me that recently  
landed 'cock held their scent.

Kay was bringing the car and we met her at the road and I  
changed into Wellington, with old memories throbbing and a vision of  
Brian on his last hunt in hand, lying in the leaf-filled roadside looking  
tired and blissful. The new Woodcock Moon hung in the sky and made it good.

Down the long ride toward Daves with the crescent moon becoming  
larger and as we went. Nice to get started. We'd hope for better in Canaan.

Wednesday 28 October

Sunny to cloudy 45°  
cold, windy  
1:25 - 4:10 } 3 1/2 hrs  
4:40 - 5:25 }

Canaan Trip

New Black Bear

mailed 9-14 flunks

1 shot - 0

Mallow

mailed 6-6  
0

Belton: 5 prod.

Quist: 8 prod.  
back

Yesterday was a "Canaan Day"; intermittent showers to steady rain  
We took the day in Timberline cabin 10 to explore, and drove some of the  
roads, then went up to the Black Bear development - developments  
everywhere! - and discovered a George Bird Grays Western exposure at  
the lower end of the Upper Valley West Virginia and Regional History Center

James Renshaw, who is house-sitting at Old Hawk, drove down to meet us at the Courtland Road and we hunted the Black Bear thorns. (10)  
Within 15 minutes we moved two woodcock. The Hawthorns are large "orchard formation." I discovered the attraction for 'cock: the grassy areas under the Hawthorns. These thorns had almost no leaves on them this season.

Both Belton and Quest had points but the birds were jumpy. I was trying to reach the old tramroad grade but found us was blocked by stands of spruce and swamp pushing into the base of Canaan Mountain. We had moved and returned another 'cock without shots and after turning back through woods we topped a rise and came to the house under construction at the end of the road.

Hunting the thorns south and east we made a large circle with no action until we reached the south end of the cover where we had some ground points by Quest. On his point I walked in and signaled James to move in on the right. The 'cock rose on the far side of a small thorn, blocking my shot. All these birds flushed low - not an easy shot - because of the open cover.

We followed toward where James had marked the flight and at the edge of longwoods, Quest had a hot point in a small draw. I was on a woods road and the bird flushed and out the road veering into cover on the right. I took a long try and lost sight of the bird as I shot but suddenly missed for the dogs did not find. Ray and James saw a second bird left and we followed it.

I walked into <sup>them</sup> one that, being aroused, the dogs missed. We had no points but a ~~refresh~~ look that could have been a new bird. The cover was so long but bounded on the east by the spruce cover along the

entered some aspen stands. The aspen look so black with no trace  
 of leaves — near the ground pack brown instead of gold but oh, what  
 fragrance. The footing in these stands is a horror of fallen branches  
 hidden by the heavy leaf fall and the ground uneven, so that your boots  
 turn under you every step. Beltz was in front of me and went on point,  
saying the 'lock was close. A scent came in and honored and Kay, who was  
 taking pictures, felt he also had the scent and it was a <sup>single</sup> divided point.

I moved in and the woodcock, a hen, went ~~off~~ for the treacher — a nice  
 night-quaranting shot but a cluster of tree trunks cut short my swing and I  
 shot, feeling myself behind. We followed and had two or three more flashes, all  
 wild. I find the birds gamier than any cock I remember.

We heard several shots and felt Jeff and Parker was into action. It  
 proved to be other hunters who had followed us in. Jeff had a shot on Parker  
 just before we got together and worked the river, then curled back to hunt  
 toward the mountain.

at the bottom we started up what seemed our road that ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> a branch  
 in the wrong direction. It was late and we hurried on to the main road and  
 started the long haul that proves you are still in shape. The half Woodcock  
 Mom was high above the Valley as we topped-out. It was a good day but the  
 sleighs are still not in

"Timberline" was not as ~~so~~ obtrusive as I had expected. It is largely the  
 old Harman tract. I had not realized there was so much beech woods in  
 the Valley — mostly beech and soft maple. There seems to be beech mast  
 this year but no grouse to use it.

Friday 30 October

Black Bear

Belton 1 back <sup>(12)</sup>

warm, sunny, breezy 62°

mixed 6-6

Quest 2/mud.

2:00 - 4:00 / 2

} 2 1/2 hrs

Mallards

4:45 - 5:15 1/4

0

Clear, sunny weather. Packed for home before leaving cabin and drove to the good court of Wednesday's hunt. No birds until we reached the north end, where Quest had a lovely point, a hen evidently that flushed 90° across but in Jeff's direction and I didn't try for what was a chancey shot at best. I can't remember 'em offering such difficult shots — all seem to be darting and low. This one forest for the spruce and alders in the bottom and we creaked to follow with no reflex.

This swampy bottom proved to be a lovely area and the "spruce" turned out to be balsam fir, beautiful trees. We missed two more 'cabs on the edge — one a bird that Quest ran into with wind at low back.

Parker dispaent the Old Hunter's Tradition by doing what Old Hunters have done for generations — rolled in a big juicy cow pad, but it seemed to wear off from running through thick cover.

In the spruce swamp we came across grassy patches including about half the tailfeathers of a male — possibly a hawk kill but perhaps a shot.

We had no further contacts until we reached the good SW corner near the cars, where Quest made a hit and handsome point and Belton, who has been hunting hard all the last 3 days, actually lashed by sitting, was doing it as much from simple fatigue as honor. I walked in after Ray had taken several photos — color of b & w — and with admirable marking circled

the Hawthorn trees. Jeff, who was equating some in the depression in front to suit  
me a shot, called that a 'cork plank' would some yards above. They could had  
been in 9 weeks just but it was a long point. I moved on, with the  
incompleted return taking its toll of me.

By this time I was losing energy fast, every step an  
effort. At the upper end of the draw - all good Hawthorn cover - Ray  
and I went to the cars and Jeff had a point by Parker in the things  
to the left of the cow road when the dogs had worked on the way in.

While they hunted the cover north, I dug and I got in the car and  
I added turkey and bread and orange juice. This is when I should have  
stopped, but we kept going after the next morning to the Mallow corner.

It was beautiful, the cover <sup>and the time right,</sup> ~~ideal~~ everything like Wednesday but today  
we didn't make a feather. That is going. Paper long, fatigue had hit  
me to the degree that I had to give up (think I may have gone too  
long without food, together with the carriage of yesterday's 4-hour hunt  
and the long drag back up the mile-long Conaco Mountain trail.

We said goodbyes to Jeff & Pamela and Paula and went to  
the car. Ray took over and made the long drive home all the way - too  
much to put on her but she managed.

On the way ~~to~~ the ~~the~~ flaming sunset was Robert Senior over the  
western ridges - a grand end to the trip. We found Old Hunkah safe,  
with Coners's welcome. Happy times!

Monday 2 November New Chesapeake / Mitchell Place

sunny to cloudy, hot 68° moved 1-0  
dry  
2:40 - 5:20 / 2½ hrs. moved 3-3  
0

(This page is out of place (16)  
Belton  
Quest  
(read later)

Now it is November, and Pennsylvania Indian summer, hot and unmercifully dry. A first visit to this covert we discovered with James when we had good dog work on spring woodcock - just of them. Today we moved 3, and that was counting close, together with our sparse flush by 'Keep' been hearing of a distant sound.

We found 2 vehicles ~~parked~~ at the parking area (W.P.A. Conservancy) that may have been turkey hunters.

We took the moved team through acres of dead goldenrod with a few thorn clumps scattered, both dogs working well. Since through the "gap" of cover, we hunted the inside edge of woods on the right. Quest had a grand point - very sincere - on the woods margin and I was certain it would be a 'cock. Ray took photos and then walked in but there was nothing <sup>but scent.</sup> There is the story of our hunting.

We worked around the far boundary of this huge old field of goldenrod. There were some clumps of thorn thickets but not a trace of wren, Mr. Gullion. At last in a nice ravine of large sumac Quest ran on a hen woodcock that flushed from under his nose. It was so dry I can understand his not getting warm. It was one of those lovely shots that come when the bird is pointed and I had to watch it go.

We found a large sugar maple log in a small draw inside the woods and ate lunch with Belton & Quint at one feet. The fragrance of dried leaves was like sherry and everything was lovely but the birds. I call these diary pages "Shooting Notes" but they are more nearly "searching notes," trying to find game that exist there. I hear of others and their birds, but I wonder if anyone tells the truth.

The sun was dropping into the bare tree tops, becoming a pallid gold ball as it went behind the fetter of branches. At the north edge of the big area we came to a planting of autumn olive that formed a dense thicket where we saw a woodcock (a male) top out very wild ahead of the dogs. I tried to follow, pushing through a tangle of blackberries but had no contact.

~~At~~ At last in the cool of the sunset shadow we came to the nice thorns on the edge of the "gap" woods when I hoped we'd have action. Quint, who didn't stop quartering hard all afternoon, was moving out too far ahead trying to find what wasn't there. The woods had a nice corner with yuccas and I worked it. I say, on the trail with Belton, whom she was keeping with her to rest him from the heat, saw what must have been a woodcock flush from the woods' edge. With birds as scarce as this, I counted it as #3 'cock. We can at least still dream.

There were two new cars parked when we reached our car, the other two having gone. At least we are not alone

Wednesday 4 November <sup>New</sup> Farnace Road, East

Belton

(18)

Hot, slightly breezy 70°

Quest

Sunny  
3:00-4:50 / 2 hrs.

Never in ~~the~~ <sup>my memory</sup> ~~mind~~ of man has there been an Indian summer like this one. November's Indian summer is different from

October's. October's was war paint and the compelling rot of autumn. November's is warm and gray-bleak with a dry smell, half leaf-dust, half leaf-smoke, <sup>that</sup> curtains the distant ridges in a blue haze, making them more distant and surreal.

The Farnace Bottom has always been in my brain as a place where John Lambert gunned woodcock in the early decades of the 1900s, a place I've promised myself I would go. Today was the day we went.

Instead of the dense bottomland what I intended to enter, we found a new stoned road and a construction crew building a bridge over Cheney for a Westraeco timbering operation. It will someday create error, but it wiped out our quest. In an effort to salvage the day, we checked our top map and set out to hunt up the tributary valley that puts in just north of where we were. It proved a long walk up a trail in Penna. State land to find a gap in the high ridge to set us <sup>into</sup> the Farnace Bottom Valley where ~~the~~ a flat wide area along Big Sandy looked promising.

at what we thought was the right place we climbed the steep ridge through large white oak timber, none of what we'd been walking through.

at last, a thinner skyline led us to what turned out to be the gap in the trunk of a yawning beam ~~the~~ steep to consider going down.





Moon came up on our left and hung, enormous, in the sky & under the drive home a memory to cling to.

Saturday 7 November  
Cloudy, smoky, 50°  
cool  
2:45-5:15 / 2 1/2 hrs.

Upper Wilkison  
mud 1-1  
0

Bellin  
Quest

Thursday & Friday were clear days, but we didn't hunt because of high winds and wind chill. Today was hazy again and most acutely smoky from forest fires in southern WV. I don't remember a condition like this, reminiscent of William Merston's description of forest fires in the 1800's in Saginaw. I don't think most people realize the seriousness of this situation. There is no place to go to escape; the condition exists over the mid-Atlantic mountain states. I don't think Kay & I would have hunted if we'd recognized the problem today. There was a sense of not being able to take deep breaths, and my nose and eyes reacted with irritation. The gun was red at noon when I had broken through and again during the late afternoon. We parked at Jim Deere's auction buildings and walked down the old back road with the dogs working some good storm water in the upper side. Partway down we cut right into the bottom and to excellent cover in the small run where Quest went on an intense point in a situation perfect for a woodcock - or a grouse. I stood while I lay down in for some photos. Bellin is continuing his refusal to back Quest, moving in instead and ground-sneezing in front of the point. He ignores my comment to hold and doesn't all in an ornery way that would be any place else. Standing

21/87

and yelling at him throws me off balance for a shot, and, furthermore, it does no good. A lot of collar stock would help.

I'm inclined to take advantage of a bad situation by letting Peltan put up the bid, but this season a bid has almost never been there. It is incredible, this lack of game under these hot prompts of quest. I finally sent him an — after a noble effort. Quest hunted beautifully today, only a few times unhooking too wide. Peltan is amazing in his vigor and hunting but today was more comfortably close to me.

We cut across a huge field of grass on the bottom hillside to the cover in the hollow. This piece was what we came for, a perfect dense regrowth thicket with a few paths growing to blackberry canes. I was hunting up one of them, going up the valley when something flashed across from the left and my mind caught black ruffs as a small grouse that zoomed into the bottom before I could raise my gun. My God, how fast! It was the only ~~first~~ head of game in a valley fullish of cover to dream about. This is about the third season we have tried this and each time we meet our grouse, a static condition that gets nowhere.

In a long push through dense cover we at last skirted the upper end and unhooked into the dry woods on top with gorgeous poplars, barren this year when last season they were bare with grapes.

These woods on top is full of memories the first year I discovered it, I think with Peltan and Dixie, when it was prime and full of grouse. What days!

Our only other contact with wildlife was a flying squirrel that came into a tree over my head then sailed to a dead snag and disappeared. We hunted the great geese over then circled to the field on the bottom — then Rexroads are good farmers — and along and into the thicket once more to the green field on the south side.

We followed the dogs up and across and decided to head to the steep woods instead of taking the old Barrader road up the hill. It wasn't the best choice but we stuck to it and climbed to the big grassland on top into a chill wind that still did nothing for the smoky haze. We went over to see the gravestones in the small fenced graveyard on top and found it full of Fikes. I remember now, but Thomas's calling this the Fike place.

There is something wrong more than smoke, when there is only one spout in ever like this area today.



A PLACE FOR A 'COCK.

How many of the points point ~~out~~ <sup>to the</sup> left!

Monday 16 November New Far Edelman

Bolton

23/187

Cool, sunny, 55°

moved 1-1

Quest: 1 back

2:20 - 4:20 } 2 1/2 hrs.  
4:45 - 5:30 }

Poplar House

Rehobeth

Last week wiped us out with snow (I don't like it in hunting season), and even though the "winter cycle" — snow on ground and trees, heavy, with blue sky overhead — tantalized us, we couldn't go. We still hoped to go to Big Mountain for 'cock, and as so often happens, I think we missed the flight.

Today was what we waited for, lovely weather, and we got a good start for Mt. Storm. Snow was gone except in shady areas. We passed opposite the Far Edelman Place in a road new to me that looks interesting, leading north. We got over fence on Edelman (I should have taken the cattle road as Kay & Bolton did) and were into excellent hawthorn at once with nice new juicy cow pads and numerous wet seeds agitated with cow hoof marks.

Both dogs walked a bit well at first, but with excitement, and I saw no point but Kay and a 'cock flushed back over her from the thorns ahead. We kept on, with the dogs covering well but missed nothing more. There was a large expanse of pasture between the first thorns and the cove at south end — a hellmouth of thorns and briars impossible to wade through except by rare cow or deer trails. I expected — expected is the only thing that keeps a summer from going mad these days — either 'cock or quail here but we found nothing all the way through to open shaded edge over an acre south.

Rather than double back, we hunted down to Maple Run and found alders with grass that was perfect 'cock cover. I found two small dots of whiterash but no birds. Maple Run is small and narrow here and we found a place to cross and hunted the alders on west side — not as good cover.

Following the lower margin of woods, we hunted north all the way to the road with nothing to reward our effort. George Bird Evans Papers  
West Virginia and Regional History Center  
prints frozen and enlarged, from old maps in areas showed but

at the next fence Ray left to sit the car and I headed up  
 the hill to the lovely corner of Peltos' beautiful point in King photo.  
 The dogs hunted hard - both so eager and certain - but there was nothing.  
 At the top, I scrambled awkwardly over Peltos' mud fence -  
 fatigue was getting to me - a tiredness that comes from our disappointment  
 after another with no relief of contact with game. It is a better way to  
see a season go when you are almost 8-1, not the grand thing that  
 gumming should be. This land of ours is barren, which I hear reports of  
 grouse & woodcock in abundance in the W. Museum of Mammals. W. deserves  
 better.

We drove to the top and saw Clyde and Vera Davis at their mailbox  
 and chatted. They are so cordial. Clyde told of some Va. woodcock also found  
 grouse on the old "Richard" woods - lots of shooting but "couldn't hit them."  
 I wonder.

Got started late in Rehoboth Thomas sat 4:45. A cold wind  
 had come up at sundown and as added clothing and started out, with  
 Quest of Peltos' park and sugar and sunny wind. Made our circle of  
 near Thomas, then doubled back to the hedgrom cover with my dogs  
 many to wish. Quest backed about he must have taken as a point by  
 Peltos, standing on the edge and solid, but there was nothing. Ray walked  
 with us through to the far clearing with no action except hard hunting.

While Ray walked back to the car, I walked the dogs out into the  
 Thomas that scatter over this huge flat. At two excellent places, Quest  
 had two excellent points, high and solid, but again, or over more, there  
 was nothing. What is this. Always, even on points there is nothing. It  
 gets to you. I reacted with extreme fatigue. There must  
 be something better ahead, but I've accepted nothing.

Wednesday 18 November

Black Bear Thorns

Belton 2 per  
Quest 1 back

Clear, sunny, cold, windy 42°

moved 4-7  
0

2:10-4:00 }  
4:40-5:20 } 2 1/2 hrs.

Plates  
maced 1-1  
0

Back to the canoe for a one-day attempt to find woodcock. There was no  
out in the Black Bear thorns, thanks be, though we found car tracks when we  
parked and they found a yellow 20-gauge empty in the balsam swamp. You may  
not see them, but they're bear thorns.

A high wind put us into warmer clothes and soon then I forgot to  
wear my insulated cap. Out in the windy flat I felt the need of it and Kay  
returned to the car for my Bear cap, blusher. I followed the dogs out into the  
lullside thorns and almost immediately saw a hen woodcock rising in front of the  
Quest without a chance for a point. <sup>I followed back as it flushed before Quest could approach.</sup> Very shortly I saw Belton double up  
into a cramped point — age and woodcock do little for style — and another  
'cock — a hen — lifted and dropped within ten feet, and lifted again like  
the willow leaves around it. This one went for the south edge of woods.

Circling, we moved #3 from the same lullside thorns, again wild,  
almost as Quest approached. On all these, he was nicely steady at  
wing. Before Kay rejoined us we had had six flushes on three birds. Now  
how I see woodcock act like this; nervous as hawks, yet lifting low for  
only short flights before finally heading out. The extremely high wind, backing  
up leaves must have been the cause, and I wonder about hunting pressure  
down from the North. But I recall a grand day in the Galus in '72, I think,  
on October 17th, when Phil was pointing cock that held well in a cold  
stiff wind.

Kay didn't get to see any of this action but it looked as if we were into  
a flight. How often my optimism leads to that conclusion, only to be foiled.

We worked all the way out the bullrush hawthorns with no further action, then dropped into the bottom of the balsam swamp. The dogs were hunting hard, excited by the contact, and both covered the area well, but I was they came to almost stop on a 'cuck' - another hen - as I entered the alders and near grassy swamp. It lay tight enough for me (is it the dog ball that put them up today?) and would have been a good shot had it been pointed and had it not gone up and been obliterated by the blinding white ball of smoke. I can't help wonder if a shot fired when the bird "went up" against the rays of light would have hit? There was some bit of white smoke in the area near the last flash but no birds.

We made a big circle around the east and south margins and came back to the chorus hawthorns in the southwest corner where I suspected action. There was not a bird. Before going to the car I made an more sortie into the bullrush hawthorns when we moved the there. Quest had two points that were simply grand - solid, hot, and with the stiff breeze. <sup>Each</sup> ~~the~~ time I was certain and so was my adrenaline, but although I circled all around and Quest held, nothing happened. I got pictures that will be hard to believe was empty. Even Peltor backed, sitting down! There have been more points without birds this season than any in my experience, and with no explanation. This was wet open where no bird could have lifted without our seeing it - and I don't believe Quest is pointing footscant. I've seen him check on footscant but he never dwells on it - The second point on this bullrush was a sudden swing - around into a hard wind - and that would have wiped footscant ~~away~~. <sup>But there was no bird.</sup>



29/81  
27/81



PROOF OF THE UNPROVABLE.

Back at the car we took a short exploratory probe into the opening beyond the woods to the NW and discovered that the woods road evidently is the old tramroad grade, or nearly so, that is the link to the northern part of the Valley we've been seeking. However "drained land" seemed to block passage from what we could see, and we turned back and drove to the Hank Mallow corner. There we found now no hunting notices and so we hurried to the Gates as so many times in the old days.

We found a bow hunter's ~~camp~~ camper in the opening near the far Thomas, and we parted off the paved highway (a State road now) when we pushed so many times in the past. Tring was fleeting as it so often was, but we hurried into the cover in the night, from now to discuss St. John's wort. There are no longer Ben's cattle in here and you can't imagine the difference.

We crossed the "cow road" into the good Thomas and aspen - wonderful looking with open grass under the thicket. Patter, Kay tells me, pointed out a cock flicked what - I saw only Patter's after-glow. That was it, but I was sent to be back in here and along. It is hunted land. The "far species" reckoned but the sun has shown George Bird Evans Papers West Virginia and Regional History Center

could ~~not~~ ~~make~~ it a day and head for the car. I don't say how many cars raced past us while we were putting the legs in the car. One of them was courteous enough to slow slightly as we passed. It is a different world.  
But the day was glorious and we did not mind!

Thursday 19 November

Ben Crow

Bellton

Cold, cloudy to sunny, 42°

mowed 1-1  
0

Quart

3:40-5:10 / 1 1/2 hrs.

We were delayed by car trouble (spark plug etc) that developed on our way home last evening, but we went to the famous Ben Crow event regardless, getting a late start. If there are the grounds there that we have heard of, I don't know where. We found the Bob Teets land a solid stand of red pine - worthless - and the adjacent Farrow land good looking but without good other than rubus. Had hoped for woodcock but the swamp is not very good cover. We saw one grouse on part of Bellton plus several woodcock after it flushed. I say heard it, neither of us saw it. That was it, except for memory of a lovely point in time by Bellton and a beautiful big cocklebird shot. When are there days?  
The last heavy mow I left 1 day with Bellton in the car and I hunted the elders on the north of the road with quart of nest is absolutely



glorious in motion, seeming to float over the terrain, never letting up.  
How he keeps his enthusiasm is a mystery, for we are hunting nearly barren  
coverts. We have, it is true, been hunting largely for woodcock, but grouse  
should be there too. We have hunted ~~thirteen~~ <sup>eleven</sup> coverts in WV and two  
in Pa, in twelve days - 13 coverts, and missed 6 grouse most of them, heard,  
not seen, out on the Canaan & Mt. Storm. This is lethal in terms of  
fatigue.

Tuesday 24 November

Cloudy, mild, damp 45°  
1:50 - 5:05 / 3 1/4 hrs.

Hatched Place

moved 4-4  
o

Belton

Quest 1 prod

We started for this covert yesterday but was turned back by rain showers.  
Today as a fine hunting day, moderate, yet comfortable with a quilted  
under jacket to turn rain if any, and leaves underfoot damp. We parked at  
Mac & Sam Henshel's and walked through woods to the log road where  
cutting is still being done, the old road being choked with slashed tree-tops.  
Both dogs working well and with hopes high.

We had come to the large clearing before the park desks where  
Quest, in <sup>September</sup> 1984, saw his first grouse, and I think he still remembers.

Suddenly there was a loud howling from one of the dogs - I couldn't tell  
which - and I knew what we was in for. Ray took my gun and I  
ran to where Belton was howling and seeing at a steel trap on his  
right paw. Quest was there working and trying to see what was going on.  
It was one of the <sup>double</sup> short-sprung ~~trap~~ traps and I had a firm

grip on Belton's forward toes. I got one of the springs depressed with my foot and quieted Belton until I could squeeze the other with my right fingers enough to <sup>open the jaws and</sup> release the foot. Fortunately it didn't appear to have done serious injury beyond the pain and shock. I knew there was probably a second trap and we got both Quest and Belton away from the place, then found the other area of smoothed soil and pushed a stone into it. The second trap snapped shut. I loathe the type who traps, and learned later from Mac that it was Fred Carter who lives below him.

There is nothing about that couple I like. Common boulders. Belton soon regained his happy mood and we got ~~him~~ over more. It was his idea to take the right side of the draw and we followed to the top, where we skirted the big rock ledge and worked to the lower path, which we followed to the deer camp clearing with no contacts.

We hunted to the upper clearing and had started down the back path when Quest had a good hoist in cover on the right. He was silent, as he has been on so many unproductive <sup>traps</sup> this season, and again it was empty. Walking down to the back area, I saw a bird cross from right to left but couldn't be certain it was a grouse because it was so atypically high. Possibly a Cooper's hawk.

It is still grand thick cover dotted with hummocks but we heard nothing. After circling it well, we found for lunch when we have many times in the past. It was getting on toward 4:00 and clouds were lowering, with light reduced. We were hunting the back path to the north when they called Grouse!! and That's another one.. Both birds had gone out from under a thick ~~brush~~ <sup>brush</sup> and I ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>never</sup> heard any more then.



~~1007~~  
~~ent p 161~~

BELTON, AFTER THE FACT.

We followed today's impression of the flight sound into large woods on the west when we have often followed birds in other years, and as in those years, we did not refresh them. A fine mist had begun to show on my gun barrels and we pushed back to the path and to the transverse "path" that leads <sup>up</sup> to the upper clearing, where we took a breather and had more food before starting out. So after I had been in this clearing and seen again the ~~the~~ <sup>green</sup> ~~green~~ that flushed across it. One band of two that year that made this count last.

The top path is growing out and we moved on. Quest had a good point that looked real, but after they got some pictures, I moved in without a product.

I got us to the last clearing at 4:22 ahead of time and again we took a short rest and then started down the rocky path through the gaps with large stones rolling underfoot, hidden in leaves. I had remarked that this path had a gentle grade at this ~~first~~ place as compared with the steep slope we had climbed on the far side coming in, when I saw Quest point for a second, then ~~we~~ ~~had~~ ~~moved~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~point~~

side behind him, the sight of so many unseen flocks I've heard in the past. We hurried down and had begun to pick our footing down the wet rocks when a loud flush on the left and to the rear made us turn and glimpse a quail crossing ~~the~~ high above us. It was later a 100' view of aircraft recognition tests, a mere blink of a dark silhouette against sky and I had no possible way to shoot. Kay had dropped and rolled on the ground to give me a shot that wasn't there - very heroic of her. Two birds here, two birds at the far end and only one flash view of me. You can't shoot the invisible.

That was it. We passed the two spring traps but saw no other sets, in all our careful looking. It was a disappointing report to a wonderful coveit, one of our best - and yet it compressed the best days I'd had, a commentary on the conditions.



Thanksgiving 26 Nov<sup>New</sup> Deer Lake Game Lands #51  
Mist, fog, cool 52° moved 2-2  
2:10 - 3:35 / 1½ hrs. 0

Belton  
Quest

33/  
187

Started for Pennsylvania in another cloudy, mist that became drizzle, but we went on, to explore the Game Lands Paul Muehlbauer had told about. We took the John Lambert road to Chalk Hill and to Deer Lake where we turned left at far end of bridge. I was surprised to find so many small houses & trailers.

The Game Land entrance sign stated the acreage to be over 14,000, and the map later showed it to extend beyond the Grayhooking Run, an enormous tract. The mud road was a bit soft from the rain, but the drizzle had let up as we approached higher elevation and in its place a low-hanging cloud became a fog that cut off visibility to about 75 yards.

We met a mountaineer with his boy in a truck whose name was John Bryner - familiar - who lived on the edge of the Lands. He directed us to a patch of woods where "there were always a good many grouse."

We turned off the main road on a newly graveled road and parked at a gas pipeline that ran 90° to the road which was NW x SE.

Dense cutover cover on the right hung with raindrops on everything, and the grassy pipeline made an excellent way to hunt without getting drenched in the brush, while the dogs quartered the sides.

The pipeline soon crossed the main road and we came to nearly cut cover on the left. The pipeline dropped abruptly into dense fog and we turned back and hunted to the gravel road at the car.

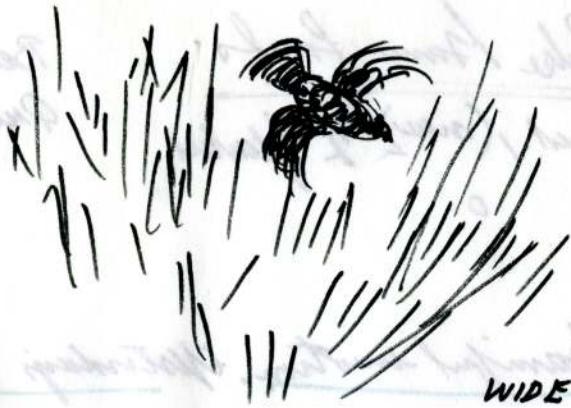
Just short of the road we found a woods path that proved to be

the cleared boundary line of the lands, marked with, with dots of juniper trees, indicating the shaded cover was of the same lands. However it ran along the right side of the boundary, which we hunted with the dog covering both sides. Good as it appeared, it held no quess.

About half a mile north we turned back, taking the gravel road. Cover here is a bit open with no food apparent, but as I had not seen for when a quess exploded on the left and gave me the best look at a bird I've had all year. For some reason, my shoulders spasmed from the reflex and I stood gaping, <sup>unable to mount</sup> ~~was~~ my gun to my shoulder. It was a repeat of the trouble I've had the last few years, which I thought I had ~~corrected~~ <sup>corrected</sup> by shortening the Purdy stock. There is nothing so quite equal it for sheer agonized frustration — with the gun stock not clearing my right elbow and watching the quess disappear from a beautiful chance.

I try to analyze it: possibly starting the mount too high in the old Churchill style instead of from the waist, which is necessary for momentum to overcome the limited shoulder action. The worst part is knowledge that this can continue and not be a simple happening. A point to learn me would help, but Quest and Belton were on the right of the road. Quest heard and saw the flash and ran after it, later going hot at the sets of the rise. I feel the stock length is still all right, that it is simply a case of galvanized reflex instead of relaxed response. Relaxed?





WIDE OPEN.

As so often happens, we could not locate the bird and one more  
 hunted up the gravel road. We had not gone a hundred yards when a  
 grouse flushed ~~from~~ inside the larger woods on the right. I say saw it head  
 toward a grassy point strip ahead and we followed.

There was some brush and logs on the edge of the meadow strip -  
 possibly game cutting. Although we hunted the strip around a corner to  
 the road and the car we did not refresh it. At the car, I say put Butler  
 up and waited while I hunted back with Quirt covering the left side.

At exactly the right place he pointed - a good sized mound but with  
 level tail. I went ahead to a break in the cover where I could enter and  
 double into an point but there was no bird present. Considering the  
 situation, I am convinced the grouse had landed there and reflected on  
 its own with no one nearer than the grassy strip, a possible  
 explanation for all the "empty" points we've been having.

This place looks good and I called Paul Thorsen and got directions  
 to where he and his friend had moved to. We're going back to try it again tomorrow.

Friday 27 November  
cloudy, cold, 40°  
2:15 - 5:00 / ~~2~~ <sup>2 3/4</sup> hrs

Deer Lake Game Lands  
moved, (now) 2 flocks  
0

Bellton  
Quest

Disillusion, the painful emotion. Yesterday's high hopes of  
having found a good new covert was deflated today. We drove on  
out the mud road to the chimney Paul M. described and parked there,  
heading north on the faint log road through clearcut regrowth.  
Where Paul had moved 5 geese last Monday, we found only his two  
plastic shot cups where he had shot at one of them. The "snowmobile"  
road at the <sup>far</sup> end of the truck cover turned out to be the gravel road we  
had been on yesterday at the south end. What had seemed a good  
habitat management <sup>by</sup> the Pa. Commission proved to be private  
cutting. The state departments ~~are~~ <sup>care for</sup> nothing but deer.

However, on the plus side, the cutover area is a good discovery.  
We could work only the log road (much like the cutover cover back  
of Mc Mullins) with cover too dense to hunt, although the dogs worked  
it well.

Disappointed, we turned back and headed to the car when we took a  
short breather, having eaten lunch at the far end. Kay found her  
G & W camera in the car, which relieved her, after missing it while  
hunting.

The best cover is a limited margin along the mud road and I  
worked the dogs for a short circle, marking the one goose of the  
day on the south edge of the road. ~~The birds left.~~ ~~The dogs left.~~

only to refresh as the dogs approached it, this time crossing  
the right side of the road too far and with too little view to shoot.

What was the most disturbing part, was my inability to mount  
and fire at the first rise. Is it lack of confidence in my gun or is it  
simply a psychological impression, with the <sup>extremely</sup> short glimpse of the  
bird an impossible chance to begin with? Several dry moments  
after the flush gave the impression that the gun is still too long.

We followed the flock into more clearcut cover on the ~~right~~  
right with no contact. I am reaching a state of paranoia  
with no points and chances for shots and have begun to be  
overcritical of Quest, who hunts hard and covers the land well but  
I feel is not giving me shots ~~at~~ on points. Ray stresses the lack of  
enough birds, but I feel he should point some of the birds there  
are, instead of only empty points.

We returned to the car and drove west to the gravel road. ~~and~~  
I hunted the road, with Day and Betty following in the car, but  
we found no trace of the two we saw yesterday. Quest spent too much  
time on the road and didn't handle well - probably reflecting my  
mood.

The east area with cutover will be worth visiting another year,  
but this eternal disappointment and lack of birds gets to you.  
And the gun problem has me worried. After spending the late  
summer reshaping the butt of the stock, am I faced with shortening  
it further and redoing it? I don't know.

Tuesday & December <sup>New</sup> Cemetery Hill  
sunny, mild, perfect 50°  
snow gone  
1:40-5:30/2 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>  
mud 1-1  
0

Pellam  
Quest

(38)

Post deer season. Had Melvin Forbes shorten Purdey stock on December 3rd, from last year's  $14\frac{3}{8}$  to  $13\frac{5}{8}$ , a radical step, but at least I have a stock that mounts comfortably with my injured shoulders (10 years and 3 years later). Spent recent days shaping the new butt and working in cast-off chamfer on left edge. Have 6 coats of Tru-Oil worked in, enough to protect wood for hunting. Now to find birds to shoot at.

Two Penna. deer hunters told of grouse mowed about Cuffetts' near Clifton. Went to try it today, parking at mouth of old Barclay Meyers road. We climbed the hill with snow drifts on right bank. The woods on top about the Teels Cemetery was fair cover where the 6 grouse was reported to have been. Today they weren't. The view of Chestnut Ridge is magnificent but we were there for more than ~~the~~ landscape.

Evening we came to kitchen, cover around a clearing with a foundation - cellar hole and two henholes and a patch of pine, where we found for me to eat a made of "special treat." We had come off without our lunch and managed by "piecing" on odds and ends including yeast tablets to keep my blood sugar up.

We lost the old road which offset at this clearing, but by taking the larger woods on top we came on it again and headed for the Barclay Meyers gravel pit through woods too open and long.

Far ahead I saw a figure against the skyline moving slowly over the brow. Hurrying fast I saw a big white animal

easier to avoid us but I finally stopped him by calling.

He was a young bow hunter with the reddest hair, shoulder-length, I had seen on a human. Turned out to be from the house where we had tracked, the source of the footprints we had noticed. Had not seen any grouse. I asked where the old cemetery was and he pointed: "Right there behind you."

~~It seemed to~~ The small cluster of tombstones seemed to have materialized like mushrooms behind my back and I must have walked within yards of them on my way down the slope to the top. The Meyers stones were, as we remembered them, Rev. John Meyers and what <sup>(Meyers died in 1863, Pringle in 1848, his girl with 1840s)</sup> ~~had hoped to hunt the old cemetery~~ was probably their daughters with no widow of a wife; or it could have been a young second wife with two daughters from her first, (noselike about).

I had hoped to hunt the good storm bullock of the old Meyers home site, but the two large ones seemed to stretch forever, and with no food to go on, we turned back taking the cemetery road in reverse to the bottom of the hill where it joined the original road that had dropped below the cellar-hole clearing to lead out toward <sup>the</sup> Vergie Sees road.

There is an excellent little run and thick thorn cover that could attract woodcock or grouse. We let both dogs hunt it out - they were working well - and then we hunked up to a dense stand of crabapple thorns where a cleared passageway had been cut through (Snowdell?).

It made a good path to hunt and we had it some far before a grouse flock roared up in the thicket on our left. Both Kay and I had a glimpse of it tepping out. I felt I might have taken a shot, had I been warned by a point but both dogs were close by. In reality, many of

the shots I blame myself for not being fast enough to try are too impossible for any man. It requires a second-and-a-half's mount-and-shoot properly and this ~~is~~ flash didn't offer it.

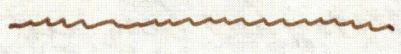
We followed the fence to the top into some beautiful grassy cover along the east edge but did not get a reflex. Many grouse (many?) put down after a flush and reflex before the dogs can reach them.

The best cover of the afternoon was this crab thicket, the gables, and the grassy field with dense cover on the lower and east edge, and is the only northwesterly area in here.

We descended the hillside with the immense expanse of Chestnut Ridge sweeping the western skyline. Belton, the rascal, went far ahead of us toward the car at the Cupbett house. Then I heard him exclaim: "There are chickens there!" There were none and in spite of our yelling, Belton gave them a good workout, with chickens fleeing like magpies in every direction.

By sheer luck he didn't manage to get any - probably because they were game chickens - handsome reds that were perched roof-top in the trees around the house and on fence posts and outbuildings. They were the most game Belton and us had found all season.

Like all "new" covers this year, this one ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ over-rated.



Thursday 10 December  
perfect day, clear sunny 48°  
damps.

2:10-5:10/3 hrs

Ray Guthrie  
mud 6-6  
1 shot - 0

Beltin  
Quest

41/87

This is the best cover we have in West Virginia. It was a pleasure to be out of the deer season on Tuesday and today to be coming back to this ground place, and for the first this season, to see quail.

At the greenbrier corner - and then all greenbrier berries - I went in while both dogs worked it and I lay followed. At the south edge near the mud cross log road I stopped off the path into a new dappled corner and a grouse flushed, crossing left beyond some trees. I ~~was~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~through~~ and fired ranging but missed, shooting through cover, as the bird bore out over the dense clearest thicket and disappeared. It is impossible to follow in that brush. ~~and we~~

I felt that two dogs should have found that bird and pointed, with ideal damp cool conditions. My dogs have not offered me a shot at grouse over a point for so long I can't remember and it began to get to me. Quest began a wild period, refusing to handle and so into the area wanted him to. I had 1 day but him repeatedly with the check collar until he came in but both he & Beltin would not go into the thick cover until I did, and then Quest continued to work out of sight. He was doing poorly on this day, if ever, and it is disappointing.

I covered the greenbrier corner well with no more contacts, then moved down to the crossroads and west toward the thorns. Quest was not handling it as he should, running the road and having to be called back. Beltin went in and hunted but too far out. ~~While I covered the old road,~~

we heard Belta flush two separate grouse well out. This is why I don't get shots.

Coming back inside, I say I ~~was walking up~~ <sup>walked</sup> the deer trail. There was a sudden explosion in a thorn thicket at my left foot, and within two yards of me. I say who was <sup>above</sup> behind me, dropped but I couldn't wheel fast enough to see more glimpses the bird. It was the closest flush I've had in years and could have been a possible shot if I had been able to stop backwards and get a clear view. As it was I found myself with gun halfway up, giving me a feeling I was locked up again. The shot a whole batch of a mess, at least gave me the feel I could mount again with the nearly shortened stock. <sup>The dogs should have</sup> a friend & powder this one.

We tried to follow this bird into the clearest tangle on the upper part of the old road, using a log road grown to blackberry thorns as the only way to penetrate it. The path took us in the right direction but ~~we~~ we didn't refresh the bird.

We stopped to eat lunch and then walked through the field on the lower edge and took it back to the road below where our boat had crossed. At the crossroads we turned north and soon were reduced into going into the mess on the left on a deer path and old log traces, hoping to find our first ~~the~~ bird. The path led us into nowhere and died out in an expanse of clearcut brush that left no clue as to how this timber had been removed. There was a deer tree stand in a land mark hummock that seemed isolated from any access and we gave up. I forgot my way through trail-logs to a flat patch on the east edge of the thicket and on the log clearing, which I say I tried to walk to the tree stand and had to give up, finally worrying me very much.



4/3/1897

girl in the world would have got through. While I waited on the outside, she worked close. Just before she reached the edge, a grouse came out from her, high and at what must have been 45 or 50 yards, crossing left over the open. I stood and watched it go, sure it was too far to shoot at, yet from that moment to this, I have questioned whether a left-handed shot would have reached it. When I lay got out, we followed to the ~~bank~~ hummocks on the north where it seemed to have gone but the dogs didn't find.

We were on the lower log road and took it west into the setting sun. It led us to the pitch-pine clearing where we used to find the birds but today we didn't. After a thorough search we came out on the main <sup>log</sup> road, littered with <sup>logs</sup> ~~logs~~ with <sup>remnants</sup> ~~remnants~~ of deer hunters.

It was past 4:30 and we headed north toward the car. I once more took the windy path in the greenbrier corner with the dogs while I lay walked the road. At this hour and with these greenbrier berries, it seemed there had to be a grouse but there wasn't.

Finally, I joined I lay on the field road where the dogs worked the cover on the right. I have always felt the helgrows ever along the road would have a bird in it. Today it did — a close flush a few yards to our right. I lay was between me and the edge — something I should have avoided — and although she dropped, I couldn't account fast enough to try the shot, a low right-horser on the far side of the thickety hedge and offering the ~~shortest~~ <sup>shortest</sup> of views. Had it been male, it would have been a brilliant shot. Again, my dog was elsewhere when ~~the bird was shot~~ <sup>the bird was shot</sup>.

understandable that they have been so long away from bird contests, as hours I, but the birds were here today and they didn't handle them or give me any warning when they were.

After the immediate irritation and frustration, the day had a wonderful quality of giving action and showing birds and it was a gratifying thing to come here and find them, and want to come back soon again to try and more.

I think the new stock-length is right. Unfortunately, the two impossible fenders left me with a sense of impotency and uncertainty about my gun. But it is well to remember that some photographs can't be made in the short flash of view the bird gives you, and it is not the gun or the gunner.

This evening at home Quest was oddly subdued and followed me when we first came in, wanting to make things right again. He didn't do well today but ~~neither~~ <sup>neither</sup> did I, and it is important not to turn the glow of accomplishment with one off-day.

The next two days will close us out of court with the dog season.

Monday 14 December  
partly sunny to cloudy  
cold 42°

Charlie Seese  
o

Quest

3:06 - 5:15 / 2 1/4 hrs. I lay stayed home with a sore foot, helping Belva. She drove me to the old Jimmy Brothers house - a wreck - and returned for me after dark. This should be called the "Enigma Court" - It is perfect: starked quivering tangles, old log wall, dense regrowth, with unavoidable reports from the Seese Corp

of grouse seen during deer season. I saw not a feather today. 45/187

I worked Quent without the electronic collar hoping he would hunt to me alone. He did some of the times; most of the times he didn't. I realize lack of grouse means a dog out hoping to find it at greater range, but there is no way to rationalize that Quent is giving me proper dog work. He could move as fast and hunt as hard at fifty yards as at one hundred. He had one point that was probably a rabbit or grouse hole. He is staunch but his points are empty. He has had exactly one point on grouse all season.

At one time he was gone five minutes - a long absence - and returned panting with his tongue hanging out, probably having chased a grouse (grouse??!!). (Probably deer.)

There was a very few grapes on the ground in the area on top - excellent cover. I hunted it out, then went down over the ridge, a surprisingly long distance through dense brushy woods to Barnes Run. I took a breather on a log before starting the trek back low down. Old Darkus began to overtake me before I got out, finally hitting the old woods road when I have a vision of a grouse - was it a hit or did I miss? - <sup>from</sup> the upper bank. The woods are full of memories and empty of grouse, a sad thing.

Stopped at Charlie Seese's and asked Ruth to whom I'd go to come for me. Charlie has a nice looking old-fashioned set of teeth turned up last just before deer season - perfectly even - mounted head and fur tops. These things are ~~not~~ depressing.

Monday 21 December  
partly cloudy from then 37°

C. ruff. Plac.

mixed 1-1

Belton

Quest

(46)

1:40 - 5:10 / 3/4

Paul Uphold

Each season I tell myself I'm not going to let myself be frustrated, and each season I'm driven up a wall. There no longer is any pleasure in going out gunning other than to take a walk carrying a gun. I write these notes with nothing to write about, sitting down mostly to get it over with. The lack of success has reached the ludicrous.

We parked at Alanna McCarty's and climbed the hill to the peak of the powdermill. The view here is magnificent and I suppose I should be pleased to write notes about a walk. The reputation clearcut area is all we near it should be and I started out, as usual, hoping.

We headed down the rugged powdermill right-of-way and took what I think was the old Howdershell / Cupp woods road through excellent cover but soon ran out at the enormous stripmining fillbacks, where we skirted the good woods along the lower edge. Standing water and large rocks hemmed us in until at the east end we worked down to a settling pond.

Two boys in their twenties with auto loaders and a <sup>young</sup> Whismoveriner batch appeared about us and came down. They were young Rob Stout, Dr. Stout's son, and a Nugent boy who, I think, may have been Dr. Nugent's son. They had come in from the north side of the valley, crossing Little Sandy on the old Francis' Place road and hunting. They said they'd had 11 flushes, with 3 geese on the north side and 3 on the hill above us. Two green birds can, by simply walking far enough, find goose when I comb good cover with ~~the dogs and bird~~

We left them and entered woods on the east edge that proved to be  
Cupp Run, with humbles grown to <sup>long</sup> ~~long~~ trees.

Just before we started up the hill, 1 day more grown (no doubt on  
the logs had used) soil down over the hill high and far behind us; I  
think but cut by Quest, who scoured the cover today.

We came up to the old lull farm, stripped with no sign of the house.  
We hunted all the flat where on a birthday long ago, I shot a quon on  
Ruff and Dixie, a bird that towered and which was found, wanted, fed on the  
left side of the ~~flat~~ path. That's deep I am hunting memories.

We passed to eat and then abandoned my original plan to  
hunt down over to Sandy, with the woods grown too long and open.

Doubling back, we come to the flat thicket that parallels the Cupp  
land, obliterated now by stump, some operations.

Quest gave us a good point in optimum. Much cover and  
which proved empty, like nearly every point he's had this year. Mystery.

The small run here is wide, and slow and deep and let us proceed to  
the wide strip road, working toward the county road. Quest hunted  
the cover gloriously; at least my dogs don't fight out.

The stappers are now eating up the good corn next to Paul Updell's,  
with the road a mere rut between the old field and the new pit.  
Paul was on the muddy road, walking ~~staggeringly~~ <sup>staggeringly</sup> aimlessly. No bird seen  
two quon at the "calle entrance" to the good cover, both birds finally moved  
into the thicket. This was yesterday. Today we rounded that cover and found ~~some~~

Deer hunters had driven the ~~road~~ log road down over the hill, leaving it a muddy shambles. We decided to hunt the low road back to the Charles Kelly autumn deer flat - a dubious decision - that took a long zig with nothing to show for it.

The autumn vines have grown into tangles that are hard to maneuver but we finally came out on the powerline at sunset and ended at the car. On the way, Quest made a grand vintners point in grapevine down over a drop-off - another empty. To save myself going down over the steep cliff I ordered rum on, a reasonable solution.

The sunset was gorgeous, flaming red, if all we were hunting were sunsets.

My dogs and I yearn and bed over time. Impatiently.

New Year's Day ~~is~~ Friday  
January  
cold cloudy to sunny 33°  
2:30 - 5:30 / 3 hrs.

ammmmmmm  
Bishop Place  
saw 3-4 flickers  
0

Belton & back  
Quest

This was a beautiful day but cold. After a long period of weather that was either rainy or muggy, it was good to get out.

Marshall Shafer had reported seeing 5 grouse "up the hollow," but we hunted through insignificant grapevines over all the way to the head before we saw a bird. It flashed below me as I worked through thick cane or what was a trace of a dog road. I heard and glimpsed it as it lifted well out. Neither dog was at the place and the grouse must have fledged from the sound of me. Our birds are so spooky there is no way a dog can get a point on them, unlike the Michigan grouse I hear of. Part of this is that we are getting almost no young grouse.

→ We followed the bird toward the upper edge of the forest but did not find. Quest had a grand point at the site of flight, no flicker, no crow, no warbler.

49/181  
If grouse were not present, Hominidae ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup>. We heard two separated spots below and behind us and I may heard a grouse flock from their area.

Not long afterwards, there was a noisy report about us near the house on top - holidays are like this.

We followed a line that would avoid both activities and came to the field above, with good cover (cutover) at the head of the hollow. I would like to have hunted the Eowly ridge if it had been above.

We all landed on top near the edge of the field, where I lay took a couple of photos of the ground view.

The flat on top is excellent cover, partly regrowth with a lot of grapes on the ground, although the vines are not conspicuous. We heard a grouse that I may heard near, then later off from a tree. Again there was no contact with dogs - just our presence.

We followed <sup>the</sup> direction of the flight through firm cover, and toward the east at a grouse flight, Quist ran into the grouse, which fled without giving him a point <sup>with</sup> the wind ~~was~~ at his back. An experienced grouse dog would not have been hunted with the wind but with no few contacts with birds it is understandable. He hunts like an angel, covering the terrain at a fast speed, but what we need are grouse. However, making some was a pleasure. We came out at the "county road" to find a new trailer beyond the house at the humber and a cement block hunters cabin where the road pitches down toward Paul Sisor's house. People.

We had a long haul down the road with a magnificent view of Chestnut Ridge, very cold, very wonderful. Better get us trouble at the bottom but we finally got him headed with us and away from the Lester house.

I must call John Sisor and get ~~permission~~ <sup>George Bird Evans Papers</sup> to hunt where we hunted!!  
a good day  
West Virginia and Regional History Center

Tuesday 12 January  
mild, ~~cloudy~~ sunny / 42°  
3:00 - 4:50 / 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  hrs.

Little Sandy Downstream

Bellton  
Quest

(50)

Weather has been cold, and even when fet overhead, has been unpleasant for hunting. Today was lovely and, with Ruth and Ron Dedrow's invitation to come over and reduce the gnats that have been flying through their windows (2 of them), we went over, parking at their house. We hunted parallel with the road, up to the old Neiman's Mill Road and down it to the bottom. Snow was only a few inches deep and soft. The old roadway was frozen honeycomb mud underneath, and with each step, our boots broke through about four inches, making walking miserable.

On the flat bottom the cover looked fair but with no food. Both dogs hunted well, and Quest didn't miss a square bit. <sup>After covering the edge of rhododendron,</sup> We took the old path that sidles up the hill and followed it until, at the place where it curves into the hillside contour, we came to a mass of fallen tree trunks.

Abandoning the road grade, we climbed the steep hillside, working it back west at a slant. Forging on the steep hillside was treacherous, with the slippery snow. Progress was possible only by clinging to saplings and whipsnig sprouts with one hand. Doing this with a gun in the other was an achievement. As Kay started up, her boots slipped out from under her and she rolled down the slope, fortunately without injury. She is gone and I don't know a girl one-fifth her age who could do what Kay does.

We found for lunch  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the way up.



We came out on top within sight of Kay Vincents barn. The  
 high moment of the day was the view of faraway Wapiti Gap and the  
 purple Chestnut Ridges with intertwining ridges snow covered with patches  
 of woodland. It was a grand day to be out, the evening was unusual, and  
 both dogs worked their hearts out. Pelton is an inspiration with his  
 courage and optimism and Quest is a dream of a hunter. But this  
 is almost too much. <sup>We have hunted 17 coverts and moved 16 quarts.</sup> What such a thing would happen to us is more than I  
 can bear at times. But, as Kay says, it's healthy.

We stopped at Ruth & Rains for a nice rent and tea.

Saturday <sup>16</sup> ~~17~~ January  
 sunny, clear, mild 41°  
 snow still on the ground.  
 3:00 - 5:15 / 24 hrs.

Chorpenning Place (Nickelson)  
 moved 1(?) . 1

Pelton  
 Quest 1 prod.

This was too perfect a day to stay in, and we hunted the lower edge of  
 the Nickelson Place. It was a visit to the past bringing back the Sunday  
 morning on a Wartons weekend home from Wilcox Run when I shot two  
 grouse on a hurried hunt before we had to drive back and leave Old Humboldt  
 again. Cover was almost identical: it was growing back after cutting them;  
 it was in the same stage now - ideal. I notice one difference: multiflora rose  
 that closes the old log roads. We followed the lower road to a place where the  
 multiflora was impassable and we worked to the top edge and the upper road.

We hunted to the boundary with the Preaders Ryan Place at a large clearing.  
 Walking the edge of the Ryan woods we found the first sign of grouse - tracks  
 running uphill - long strides in the snow, which I lost in some thick ground  
 cover. We ~~found~~ passed for lunch (Kay wasn't eating, having had lunch at home).  
 The view was magnificent to the west <sup>George Bird Evans Papers</sup> the peaks of Chestnut Ridges - Heaven  
 West Virginia and Regional History Center

Hump and the south shoulder of Weym's Gap blue, the only tips that rose above the rest of the middle distance. This is lonely country we have lived in for nearly 49 years, if only it still had the birds.

After eating, we hunted lower and found the bottom road again. I saw Quest on point just below it and I hurried to him. It was a strange thing I can't be sure of, yet. He was pointing, high and solid and I moved to his left rear and waited while I got a photo. Then Quest suddenly broke and circled around to the right and came back in, pointing left, again solid. Something flashed without a sound, and I caught a briefest impression of what seemed a small form crossing - rising against the blazing ball of sun that blinded me.

Quest lifted and broke as on a flush, and that was it. Had it been in November and not January, I would have called it a woodcock, from the impression of the wings. As it was, I am sketching it and counting it a grouse. Any thought of a shot was impossible.

That was it. We hunted the town road back to the multiflora tangle and again took the upper path to our line. I can remember numbers of grouse in here in the other years. Was so perfect cover, medium sized grapevines throughout, tangles of them on the upper edges. The dogs covered it well and our only game was the quality bird that Quest pointed - his second years point of 3 months hard hunting. We live in an unreal world. It is difficult to accept this thing and keep your sanity.

Tuesday 19 January

The Graveyard Sheds

Bella

Quest

cloudy, cold, rain 42°

3:00-4:00 / 1 hr.

This is a covert I always approach with anticipation. Today was overcast with clouds that spelled rain — low stratum layers and there was even a smell of snow. We parked at the gate and immediately worked left and down the hillside on a road trace that soon died out in the excellent cover. The swamp was half-frozen with crusty ice and mud, and we hunted across and into the timber cutting we discovered last season. It looks good, even though it was selective cutting, for there are piles of brush and cuttings that should hold grouse, with the adjacent thicket.

Both dogs worked well, although we had to touch Quest with the shock collar to get him back in range. If there had been a grouse, he would have found it. Ray found one roost.

We had circled the upper edge of cutting (I keep using the word) when the rain set in — like Eolus St. Vincent Mallory's snowfalls:

"At first a feather, then three or four, then many more." (?) Soon it was coming down hard and we were glad for the well used dog road leading to the upper edge and the road. By the time we reached the car, it was a hard cold rain and we were glad to stop. Another disappointment with not a single grouse in excellent cover. I have never had a year like this.



Wednesday 20 January

Sunny, mild, 50°  
3:30-5:40/2 1/2 hrs.

16

Jimmy Spiker

Belton, 1 lock

Quest

(54)

This is Brier's birthday. Tomorrow will be Dixie's.

January thaw. Got a late start but could not stay in on a day like this. Went to nearby Jimmy Spiker covert and, having phoned Ward Crane, drove up the very good road to the top of the steep hill, unhooking the chain cable barrier.

After a touch of the chain collar to get Quest started in our direction, he gave us the most perfect dog work in terms of range and covering that I have seen any dog do. What a joy. He covered every bit of cover, quartering from side to side and at a nice comfortable range the way Dixie used to do. Even without birds, it is a pleasure just to see such intelligent work, and at a brisk speed, never letting up ten feet less at any time as we out, in 2 1/2 hours.

At the forks of the log roads, Quest hit scent and wheeled to the right and froze, pointing into the corner between the two roads. It was a good spot with dense tangle. Belton came in from the right and barked.

It should, by every bit of justice, have been a grouse. There was nothing there, nor in any of the many excellent pieces of cover we hunted.

Belton was also hunting the cover but tends to push straight out the paths, a prerogative I grant him, the rascal.

We hunted out the top road to the north point of land, with numerous grapevines and some grapes on the ground, then walked around the south of land to the ~~the~~ field within sight of the Spiker farm, where we found in a magnificent view of the Brier's and Pine Swamp (dead), and long both sides of the sweep of mountain with broad strokes of scrub field in the muddy distance, and Cloud Meadows delineating

the contours of the mountain. What memories of grass, there! 55/81  
We stopped for a late lunch on the end of the top strip of cover, sitting  
on a rock with littersome ones entwining small saplings and ferns,  
and looking at the Pomeris to the east. The view today was grand, at  
one place as had others & I see the country to the west, with our top  
pine/bamboo knob and the border with the Foreign Place. I say took  
a picture of Chestnut Ridge and Wyo's Gap. Horvics

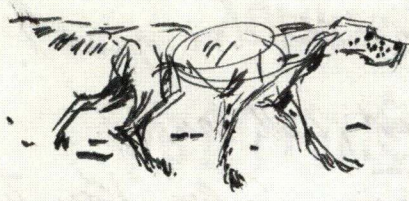
The sun was just on the top edge of the strip of cover as we hunted  
back the crest, within the edge of the big field. Excellent quipping laughs  
here, all empty. Belton was hunting hard now, and I sat on the  
area in broad casts, never letting up.

We hurried now, with the sun going down and the shadows  
touching us with cold. <sup>back</sup> at the forks of road. Belton did something that  
touched me. He left the road and, winding, hunted up the draw from  
above and creaked into the thick cover and paralleled the road, hunting  
I out loyally until he showed in front, coming out a log road from the  
left. It took energy at that hour and showed a loyalty and devotion that  
I treasure. Grand old boy! He continued to hunt the cover all the way to the  
car, as though to prove to me that when he stayed on the paths it was  
because there was nothing to hunt on the poles!!

The old woods road was a picture of what a wood road should be winding  
with deep ruts in black mud through rich thicket, everything exactly right.  
with the pink sky of sunset through the bare tops of trees. A wonderful  
experience with a grand girl and two grand dogs. Who needs birds?

78% ✓

p 67



A GOOD CORNER

Wednesday 3 February 16  
cloudy, dumps, cool 45°

Herman Dillow  
mired 1-1

Belton  
Quest

1 }  
1 1/2 } 2 1/2 hrs. Evans Bishop  
mired 2-4 furlongs

Perfect hunting day after two weeks without getting out. On the strength of Jim Crane's report of grouse seen in "the road," we went to Herman Dillow's and, parking across from the barn, waded through cow mud to a nice old woods road that led around the lots of the ridge. Given cows, there is going to be mud at every spring seep, and coupled with rocks, the footing was wretched. Cover on top of the fence is too open and although we mucked it out in a long way, coming to a bloated dead Black Angus <sup>with its anal region eaten out,</sup> while the road led for us as well as the cow.

Crossing the fence, we found a log road trace that led down the steep hillside through good hemlock/hardwood cover to the main road to Richwood. Quest struck scent near the bottom, very hot, but no bird materialized.

We started hunting up the steep road with Quest covering the 57/187  
sides and Beltin covering the road. I don't try to change Beltin at  
this age. He hunts well when we're not ~~on~~ on a road; when we are, he hunts  
the road well.

Quest ran into a gopher below the road near the small clearing,  
with no sign of getting scent. He can get scent when the bird is not  
there, and runs into them when they are. I glimpsed this gopher as it  
popped for Soren. Ran and across the valley, the only bird we saw  
in this count.

Walking up the long road to the ~~at~~ Harmon Dallow house,  
we had views of Soren Run forming mud in the wild valley below.  
I can get a photo of it and another of the old Dallow house with its  
windows broken out and its two leg spruce trees.

We got in the car and drove past Mt. Nebo church and took  
the Harmony Pass road. We passed a track stuck in the ditch on a hill  
and then began to climb the ridge with areas of weathered rocks that  
were a horror to the little Subaru but in 4-wheel drive it did it beautifully.

There was some good clearcut on top but it looked too dense to be  
promising and we went on to the Evan Bishop bottomland and parked at  
the <sup>power</sup> <sub>substation</sub>.

The lower end of this swamp is unpleasantly soggy with mean-  
looking stagnant pools but we finally waded through much dead grass  
and got into the right edge, with Hawthorn and crabapple trees and  
St. John's-wort. What a place for woodcock in October!

It was getting late and light was diminishing but I kept going, trying to circle the upper end and go back on the Swan Creek side. There was a trace of road that crossed the swamp transversely, two more tracks in places, and I can't fathom what it was used for unless to get to a field on the east side.

We took this to the west and had just entered a nice piece of cover when Quert came barreling - he does too much barreling - along and ran into a grouse that flushed without a shot of shot. Quert took after it and Ray said a second grouse went out I didn't hear or see. The first bird had flushed the way we wanted to go and we followed.

In some dense shoulder-high stuff I heard a rufous, and I have no reason to think Quert did any more than bump it not from intent but from intensity. The grouse was coming at me before I could see it, and was over my head and going away behind me. I wheeled and hoping for a shot stood helplessly as the bird disappeared in the tangles that prevailed a view of it. I found myself with my gun almost to my shoulder - no way to take a shot of I'd had one.

Instead of using good sense and proceeding along the road track, we followed the bird into the head of the swamp. We later heard (Ray did) a rufous.

By that time we were with trouble to get out by dark. The head of the swamp seemed to go to infinity and I cut for what seemed the west edge. They were three small ones that



had to be crossed if we weren't going to spend the night there. Swamp streams of this sort seem to run fairly fast but are often deep. Going upstream gets you nothing in that they appear to be of the same depth and width, no matter how far you go. We at last faced facts and waded across, fortunately what was not unsteady bottoms. At last I saw a clearing and we got to it. It was ~~the~~ open land with a glimpse of a large barn roof that turned out to be Ewan Bishop's.

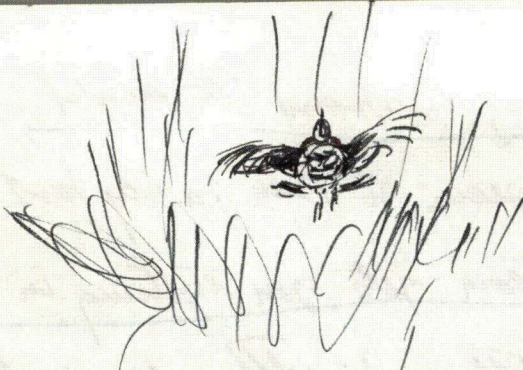
The Bishop house appeared uninhabited, but we could hear a dog barking and we wondered if it was just a stray. Finally we saw a faint light in the house, against all reason that anyone could live there. What religion will do for a man.

It was a long walk to the road, and even longer to the bend in the road where we saw the cat.

This last piece of bottomland covers just as much, even if you only see grass, but we at least saw one of them well. I am becoming discouraged with Quest, who ~~had~~ has a grand sense of pointing and a fine nose. But he runs too hard and is not careful enough. He does not give me a chance, and I am being deprived of shots I should have from a pointing dog. I say says it's because he is not into enough birds, but I like a shot at a few we see into.

Grass hunting is frustrating. ~~But~~ But as I say says, it's healthy.

I wonder.



I COULD SEE ITS EYES BULGING.

Tuesday 9 February <sup>14</sup>  
Cloudy, 36°  
snow on ground  
3:00 - 5:30 / 2 1/2 hrs.

Bishop Place

moved 1-1

0

Fortney Place

moved 2-2

0

Belton 1 each

Quest

After nearly a week without getting out, we set out today to hunt the Bishop Place on top, planning to drive up the steep hill. We found the hill was solid snowice, and parked at the bottom and hunted ~~at~~ the pine planting instead.

There were tracks of a large cock quoness across the floor of the pines, probably one bird which I may have heard without our seeing it. At one place immediately after, Belton flushed pointed to the left, then went on. There were foot tracks all the way and we saved the same path until we lost them at the upper end of the pines, when we took the valley log road to the head of the log hollow.

Quest showed intense interest in the quoness killed, on the right but there was no bird. Excellent quoness even here.

We crossed to the far side and took a steep log road pretty good to blackberry canes switching back to the top on what I used to call the Woolly land, ~~but~~ but discovered it was the abandoned Fortney Place. I hunted here with

Belton on a day in 1928 when ~~Belton~~ <sup>Belton</sup> did it with ~~me~~ <sup>me</sup> and ~~Quest~~ <sup>Quest</sup>.

shot a quail that Belton retrieved - one of my 5 quail that season. 6/187

Oddly, I can't recall if Belton had a point on it. (Mark look it up.)

Today I saw my way to the right to hunt a good Indigo-bird of greenbrier where I thought there might be a quail. There was. It came suddenly, crossing right-to-left in a power set-up - wings open against a background of locusts and tall brown goldenrod. I don't think it could have been missed, but I stood paralyzed, with my gun locked partly up, my shoulder muscles atrophied, while I gaped oh, oh and watched the bird fly on toward the brink of the hill. I have no other word for it but shock paroxysm. I tried to turn the trunk of my body toward the bird, still unable to get the stock up to my shoulder. It is a case of total impotence. I don't know what I'm going to do, when, after all my daily dry mounting, I react in this manner. Day, I think, has it correct when she says it's because I've had no shooting for so many years.



100%  
and p 208 ✓

TOTAL PARALYSIS

The experience left me shaken and actually at a loss to know what to do about it. I plodded on and almost within a minute there was another flocking round from the hedgerow and I was gone out the far side.

with Quetzal but after it. May saw the quetzal - I heard only the sound - (62)  
and she said it pitched down over the far wooded hillside.

Both birds, as I think, had been in a small tree with tangles of greenberries  
was ~~and~~ loaded with berries. It was a grand situation and a wonderful  
chance - the second such opportunity that had spasmed me in that manner.  
On the first, in Pennsylvania, I felt it was stick length that impeded  
my ascent. Now I know it is neuromuscular shock and I can't  
see what to do to overcome it. <sup>Just a year ago I reacted beautifully to an open shot but I don't</sup> ~~see~~ <sup>see</sup> what to do to overcome it. ~~a~~ <sup>some</sup> warning then.

We worked around the far brink of the ridge - this is high land -  
about a good wooded/gropewood edge but ~~nothing~~ <sup>nothing</sup> else. We came to  
to <sup>the</sup> abandoned Fortney house stranded on the edge of strapping ruins,  
and stopped to eat, sitting on a log beside a large tulip tree that had been  
split by lightning but which still lived on, hollow to the crutch fifteen  
or more feet above the base.

It was late when we started for the car. Quetzal had a solid point in

a tangle of blackberry canes and Peltandra lacked, but there was no bird. We  
hurried down over to the woods on the west slope and pitched for the bottom.  
The woods is large and open and incredibly steep. I had no idea it was so high here.  
In the bottom, we took the path below the pines to the station wagon, ~~and~~  
got there at 5:30. A good day but a strange one.

Wednesday 17 February  
beautiful, sunny, mild 44°  
2:45-5:50/3 hrs.

Ray Buttons  
(now)  
maced 2-2  
0

Belton  
Quest

63/189

This was the day we waited for, snow almost gone, lovely. The road was too soft to drive to the Ochs Frankelmann house so we parked at Daisy Rude's. It was the right weather and time of season to find birds in the green-train corner with all the berries but it was empty.

We always seem to hunt the same general place but today we found nothing in the crabapple corner either. It was a curious pattern that seems to prevail in our coverts. The first time we were here we found several grouse in the crabapple thicket, and fewer each succeeding time.

Today was the bottom - nor was there grouse in the best cover - the growing-up flat with hemlocks spotted among them when in the old days there was usually a few. Today we had the real welcome of a double shot a hundred yards or so ahead of us. I found his tracks coming in the log road that descends to the creek and I suspect young Nugent is working this pretty hard. We found three shells at the crossroads and later I found two tracks on the gravelly headed for the Old Brick.

Later-season grouse coverts are almost always down to the bare bone. The birds - Ray had to take a <sup>young</sup> log down out of Belton's mouth, probably the remains of a hawk or owl kill about where the shots had occurred - no relation.

We ate lunch on a log (logs are at a premium here) and then decided to hunt back via the old Buttons house. Blocked by dense clearcut thicket, we had to back-track to the <sup>old</sup> <sup>Buttons</sup> <sup>house</sup> road that led east to the

big rough field. [He walks or trots, utters (soft moans) and he will dip <sup>down when we stop</sup> (64)  
10 [Belton was hunting well but does show a few signs of age.] He  
will take off in his own direction without responding to voice or whistle (is this  
scurrying?) and he chooses this time to go in a line north. Ray stayed back  
to assure that he came to us, which he usually does on his own. I

followed Quark along the south edge of thick cover where he had a good  
shot point in a tangle under a hemlock. He tries to land but the  
points are almost all empty cuppurs. with daylight through its bones,

We are near the ruins of the <sup>Ray's</sup> Gunther house, and I suggested that Ray  
set a picture of it. Working in from below, she took several photos  
of it against our sky, and while we was at it, they heard a green flicker  
and both of us saw it low against the daylight headed east - a more  
~~ghost~~ <sup>ghost</sup> with Quark scurrying after it. Dead by here a point?

We could see the silhouette of the big red oak beyond the house and  
we headed toward it following the flight of the green. There is good cover  
there but we found no traces of the bird.

The scent of a red oak looks more rarer than ever. Some of  
the large tops is dead but the tree seems sound, although I noticed a healed  
vertical scar that must have been a lightning strike I didn't remember. I took  
a couple of pictures of Ray and the ratters at the base (under dress from 1 day).  
Then we worked through to the powderline right-of-way just beyond.

Then we remember how of a green that flitted parallel to the powderline  
and I missed. No birds today. Just the fresh footprints in the mud of  
the hunter who preceded us



THE OLD HOUSE

psq/75%

We found stripmine scars in the area to the west, within an impoundment. Trying to find the old path - no longer there - we had to climb around the right side of the pond and search for paths that all ended blind in the dense thicket. Finally, crawling against the edge of the strip refill, we slowly approached Daisy's house above us. In one patch of grass I found there were tracks of a large earth quinn a few days old. I was climbing the rocky margin of the strip mine when Kay called: "Did you see that quinn?" Of course I hadn't. I almost never do. Kay had heard the flint, which I can't hear, and said the bird crossed right-to-left, fast, in front of me when I must have been looking down.

In a good corner just below Daisy's house, we found Quail on a tree limb which I approached cautiously, but it was empty, as almost all of them are. Post Kay, poor me. Brown swimming anywhere is all memories.

But it was a beautiful day to be out.



Last Day 29 February  
Monday

The Otto Place (Lower Hartman)

Belton  
Quest

o

clear, sunny, cool 43°

3-5 / 2 hrs.

The bitter end of a bitter season. Snow still on the ground and the back roads mud and slick, with water running down both tracks, reflecting the bright suns. The best of the afternoon over the glorious Breary Mountains piled up against the eastern sky, vivid blue beneath a rosy blue sky.

We took the Luthoran Hill Road past the "Crab Orchard Church" with Ray driving horrible mud roads in places between Wesley Chapel and the Forman house. The Hartman (Lenny) Road too had to enter and we parked at the intersection and entered the good cover on the right corner — mostly crabapple thorns with both dogs hunting beautifully.

Twenty minutes after we started I was on one knee and leaning against a nine-inch maple tree trunk, nearly knocked out. It happened with a surprising abruptness — my clumsy snow boot caught in a fast-over whip-segi sapling, a slip in the slippery snow and a stunning blow on the left side of my head with a sound like an object hitting the



very solid tree trunk. I took a little time to recover, trying to get my eyes in focus. It's a time like this when you know your head is solid bone. After we moved on, I began to feel pain in my left shoulder at the top of the deltoid and I then knew I had hit the tree a one-two, front my shoulder, then my head whipped over. By the way my head felt normal but the shoulder became increasingly sore. I make so much of this because it was the only thing that happened today — not even the sound of a distant flock.

This cover is growing out — but then are memories of Puff and Dixie and Bler and grass on this big flat west of the 6th house, lots of which are now piles of ~~rotten~~ trash wood. A nice little edge of set-out spruce I seem to remember saw prominent of a grass that won't there.

We ate lunch on a fine cherry log in fair cover that could have shield birds; better than the other hole saplings on the field's edge. After eating, we crept back toward the mud road and found ourselves above the stripmine "inlet" with a road angling up the slope below us. We were at the trunk of a log (everything in this area is in terms of stripmining) and trying to skirt it on the right to get below found ourselves blocked by a rugged ledge of rocks between us and the road.

There were numerous footprints that didn't seem fresh enough to have been made today, suggesting hunting on the weekend, which isn't decent, so they may have been an intruder early this morning. We had heard a double shot report in this area as we started today, but that was the only trace, other than the footprints. (No one ever sees another green heron.)

We finally found a passage down to the road at the south end of where the ledge pings out (but Thomas) and took the muddy road back

(5)

lost the respect of the two old hands with their magnificent view  
of harm <sup>that was</sup> the Pueris. The view made the day worthwhile, and the  
good air and sunshine, and fine dog work by both boys with  
the grandest quarrying quest that any dog could make. That  
wonderful faith, believing what he knows ain't so.

Near the intersection a truck approached, stopping to let Belton  
get past. The man was named Stonebreaker from Albright, a  
can hunter that knew who we was.

at the core as decided as if had enough, only two hours,  
but two hours of nothing is enough ~~and~~ We took the steep hill down  
over to Deep Hollow in preference to the road we had come on, and it  
was an improvement.

If you're going to do something, you may as well be consistent.  
this season was bad nearly all the way, but there was some good hunting  
in spots of it.

Finis 1987-88

### Summary

This season has been the stuff that makes ulcers. That I haven't had them  
is a tribute to self-control. The disappointing part — and it is  
self-pretentious to even keep a diary this year — is that so many  
people reported finding more grouse this season than last — some in the usual  
wild members. There is little more to say. It was simply obscene.

Belton and Quist tried nobly and the very lack of grouse and  
woodcock seemed to spur them on to hunt gorgeously. I wish I had  
their class. The forest-fire smoke in November wiped out some game last  
chance for 'cock, as did snow the following week. Oh well! 'Eat la vie.

| COVERTS | DAYS/HRS  | GRADE | SHOTS/HITS | 1987  |            | BELTON       |             | QUEST       |            |
|---------|-----------|-------|------------|-------|------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
|         |           |       |            | COCK  | SHOTS/HITS | PROD - RACKS | HILLS - RET | PROD - BAKS | KRUS - RET |
| 2       | 2/6 1/2   | 3/3   |            |       |            |              |             |             |            |
| 4       | 4/11 1/2  |       |            | 26/35 | 2/0        | 7-1          |             | 13-2        | Mon 10/31  |
| 2       | 2/4 1/2   | 1/1   |            | 3/3   |            |              |             |             | Mon 11/7   |
| 1       | 1/2 1/2   | 1/1   |            |       |            |              |             |             |            |
| 4       | 3/6 1/2   | 1/1   |            | 6/9   |            | 2-1          |             | -1          | Mon 11/2   |
| 2       | 3/8       | 7/8   |            |       |            |              |             |             | Mon 11/28  |
| 11/4    | 10/27     | 5/5   |            | 35/47 | 2/0        | 9-2          |             | 13-3        | Mon 12/12  |
| 2       | 2/5 3/4   | 7/7   | 1/0        |       |            |              |             |             | Mon 12/19  |
| 1       | 1/2 1/4   | 0     |            |       |            |              |             |             | 12/26      |
| 1       | 1/3 1/4   | 1/1   |            |       |            |              |             |             | 1/2/88     |
| 2       | 2/3 1/2   | 0     |            |       |            | 0-1          |             |             | 1/23       |
| 2       | 1/2 1/2   | 3/5   |            |       |            |              |             |             | 2/6        |
| 1       | 1/2 1/2   | 3/3   |            |       |            | 0-1          |             |             | 2/13       |
| 1       | 1/3       | 2/2   |            |       |            |              |             |             | 2/20       |
| 1       | 1/2       |       |            |       |            | 0-3-0-0      |             | 2-0-0-0     | 2/29       |
| 26      | 23/58 1/2 | 25/28 | 1/0        | 35/47 | 2/0        | 9-2          |             | 13-3-0-0    |            |
| 26      | 5/12 1/2  | 8/9   |            |       |            |              |             |             |            |

$$\begin{array}{r} 1.1 \\ 30 \overline{) 33.0} \\ \underline{30} \\ 30 \\ \underline{30} \\ 0 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1.38 \\ 18 \overline{) 25.00} \\ \underline{18} \\ 70 \\ \underline{54} \\ 160 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1.38 \\ 18 \overline{) 25.00} \\ \underline{18} \\ 70 \\ \underline{54} \\ 160 \\ \underline{144} \\ 16 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 11 \\ 18 \\ \hline 29 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 0.96 \\ 26 \overline{) 25.00} \\ \underline{234} \\ 160 \\ \underline{156} \\ 40 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1.04 \\ 25 \overline{) 26.00} \\ \underline{25} \\ 100 \\ \underline{100} \\ 0 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1.3 \\ 19 \overline{) 25.01} \\ \underline{19} \\ 60 \\ \underline{57} \\ 30 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1.1 \\ 30 \overline{) 33.0} \\ \underline{30} \\ 30 \\ \underline{30} \\ 0 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1.13 \\ 29 \overline{) 33.00} \\ \underline{29} \\ 40 \\ \underline{29} \\ 110 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1/1 \\ \hline 5/6 \end{array}$$

~~3/4~~    2/10    3/5-1  
 9/12    2/10    3/5-1  
 13/22    3/10    1/6

~~3/4~~    3/4  
~~3/4~~    3/4  
~~3/4~~    3/4

1987

TOTAL : <sup>29</sup>~~30~~ COVERTS / 33 GROUSE  
1.13 BIRD/COVERT

GEORGE (80) 63rd season

WV 25 DAYS / 58½ hrs. 25 COVERTS  
PA 5 " / 12½ " 4 "  

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30 DAYS / 71 hrs. ~~30~~ COVERTS (7 NEW)  
29

WV 25 " / 25 "  
1.0 BIRD/COVERT  
" LOCAL 18 COVERTS / 25 GROUSE  
1.38 B/C  
PA 4 COVERTS / 8 GROUSE  
2.0 B/C

WV MOVED 25 GROUSE / 28 FLUSHES  
PA " 8 " / 9 "  

---

33 GROUSE / 37 FLUSHES  
1 SHOT / 0  
MOVED 35 COCK / 47 FLUSHES  
2 SHOTS / 0

BELTON : 11½ years 12th season  
24 DAYS

GROUSE : no products  
3 BACKPOINTS  
'COCK : 9 PROD.  
2 BKKS.

LIFETIME '76-'87

372 DAYS  
139 PROD  
36 BACKS  
26 KILLS (6 OP) / 21 RET  
163 PROD  
57 BACKS  
49 KILLS  
28 RET

QUEST : 3½ years 4th season

25 DAYS  
GROUSE : 2 PROD.  
'COCK : 13 PROD.  
3 BACKS

LIFETIME: '84-'87

116 DAYS  
17 PROD  
5 BACKS  
1 KILL  
1 RET  
28 PROD  
13 BACKS  
4 KILLS  
1 RET

7 counts/0 1987

BIG MOUNTAINS

0. bird/count

REHOBETH 026-1-2.0/N16-0

- new } BLACK BEAR 028-9-14.0/030-6.6.0 / N18-4.7.0
- Canon } MALLOW " 6-6-0/030.0
- new } UPPER VALLEY 029-4-7-0 (11-14 with Jeff)
- FAR EDELMAN N16-1.1.0
- POPLAR HOUSE N16-0
- GATES N18-1.1.0

4 counts/8 squares

PENNSYLVANIA

2.0 bird/count

- new CAIDPYLE/MITCHELL PLACE N2-1.1.0-3.3.0
- new FURNACE ROAD EAST N4.0
- HENCKEL N24-4.4.0
- new DEER LAKE GAMELANDS N26-2.2.0/N27-(1).1.0

LOCAL 1987

18 counts / 25

1.38 birds/count

Total WV <sup>25</sup> ~~24~~ counts 25 grouse

~~1.0 bird/count~~

1.0 bird/count

Total 1987-88

29 ~~30~~ counts 33 grouse

1.13 bird/count

HARTMAN O19-3.3.0

HAMER AMY O22.0

UPPER WILKINSON N7.1.1.0 1

BEN CONN N19-1.1.0 1

NEW CEMETERY HILL DEC 8 1.1.0 1

RAY GUTHRIE DEC 10 6.6.0 / F17.2.0 8

CHARLIE SEESE D14.0

CUPP PLACE D21.1.1.0 1

PAUL UPHOLD D21.0

BISHOP J1-3.4.0 / F9.0.0 4

LITTLE SANDY DOWNSTEAM <sup>DEBERRY</sup> J12.0

NICHOLSON, J16.1.1.0(?) 1

GRAVEYARD GLADE J19.0

JIMMY SPIKER J20.0

HERMAN DILLON F3.1.1.0 1

EVAN BISHOP F3.2.4.0 2

~~BISHOP F9.1.1.0 1~~

NEW FORTNEY F9.2.2.0 2

OTTO F29.0