

Shooting 1988

Monday 17 October
lovely day mild 62°
sunny, blue sky.
3:15 - 6:15 / 3 hrs.

Ray Gutherie

Beltin:

model 2 (heard) - 2 flocks Quail:
no shots

Carrying the little 28-bore AYA for the first.
Color at its peak, everywhere. Beltin at 1 1/2, Quail 4 1/2,
This is my 54th season gunning grouse.

Guns 8 1/4, all in good shape, especially 'day'.
day at a favorite place, with hopes high. Heavy foliage a problem.
We drove the little Subaru station wagon out the road past the
Och Franklauer place nearly to the greenbrier corner, very
dense and no birds ^{there} today.

The first trace of a grouse was a flash by road, probably per
a tree, that I day heard in the NW corner. ¹⁶ We heard a distinct shot or
two - squirrel hunter - but otherwise had the world to ourselves.
The grouse color made up for the lack of birds but high

hopes tend to decrease with no contacts with grouse.

Both dogs enjoyed it all - Beltin staying close to us with
side portals; Quail always quailing, never letting up. Was in
fairly good range today, with a few few carts. We felt the hot day,
might put the birds in the bottom, and hunted down to Little Sandy. On
the way I day thought she heard another grouse, very faint; all but
out of my ken. ¹⁶ The black lace of humberches against the dense was gold
of maples made this fairytale in the bottom, but no grouse.

Early foliage such as this has a practical disadvantage in changing conditions and giving a false impression of the ground - I hope. We are placing our hopes for sport on the woodsch in the Cassin Valley next week and the next. But it was glorious to be out in these lovely mountains. Everywhere as looked today they seemed to be a blue shoulder of mountain showing beyond the masses of color on the intervening ridges and woodland.

It is glorious to be alive. A joy to carry the 5 lb AYA 28-bore. Now to get to shoot it but feel degraded to the Purvey.
 Throughout the afternoon, insects, like miniature hypopygoid flies kept crawling on me, 4 or 5 setting on my neck and ear, ^{like Flat, winged ticks.} Have seen them on recent walks

<u>Thursday 20 October</u>	<u>Hartman Place</u>	<u>Belted</u>
Clear sky, sunny, cool 49°	missed 3-4 flushes	Quest
3:15-6:30 / 3 1/4 hrs.	0	

To the Court Out of Time. Climbed the little Suburn over the horror of rough stones on the way up, only to find the land heavily wooded by the C & P Hunting Club, but no one there. We parked in our special place and walked across the rough field - no moor - to the upper cover, very dense and weedy. Color blazing and hawthornes loaded with red haws, smokes those on the Ray Gathine.

Entered lower than usual and missed the lower road due to thick cover, commencing on the old Lennox Road and almost immediately heard and glimpsed a grouse flushing from the upper corner, getting a flash view of the bird against the ^{George Bird Evans Papers} ~~background~~ ^{West Virginia and Regional History Center} of the old spoil bank. I can now see (Why do I never see ^{flushing} them ^{flushing} there?)

3/88

The birds had flushed north paralleling the old road and we followed, wading through the muddy puddles and the glorious carpet of long red leaves dropped by the scarlet maple exactly as last season. Key took a photo of them.

Bottom was eager to hunt today but spent all his time pottering and eating at grass instead of hunting. Later he settled with it and hunted well, trotting at times and ^{driving} enjoying himself. Quail never stopped.

Both dogs got scent at the area when the quail flushed. Key heard a flush up on the steep rise above us that we caught a reflex, but somewhat shorter than I would have expected.

At the crossing to the lower road, we continued on up the Lower Road a short distance, then climbed the steep short bank and hunted the crest all the way back, hoping to meet the reflexless bird but did not. Once more down on the Lower Road at the large splash of scarlet maple leaves, we worked down through the dense thicket and came out on the lower road, hunting it back north.

Key had dropped back to locate Quail, who was moving out, and I heard a flush just below the road moments before Quail came in. He heard it but had no point.

At the head of the lower when we hoped for woodcock, we worked down through ^{the} excellent situation with everything there but the cock. We hunted the bottom land with no contacts, and reached the large field and took the edge to the powerline where we found for lunch sitting on the large crooked boulder in the right-of-way, with cedar on the distant hill but burned brown on the mountain.

④
Going over the steep drop to the little stream - Belton went purposefully down to the place he had his 'cork point' in '86, the day the Purdey top lever spring broke, and I am certain he knew ~~exactly~~ exactly where he was - of course he did - and remembered that point. Old dogs, like old gunners, have double pleasure in old events for the memories. Today the red haws covered the ground and stream bed, as they had two years ago, without the woodcock.

We left the dense bottom cover for the prowlina opening (a mistake?) and hunted down the left margin with red haws hanging ~~very~~ heavy on the edge Hawthorns over again. We had passed the old fence posts and the rocks in the right-of-way ~~where~~ where I dropped that lovely grouse - lovely spot - ~~and~~ with Belton working like his old self and Quert moving from one side to another.

On the left edge I saw the lovely sight: Belton pointing toward me and then Quert moving in and freezing on scent, not a backpoint. The two of them held beautifully white 1 day set pictures and I balanced the little 28-bors, wondering if I would mount it smoothly. Finally 1 day moved in covering the thick weedy ground growth thoroughly with no bird flushing. At last both dogs went in, hot with excitement, while 1 day circled just inside the thick and came to a single splash of white wash, and took a flash picture of it, while I watched, tense with uncompleted action. Why can't there be birds?

5/88



WHITE WASH

We hunted to the cross road and back the main road with light fading and color glowing (can't remember being on this road in full color) and had a couple of empty trees by quest on the steep slope above the road - good enough place. At the Pownall's found to honor the memory of a woodcock shot on a point by Bolton in the corner, a bird that dropped in the middle of the dirt road, and to remember the lucky ground in 1986, my last such experience. As they become rarer, these happenings, you wonder if each will be your last. Early season days are not the best for luck, but it seems wrong to have it dry up like this. Still, it was grand to be out with 1 day, and both dogs enjoying it as in all did. To be able to do it, as always, is something.

Monday 31 October

cool, cloudy to sunny 45° Clyde Davis

Belton

(SUN TIME)
2:55 - 5:25 / 2 1/2 hrs.

Far Edelman (Alvin Jones)

Quest 3 mod.

Some areas of cover remaining in trip down.

heard 3 - 4 flickers (all here)

The Corns Valley again! Hunted on the way down at Mt. Storm, Drawing up Hitzmiller Hill was a joy - the delirium, the orchard, everything right again until we saw the posters all over the Robert Thomas court, signature bold but illegible. Too unpooping to ignore so we drove on, with the notices glaring at us all the way to Davis's mailboxes.

Found notices on the Poplar House land with the entrance to the lane blocked with a barrier. No place to park but on the side of the road (the road at least was hospitable) and had just started to change to boots when a car came up the hill and stopped. "Are you Mr. Evans?" "Why do they all have to know me?" A white-haired newspaper hawk from Charleston; ^{named Rex Wilford.} Bill Gandy had brought him in here; has a snuff with the Robert Thomas court marked "Gandy, Bill Evans's Gandy's big mouth." Macrostomia

Finally got rid of him and we hunted on the Clyde Davis side - too open and dry - noisy with all the leaves down, not a feather. Hunted low on the way back in hemlock/swamp margin. Came out on road near bottom of hill on the north side (Edelman) and hunted up through excellent thorns to Belton's corner, still not a feather.

There was no cows evident on Poplar House land. They got the car while I hunted on the rail fence - more Belton memories. Drove across Maple Run and parked at Far Edelman - more posters.

The moment we got over the fence and started in on lower edge we came to cow pads, big, juicy, beautiful, and immediately a new woodcock

came back at us fast and low ^{fast and noisy,} crossing the main road to far.
thicket. Cows are necessary to woodcock.

7/88



It was cold and fairly windy as we wound through the Hawthorn, dotted with enormous white oaks. Just below the small shack, Quest frog on point headed into a dense Hawthorn thicket. This was the moment I had wanted for — all summer spent dry mousing the new little 28-bore AYA, daily therapeutic exercises to strengthen my bad right shoulder. Ten days ago, the reinjury of the shoulder, the return of pain, but now it was going to be all right.

I don't know where Belton was but Quest was holding like an angel, his bloody tail tips pointed back at me. The cock, another hen, gave me something with a rising straightaway over the thicket and my right shoulder atrophied ~~and~~ ^{with the sandwich} a partway up. Some things are more bitter than the pain. But it was a grand point and we were into birds.

We moved nothing more, not even a reflect, although we heard an empty point by Quest too far for the same bird. Belton, the rascal, wouldn't honor — there was no bird, was there? — but walked all over the area in

front of Quest

We hunted further out and higher, all good cover with cowpads all over. What from a distance had appeared sheep proved to be Charalot cattle, lots of them, bless Mr. Jones!

This side of the open pasture, Quert pointed again in a clump of (8) 38
hazelnut. Again Belton wouldn't acknowledge the point or my hold! and
walked up the woods. I was anxious to try again to mount the gun but
the 'cock, another hen, flushed straight into the sky then ~~fast~~ banked around the
mass of hazelnut with no chance to shoot.

We hunted to the upper cover and headed back at 5:00



BELTON DISHONORING

In some more good hazelnut cover (it's all over here) Quert gave us
another hot point and I hurried to him, certain of a flush but the
bird must have lifted. Again Belton disgraced himself and walked in
regardless.

It was in fading light when we reached the car and while they
put Belton in, I took Quert to the edge cover where the first woods
had landed. It was too dark to see, but I heard the bell go silent, but after
I walked down and into boggy swamp grass I ^{heard the bell} ~~heard the bell~~ again. In a
^{moment} the 'cock came out against the sky and beat straight past me. I
wheeled and tried to mount and again the shoulder just wouldn't do it.

I can't understand, but the gun seems a foot too long at those times and there
is no way to get the stock to my shoulder. ^{at times I think I am}

subconsciously starting the record too high up on the Churchill manner, 9/88
 without enough momentum to raise the gun up. It is devastating.
 The upper right arm is sore to extreme, and I can only hope it will all
 work out of the shoulder sockets. I'd give a thousand dollars if I had not taken
 the Pender down to the bank for safe-keeping and had the accident.
 Mammals as is at the chalet at Meador Lake with what appears to be
 a modest flight in. And nothing is impeding Grant and her pointing.



AT ME AGAINST THE SKY

Tuesday 1 November
 cloudy/sunny, cool, windy 47°
 2:15 - 4:50 / 2½ hrs.

16 Hawk Mallow / Power Co.
 moved 9-12 flocks
 2 shots - 0

Belton 3 PROD
 Quest 5 PROD
 1 BACK

✓ Stopped at the old Mallow place and spoke to their daughter,
 Mrs. ^{Smigal} Smigal ^{SMIGAL} who corroborated that the land to the east was "Power
 Company land," and that the area on the north side of road is ditto but
 leased by her sister who lives at Red Creek. Power Co. allows "recreational use."

We parked inside the rickety iron gate and had just started hunting
 when Belton and Quest went on a double point, Belton in front, at the very
copse where they pointed a cock last season. I walked around in front and
 the bird - a hen - flushed into the sun at head height. To my delight
 I got the gun up, altho awkwardly, and fired "right-on" and felt I
 might have hit, but Quest loved out in evident cheer and while we

got both dogs in to search, found ~~no trace~~ ^{neither bird nor} feathers.
 With Belton and Quest high with excitement we penetrated in balsam swamp.
 south into the good cover bordering the small ~~run~~ ^{well}
 Very shortly there was another double point in front and as we
 approached, I saw Quest move in and the bird went up far ahead of us.
 Too much excitement all at once.

We held to the left side of the spruce/balsam cover. The
 problem with the pleasantly busy action of woodcock gunning is keeping the
 points ordered in memory. Somewhat along here Quest had his third
 productive that I can't recall.

His fourth was in the edge of alders that become part of the
 spruce cover, a point he held solidly as he always does - beautifully
 staunch fellow - and I walked in front with no reaction. Then I
 heard the bell-like twitter - up to the left behind me, and turned
 and fired as the cock topped the alders. I didn't manage this shot as
 well as the first, with the pain and cramped shoulder, and felt
 myself ~~too~~ to the right of the bird. With this shoulder trauma there
 is no strength to hold the gun on the bird - you shoot the moment
 you set the gun to the shoulder, if you do, or not at all. It is a
 miserable way to shoot - pain and ~~cramped~~ ^{spasmed} muscles can't have yet to
 work out ~~any~~ ^a way to beat it. I feel if I deliberately hold the gun in a
 loose relaxed grasp, low and not above waist level, and with the right
 elbow slightly out and "elevated," the muscle spasm is not so great.

sport.

11/188

We were in an area new to us and a big sweep of country to the north, much alder growth along the run, changing to a series of beaver backwaters. In the distance I could see a stretch of barren tundra and we circled left and topped a rise with more hawthorn scattered over acres of land ahead.

We found a rock large ^{enough} ~~enough~~ to sit on (there are no logs in here) and found for lunch with ~~the~~ big Cabin Mountain in blue cloud shadow to the east. Day got several pictures. It was windy and cold but beautifully sunny with huge cumulus in the ^{very} blue sky. (Forecasts had been for showers.)

Bellon was hunting well today, reaching far out, like Quest, but on the way back north we felt he needed resting and Day led him on leash while I skirted the tall woods edged with gorgeous hawthorn, some of them quite large with thick trunks. There is no lead to the hawthorn in ~~the~~ this country ~~area~~, but they appear to have had no laws, unlike some cover we was in yesterday at Mt. Storm.

As we circled the east margin of the edge hawthorn, Day released Bellon, who hadn't taken his eyes off me, and he soon was working the thorn with Quest. He had a nice point (no tail style) and Quest backed, but I think Bellon moved in and we saw the cork hole out low. Suddenly we realized we were near the lowland road, seeing cars so big, and we got little dogs to us with Bellon once more on leash.

In an effort to find the powerlines and lead toward the car, we

had to walk through uncomfortable footing over leaf-covered rocks in the big woods. Kay got over the fence and led Belton along the road, from where she saw Quert make a nice point that seemed to be empty, but actually had two 'cock that I walked into after I sent Quert on.

One was a climbing flicker that I'd normally have tried for but ~~it~~ in my present ^{condition} couldn't manage. Both 'cock crossed the road.

That was the end of the action but it was a good day. Regrettably I could give Quert nothing to retrieve but he made do with several deer legs he delivered to me religiously. Let's hope this shoulder thing improves.

Both days and Kay and I had a grand 2 1/2 hours.

In the night it began to spit snow, and on Sunday & Wednesday to a one-inch white ^{later} Canada. Then inches of snow with Canada and Cabin Mountains frozen out and we spent the day in the chalet, with an afternoon with Dorothy and Ben Thompson.

Thursday 3 November
Sunny, breezy, mild 55°
1:25-3:35 } 3 1/4 hrs.
4:20-5:05 }

Black Bear Woods Thorns
mowed 12-21 flickers
3 shots - 0
Mallow / Pouch Co.
mowed 1-1

Belton 1 prod
Quert 6 prod

This was a magnificent day - for flawless blue sky and sun melting the snow and for action. Left the chalet, packed for home trip.

The Black Bear Thorns seem consistent and we hunt them that way. Noticed cow pads but saw no cows. Belton mowed the first underline as we worked the hawthorn north on the upper slope, a bird that bored out like a bullet. Quert was reaching a lot of and leaving open areas unchecked.

He ran onto a woodcock that lifted from a small cove ^{near} us, followed by more and more — five! that went in ^{many} as many directions, a couple up the slope in front of us, the others lower down. A characteristic of woodcock in these ^{large} haunts seems to be a spooky quality, altho there was close enough to Quest but the wind was behind him and fairly brisk. all but two or three of the birds we missed today were here.

There were so many 'cock today and so many reflexes (9 in line) that keeping them ^{and the points} all in mind is too much. We circled ~~out~~ to the upper end where the cover changes to spruce and the balsam swamp, then turned back lower down, moving nothing in the alders.

Bobby hunted well today, at times moving too far out but mostly keeping in touch. Quest was frantic with all the action and had to be checked a number of times with the shock collar.

at the south end woods as ate lunch setting on stumps and Ray took some pix after Quest had found a 'cock that flushed toward the head of the draw. ^{After} ~~Before~~ that, we had a nice double point in the smaller haunts, a male woodcock that came out and crossed low to the right. I fired too soon and close and fired again as the 'cock bore ~~away~~. It is odd that two missed shots can be an event but with my atrophied shoulder I was pleased to be able to fire twice. Even so, I might have let if I'd waited that vital moment to get the bird in good range. Both dogs broke at shot ("broke" dogs?) as Quest did on most of the birds today. Too much adrenaline. The little 28-lor is a joy if only I could manage my shoulder problem. The 2-3/4-8 load Payer did for me is most pleasant.

We repeated our first morning out ⁱⁿ the ^{large} haunts ^{disturbing} ^{nothing} ^{worth}. One

bird seemed to come from nowhere going straight away like a bullet.

Once more at the upper end, we had a point by Quest - a large hen that flushed right - quartering through the trees. I fired in a cramped mount and the 'cock went about the road into woods on the upper side.

When I am able to shoot at all, it is a snafu shot with my shoulder and right arm too cramped to be "in" the bird the important moment, a limitation I'll have to put up with for a while, if ~~not~~ ^{then} last accident holds off.

We crossed under the barbed wire fence to the road and went to the station wagon, and then saw Quest on still another point in the ^{dead} goldwood on the edge of the old woods road in front of the car. I walked to him and the 'cock flushed from my left in a low dart to the woods and I refrained from shooting at it very low in time to keep from scalping Quest who was only a yard or two behind it. At this moment a second bird went out the woods road. I ^{could} ~~was~~ ^{not} follow.



DOUBLE POINT, DOUBLE MISS

At 3:55 we left and drove to the Mallow place, parking ~~near~~ ^{as} we did on Tuesday. Today there were more men than birds - one low hunter who came in and parked soon after we did, walking into the big event, and a second car with two workers who drove in ^{to} I don't know where. We moved ~~nothing~~ ^{where} ~~we~~ ^{we} moved several about at ^{George Bird Evans Papers} ^{West Virginia and Regional History Center} The only bird was with a distant - too distant - point of Quest on the left edge of the woods

and that only by educated guess; I lay saw Q. more after the flush. 15/88

The snow may have pushed the birds out but it is odd, finding only one two days after many of them. However, we did not reach the family cover along the big woods when we were 3 last time.

The Black Bear Thorns has proved to be a grand covert.

We left the Mallow place and drove home. It is the first time I've come from the Canaan empty-handed but full of pleasant memories.

Tuesday 8 November

Rainy in am, clearing to bright sunlight, cool, 50°
windy

~~3:50-5~~
4:00-5:20 / 1 1/4"

~~Black Bear Thorns~~

Hawk Mallow

moved 5-6 flocks

made 1-1

Belton

Quest 1 prod

Election Day. After noting we headed for the Canaan looked for a three-day hunt. Arrived at Black Bear Thorns to find a 4 wheel drive parked back in the old road, three three hunters with them dogs - a Brittany, and two brown dogs that could have been Weasels or German Shepherds. The three hunters - always there - was Oliver types, one was John Burk, the other a Joe Smith, who said he'd been to an place with Jensen, and a spruce #10 around Lester, all from Ellins. They had each shot 3' cock since 10 am and would have talked for an hour if we'd been around.

Being preempted visit the greatest fun and we broke away and moved on to Mallow's and got started at 4:00.

Belton was started on chemotherapy yesterday and today seems to show no ill effects. If anything, he seems more than usually in good spirits and moved with verve. We hunted down the west edge of the spruce swamp and lay saw a bird flush well ahead of Quest, either a grouse or a woodcock.

It was extremely windy and the lowering sun was bright and blinding. No contacts until we were nearing the valley from the west. I say called that Quert, who was hunting beautifully, was pointing and I hurried toward him. He was holding solidly, then for no reason, moved in - perhaps the wind - and a large hen 'cock came down over me. I wheeled but had no shot as it bore out over the expanses of spruce and alders.

I had picked up what was to have been my final ^{version of} shooting glasses yesterday and they were giving me the devil (I don't think they'll ever set them right) and vision was miserable, with the disturbance of the vision referring to stay single.

We found a crossing to the east side and hunted some good hantowens on a small rise but with no birds. Bolton was actually moving out too wide in his eagerness to find game and we had a problem keeping him in touch.

Quert had a lovely point in some lower-lying St. John's wort, which spread like a moor of heather for acres, but nothing materialized in spite of Quert's intensity. We hunted back north with the gun down behind us in the southwest. I say took Bolton to the car and I took Quert on the edge of large woods, hunting the excellent hantowens. Not until we reached the good corner near the ^{front of} road did we find birds and then it seemed every time I looked up there was a 'cock in the air flushing ahead of Quert. The wind was adverse and he didn't get a point, though he was flagging and trying to wind them. There were probably only three but a reflection or two made them seem like more. Woodcock seem to offer me no shots, no doubt because I wait for painted birds and also because of my shoulder handicaps. My tortoiseshell hat last Friday may have improved the condition but not totally returned the hair and I'm not sure of myself as you must be to shoot well. Met I say at the road that we drove to the point and settled in

Wednesday 9 November Canaan Mountain

Bellton

17/88

Warm, sunny, now mid 60° nothing

Quest 5 proof

1:30-2:30

Black Bear Thorns

3:25-4:25

} 2½ hrs.

marked 1-1

4:40-5:00

Hawk Mallard

marked 4-6

1 shot = 0

We tried Canaan Mountain starting at the bottom, where we found no trace of the Davis dog pound; instead, there was a white building that must have had to do with the water supply. A new road led gradually up the mountain, paralleling the river, which was closer than I realized, to an impoundment in the Blackwater where it ended. We climbed over the ledge of rocks on the right to an isolated plateau of flat rocks, then down over to more open land, and back down to the bottom road again, the only sign of game being 3 deer tree stands. I say take a ^{part} of Davis in the distance. At the bottom, Quest had a grand point that allegedly proved empty. This was typical Blackwater empty ever of these times, ^{but} I had it in my blood to try it. We stopped at the Wilmer Spring ~~only~~ refreshed with a sign:

If with little you must disagree
The beauty of this place
May indigestion wrack your chest
and ants invade your pants and vest.

I took a picture of Kay filling the water jug; a few people had ants in their pants and vest.

At the overlook of Canaan Valley, ^{where we ate lunch,} Kay took a view of the distant Cabin Mt. and I took a view of Kay taking it. At least we can get some photos.

at Black Bear Thorns we found a pleasant absence of people. Bellton, who seems to be more vital than her ^{as} Chernobyl, ^{is} really a big

cent into the bottom, actually trotting like old times.

We found no woodcock all the way to the upper end of the covert, and I wonder if the working - over by the Ellens, this yesterday put out about birds they didn't shoot.

Then we found Quist on a lovely intense point just above me, pointed into a blowdown. I moved to him and the 'cock - a large hen - flushed from in front of me, giving me a low straightaway chance that Quist wiped out by breaking at wing. I probably wouldn't have got off a shot anyway.

That was it for the Black Bear Thorns, after which we moved for the last attempt to the Mallow Thorns, parking at the road end and entering the large Hawthorn where I came out last evening. In twenty minutes we made four 'cock for six flushes and four good points by Quist. (We left Bolton in the car for this last turn, and he seemed content to rest.) My one shot, a matter of pain and cramped shoulder was a bitter realization that my shooting may well be over. The shoulder just won't work. It would otherwise have been a beautiful last bit of end of day. I don't make a good loss.

Tuesday 15 November

Corinth

Bolton
Quist

cool, sunny, 50°
3:00 - 5:00 / 2 hrs.

Hoped to find woodcock in this covert but, instead, found Preston Miller just ready to start out.

We moved on to the Lankam covert when I persuaded Mrs. L. to let us hunt. Actually, the area we hunted was the adjoining good woodcock cover and some Hawthorn margins - sort looking, with even cow pads in adjacent pastures but we didn't wear a feather. Bolton was in good fettle today, at one time moving towards and getting separated but he tracked us and worked us. A disappointing trip.

Friday 18 November
perfect day, clear, sunny,
cool

Paul Uphold
maced 2-2 flocks
1 shot - 0

Bella
Quest 1 prod

19/188

2:30 - 4:30 / 2 hrs

This covert has almost everything — two grouse, quails (loaded) greenbruce (loaded), and a pack of deer hunters getting camp set up for next week. The first corner seen has a newly opened strip-mining exploration road, but although hanging blue with quails, we only maced — heard — one grouse, 1 day heard one drumming.

We hunted to the west side of the NS road and onto the basin of pines where we ate lunch. Bella, after two days off feed, is hunting well for a 12½ year old, keeping close by while Quest hooks wild.

~~Old~~ Starting out after lunch, I came to Quest on a picture point facing into the large white pines on the left margin — a glorious point held until what had to have been a flush. I was within thirty yards when he jerked his head to the right and ran into the pines and out of sight.



I wanted for the dog to come to me, ~~not~~ while Quest worked on the deer stand, but autumn drive with point. I don't know what transpired but suddenly a grouse was coming out toward me, banking to the right with the best chance I have seen for years. I tried for it, all right, but the mount was sheer pain, seeming to redo the damage done four weeks ago, and of course missed. It is a commentary on ^{my} ~~current~~ grouse hunting that a miss is a

high spot of the day. I don't know if I can hope this shoulder will mend, ever.

We hunted to the narrow neck of land between two deep stragglers, both unfilled. Cretling into the thick cover behind Paul's house — on corner was a mass of quercus berries — we came to the road and Paul again. I think he spends two days when not walking to Princeton, out on the road, with the magnificent view of Chestnut Ridge, which I doubt if he sees, and a row of decrepid porch chairs arranged along the road.

Paul, on the subject of religion: "I don't believe that stuff. ~~It's~~ It's made up." A brave man.
Belton, while restless at home, is in good spirits hunting.



A FINE CHANCE

Tuesday 22 November
Clear, sunny, perfect cool 45°
3:10-5:10/2 hrs

Hinorman Place.
score 1-1
0

Belton
Quest

First day of WV deer season. Finally to the Hinorman Place in Pennsylvania in Greens County, the promise of a thousand grouse. Once again I was a sacker — 156 miles and the mere hint of one grouse fleshing for almost of Quest, who later hit scent at the site. The old Hinorman track house crumbling away in death, the steep ridge through unpromising woods, except for some steep regrown fields at the bottom. George Bird Evans Papers
West Virginia and Regional History Center

^{new} toilet paper at the top that, thank God, the dog didn't 21/88
roll in. A long cleared strip on top looking like a pipeline but which
I think was merely old fields. The cemetery Jose Taracido described
as out to the left was out to the right and down over — an
old farm in groups of impressively large ^{prosperous} granite markers, too
large, too recent, marking the graves of several Hennermans, one
born in 1867, died in 1936, whose nice old house disintegrated
long before the tombstones. At least they were buried in their
homeplace high up close to heaven.

There were some grapes on vines at the top but far fewer than
Taracido reported, and not the forty groups. This is a massive spread
of wild country in the SW corner of Pennsylvania, dull mountains
cover and forested hills that could hold the grass they say are here
and I never find. Once again, I say I am never coming back.
Home in a magnificent field Second Hunter's Mom.

Wagner, let good to me. We deserve it

Wednesday 23 November Deer Lake
perfect, clear, sunny, cold 40° moved 2-3
3:30 - 5 / 1 1/2 hrs 0

Belton
Quart 1 prod

Gorgeous November. Drove to Thorp Club above
Chio Pyle to find grapevine cover described as good grass area.
Found limited area too near paved road. Went out to end of
road (Penna. Conservancy) — magnificent views of Gorgehogging
Gap and Sugarloaf Mountain equal to anything in the

Big Mountains of W.V. Any possible cover was too near (22)
the paved road.

Drove back to the Sand Falls area and out beyond the
cutover — excellent cover — when we were turned back by
soft water holes in road. Kay, driving, cracked the car to the poplars
and parked and we walked on out to where we had flushed a grouse
last year. ~~#2~~

There is a massive spread of recently started timber land with
a few islands of thick corners. Within fifty yards of where the
grouse went out last season, I hunted down a rough trace of
log road and Quist went turkey in thick stuff to my left, going
solid for only a moment, then flagging, obviously on scent.

(Why not ~~at~~ a good sound point?) Points come sparsely
these days and I am counting this a production.

The grouse went out the far side showing my only sound,
and a glimpse to Kay, who saw it top out and cross the road
road to far side. Explored down to a big pool in the road
where a small run crosses. We turned and worked back to
follow our grouse when a second bird flushed from the same thick
corner. Questions: why did it hold where #1 went out? And
why didn't Quist get scent and point it? Kay tried to get
my attention to the flash and I turned to see where she
indicated, and missed seeing the bird until I got a final look as it
topped the slope and crossed the road bearing left.

To follow it would have meant working into the blinding ^{23/188} lowering sun, so we took the appropriate flight of #1 into the bush on the north.

We eventually moved our bird - Quest someplace else - but Belton may have been aware of the flock. I only heard it; Kay saw it (she should carry the gun) and we turned back (too late to push on). At the road, decided I might lead us in the direction of the flock after all and walked east some paces, crossing the thick brush, slow stream and to a spot of sunlight on a side road, hoping for warmth from the setting sun. It wasn't. ate standing up and answering like Belton.

Turned back with Quest probing all possible areas, lit up by the contact with buds. At the old chimney clearing, we took a path into dense thicket where #2 had gone and in there, in the cold shadows with the sun below the trees I came on Quest on a grand point, high and reaching. It gave me all the goose pimples any producer could have, as I walked in, Kay getting a couple of pictures, and while I was the exact spot where the geese had to have landed, incredibly there was nothing there except all the ingredients but the bird. It must have lifted just before we arrived, and it was a point to remember, regardless.

Curious, how a day that was only 1 1/2 hours with no shot that I wouldn't have made anyway with my crippled shoulder can be so good. Because we were in good spots in our mountains

Belton hunted around and held up well, and enjoyed himself

The enormous second Hunter's Moon came up gold and red with us all the way back home.



DAY'S END

Friday 25 November

~~clear~~, partly sunny, cool 45°
2:35 - 4:55 / 2 1/4 hrs.

Deer Lake

moved 1 (not new) - 1
0

Belton

Q shot 1 prod.

Back to this good covert with evidence that there had been attendance yesterday. Thanksgiving Parked at the pipeline and walked the road. At the chimney corner, Q shot pointed in the middle of the road headed right ^{about} into the same thicket and brushpile tangle where we moved the two birds yesterday. With his tail tips lowered the tail was not even horizontal but the point was solid, winding with head well up. The road was greasy - muddy from what I don't know, and I had difficulty with footing as I approached. The grouse exploded from a few yards and crossed left head-high and too close for a shot even if I had been in normal condition. I had the usual paralyzed reflex and heard the right shoulder crack as I tried to mount, then stood, unable to get going and first as the grouse topped the woods on the left. It would have been a possibility if I'd been functioning - the story of this season's action.

Let cover the entire corner but failed to reach the other grouse; finally doubling back to the north side of the road in a big circle where

our bird should have been. Quetz worked today as well and 25/88
beautifully as any dog I have known, eagerly and conscientiously and
covered every bit of cover.

We found for lunch on a big section of log near the chimney,
then hunted to the car when at 4:30 I lay took Belter in the car and
drove around the corner and waited on the "snowmobile road" until Quetz
and I hunted across the poplars, then hunted out the road to the end
of the gameland on the left and lay picked us up at 4:55. I had
hunted 2 hours and 20 minutes. It is amazing how much time you can
spend in such a limited area.

When lay picked us up we drove on out the road and discovered
a large area of gameland for about a mile. I think this road ties up with the
Dunbar area, much land but requires care. The Game Commission thinks
only in terms of grass plots as game habitat, their one large project
being maintaining a road for snowmobiles. They are all alike.



IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD

Saturday 26 November

clear to cloudy, cool, 50°

Hemlock
0

Bellon

Quest

2:20-4:20 / 2 hrs

Back to the wonderful "O'Leary Land," but hunting the north end, rather than stress Bellon with the long hike to the back portion. All life in snow was two deer hunters driving out and back in to their bus/camp preparing for next week's deer season. Am told there are grouse all over here. They were not all over there.

All of this is sadly changed: the "grouse hill" had not one grouse; the top and west face proved long woods with a nasty understory of short sparse greenbrier with not a berry in combination with a ground litter of 3/4" "twigs" that managed to make walking miserable.

Bellon is doing well however, in spite of chemotherapy, and ~~I think~~ these outings are good for him. Quest hunted beautifully, trying hard on nothing to work on. He made a very convincing point at the trough point of cover on the edge of the leading clearing, holding staunchly which I walked in. Nothing.

The leading clearing is now grown to much greenbrier, beautifully "pink foliage" growing up on crabapple/hawthorn response - amazing to realize we haven't been into this in recent years hunting the back country.

Found our "lunch log" and took some prep of leg and the boys. The log is rotting out on the back side. Was it maple or was it oak?

Hunted to the leg however ~~we had~~ another excellent point

by Quert - bewildering, with no bird. At least iters the
adrenaline. Odd that the two points were at the only two
bits of good cover left. What a shame to see good cover go this way.

C'est la vie Didn't hear as ^{many} ~~many~~ pre-deer rifles.

27/88

Thursday 22 December

Clear, perfect, cold

2:55 - 5:20 / 2 1/2 hrs

Little Sandy North

made ~~2~~ 3-3
0

Bellon

Quert: 1 prod

A gorgeous day, sunny, cloudless, cold, after a long confinement
due to cold weather, a head cold on my part, and Bellon's run-down
condition and loss of weight due to chemotherapy. He was down to 53.8 lbs
but yesterday's checkup showed a weight gain to 56.4 lbs, after a
reduction of medication, and we felt he was up to a short hunt.

Bob Reason had reported grouse near Jay Casteels' old place
during deer season. We parked at the bridge and hunted upstream
through magnificent hemlock cover. The path above the sawmill cabin
had been opened and we found a clearing that had been used for a
campsite just short of the powerline.

On the east side of the right-of-way a grouse flushed out of a low
hemlock and boreal through cover upstream. I neither saw nor heard it.
It was too thick to follow through the lower ~~edge~~ edge, and we stayed on
the path as it climbed and paralleled the powerline.

At a large boulder just inside the woods from the right-of-way
I saw Quert under the overhang suddenly wheel and look up and I
thought he had caught scent from atop the boulder. He rushed around
and froze at the top, holding what I ~~thought~~ ^{thought} was in front, but

Quest reconsidered and moved in. Looking back, I think Quest had (28)
heard a flush from the top of the boulder when he was below.

Quest was hunting like a dream, occupying the heavy cover above and below the path. I was impressed with the excellent cover above the path, dense with grapevines and not opened up after all these years.

We worked the path with Quest quartering beautifully and Belton having a grand time, on the path and to the sides, with no sign of weakness. Less than 100 yards short of the fork of the path to the Bowers Hole, Kay saw and heard a grouse flush from just below and patch for Sandy. I had no sound or sight of it, and am beginning to wonder if I'll ever hear a grouse again. It was too dense to follow to the creek and we continued up to the old Coopers house where Belton took a side trip above the path to where a deer had been gutted, and Kay had to go for him. Meanwhile Quest had lat scent in the thicket below the house and pointed well out from me. Kay heard a grouse go out far ahead, very wild, and Quest made another point, empty, later.

We went up into the gopher's on top and sat on the crumbling porch of the house and ate lunch at 4:10.

Starting the long trip back with the sun lowering, we got to the thicket cover again and Quest made a point on the upper edge. Belton moved around in front of him and I worked in which Kay styled Quest's tail and got a picture but it was empty.

We had started along the upper edge when Belton came out of the thick cover and lay down at our feet. I could see he was tired, and as he stretched out on his side I found his gums and lips very pale with a fast ^{weak} pulse.

It looked bad, and I realized I had overestimated his ability ^{29/188}
to come out in his weakened condition. We got ten brewers yeast tablets
into him and Kay managed to get some cluscha down him but he
was not too aware. Fortunately we were above the Seas boxes, closer
than the long trek to the car, and we decided to have Kay walk
him that and wait, while I went for the car. As they walked
slowly across the hilltop field with Belton on lead, he repeatedly
stopped and looked back at me and Quest and it brought back
memories of this same situation with Brian with cutting clarity.
The description of these wonderful people is terrifying.

The top cover is excellent and now had a drill/exploration road
that makes good hunting. Quest had a hot point that seemed certain,
but proved empty, and I hurried on at a fast pace, following
the road around to the big powerline, then down across a felled-back
grass-planted bush field with a view to forever, both to the
chestnut Ridge for many and back up Beaver Creek to the Pincis,
with a huge yellow globe of full moon in the east.

The "climb" down the powerline and over Stripsmine Spoutbank
to the bottom seemed endless. In spite of my hurry, I thought of Plover's
magnificent fast Day point under the big poles nearly 25 years ago.
In those days I would have saved at least two or three years in the
night-of-way at this hour. It was getting twilight in the valley where
I reached the bottom and kept up my pace — ~~constant~~ aerobic
all the way to the car at 5:20

I got Quest in the rear and my gun case and turned the car
and headed up the road. Just past the old Rowan house, I

30
saw, incredibly, on the right side of the road, Kay and Belton walking toward me. If I hadn't been so pushed, I would have thought it an illusion.

Belton had come back to himself and with some hours at Sees; Kay had walked him all the way to the paved road and almost to the car as soon as I had made it.

With immense relief, we drove home with Belton in Kay's lap in the front seat, with that grand moon in our sight above the trees.

We are going to have to reconsider how to hunt Belton for a while.

Tuesday 27 December

perfect, sunny, warm 55°

3:00 - 5:00 / 2 hrs.

Paul Uphold

Belton

Quest

Warm Indian summer. This was unbelievably weather, and with rain forecast for tomorrow, my birthday, we took today.

Today we hunted this wood in reverse, starting below Paul's "house" with greenbrier berries hanging on the tangle of spiky vines. Belton started by "taking off" down the road from the car and Kay had to overtake him and head him back in the direction of Quest and I had started.

We followed the narrow division between the two deep stripwood cuts and entered the pines and autumn oaks where I had the spot at the grass last time. Today I pushed into the large oaks and discovered a track of road between pines and followed it westerly. It turned out to be a definite corridor between pine plantings (white pines) with autumn oaks growing on the edges, loaded with berries that appeared proper and abundant.

There were two cross "corridors" much like the ones we were on, with notices on the first signed "John Friend" - oddly lost in this dense stand of pines but with new surveyor's stakes on the first. I now recall that the young butcher at the Brunton grocery, Mike Foster, told me he had saved some grass in

This area, hunting on Thanksgiving with a boy from Princeton named Friend: 31/188
Belton was having fun hunting the path in front which Querst quartered
the solid pines on either side. It seemed ideal for a winter covert for quinn with the
abundance of dirt berries and the heavy cover for protection. We followed the
original path to where it pitched down the western slope with distant Okolontz
Ridge blue on the skyline. At a fork ahead our path dropped sharply, we took the
left prong and followed along the brink of a steep high wall, with a definite
path, bordered with autumn dices and pines on the left and simple spruce on the
right, where Querst gave me creeps by looking down over as though considering
spring over.

We had veered south, traveling quite a ^{ways} distance. At one place we
came to the mouth of the cross path with the Friend notices, and some distance
beyond came dead end to a narrow terrace I recognized ^{as} the one we have
hunted into from the east. Here the autumn dices ended and we were between
a low spruce bank above on the left and another below on the right, with woods below.

Finally we came to the path as usually takes up over to the upper basin.
Just beyond, I saw Querst on point, high and solid. I got to him while
Belton, well aware but not backing, worked around in front. They got to
us in a couple of pictures. At last, Querst moved in with no flourish.

We crossed the traveled woods road that cuts down to the "Kelly road."
Had the ever change to re-grow with loads of grapevines tangles and they saw
some grapes. This is classic slash cover and today was ideal for conditions.
Querst had not let up his constant quartering search that never ceases to
impress me with his determination to find leads.

Working east, we saw a bulldozed strip below that proved to be a
drilling exploration road we had been on, or so I thought. It led east to a large
pond. There were many grapevines on the hill ^{above} with ^{large} woods below. At the

impoundment we climbed to a corner of good cover above and paused to eat lunch on a nice flat rock seat. (32)

The day was lovely, almost too warm for the jersey/flannel shirt combination I was wearing. Kay had a good lunch feeding of high protein "jerky strips" and dried liver for Pella who ate with relish.

It was well after four o'clock when we started out again, and very soon came to another drill road strip that is the one we'd been on the last time. There are even more grapevines here. The strip operation is finished and filled back and it appears this sort of grapevine cover will remain. At the dead end we turned up the hill and came to grapes hanging full on low vines when I'd seen them last time.

Working west through the upper flat to the clearing where the deer hunters had their camp. For the first, we retraced our trail and followed it back around the good thicket cover below Pauls. Kay went for the car while I took the loop out the easy way to the main road.

The sky was beginning to glow in a glorious sunset beyond the black sharp pines with chestnut ridges a velvety purple. I wouldn't give this final hour for an entire day's hunting and I hailed by the roadside in a wonderful place until Kay brought the car. It had been two hours through a dream world and we had not moved a feather. Not one feather.

We drove home with the western skyland blazing to gold, then burning down to a red red December sunset I'll never forget.

at home, sitting beside Pella I ran my hands over her throat and found the lymph nodes had enlarged. Called Gus Seiler later. Why must it be like this?

Tuesday 10 January

Upper Spiker

Belton

33/88

Cool, sunshine, 42°

0

Quest

2:50-4:50/2 hrs.

Belton's last day.

Another perfect covert, a perfect day, Belton feeling well enough to take out. We opened the cable barrier and drove up the steep hill to the forks of the woods road on top. We decided to try the cover on top under the straggle where we had never been.

It is good grapevine and regrowth and we hunted south along the base of the old spill bank — a classic place for grouse. There was no log road but the footing wasn't bad, over and around logs and tangles. Quest hunted it like a dream, overjoyed to be out, quartering it rapidly at a fast pace but in ideal range. Belton was having a fine time, seriously hunting but very near me. Conditions were ideal, cold air and sunshine and if there was grouse in here we would have found them.

at our place it seemed we had. Quest was on the steep lower part of the spill bank, pointing below ~~him~~ and reaching with a high back. We were near the open field on the far end and I had been conjecturing that if we had been hunting pheasants, they would have run ahead of us and be holding here. I pushed through thick cover and crossed a steep little ravine and I should have known no grouse would lie for that, not in our coverts and on these days. Day was behind me and got a couple of pictures of the point, Belton worked in below Quest and Quest never stirred a hair, always drinking in scent. Finally a quail a two-note whistle

and Faust dashed down over, crawling excitedly, and there was no end.

This is the story of our covert's three days.

We turned back, crossing the barbed-wire fence and hunted the hillside back at a lower level. This is the cover above Fred Kelly's that we had admired from across the valley.

At the station wagon we decided to leave Belton with some cookies and let him rest while we hunted ~~north~~ to the upper end. The old woods road running about half way to the ~~top~~ old fields and through beautiful dense bracken cover sparsely dotted with small hemlocks and cut with ^{old} log road traces was a picture covert. Faust didn't let up his questing or miss a square yard with that keen nose.

At the log powerline, we hunted up the hillside on the right-of-way where we had memories of a couple of grouse and some bittersweet vine. At the top edge of cover we turned west to hunt back, and found an exploration drill road giving us a fine lane to hunt, but first we stopped and located a good log to sit on and eat lunch.

Cover like this, posted and gated, and given us for two generations first by Jimmy Spiker, and now his adopted daughter, Mrs Ward Crane, fifty ^{seasons} ~~years~~ of hospitality, is something to cherish. And we didn't miss a feather.

We found Belton looking silent larks lying in the rear of the station wagon, but in good shape. It was a day we couldn't have stayed indoors, a lovely experience.

Thursday 19 January Asa Wright Quest 35/188
clear, sunny, cool 46° wind 2-2
2:45 - 5:00 / 2 1/4 hrs 0

A perfect day but a wretched thing, hunting with Belton in hospital. But it helped to get out on a lovely day in an old covert where we were once more hunting memories. They were there.

We parked at the Asa Wright house, a shambles without one home but five dogs and a cat; two of the dogs - a large cocker and a lab (both with bar sinisters) - the more sociable of the group.

We hunted down the hill on the right of the muddy road through excellent cover all the way. At the old log road we used to hunt, we entered very cut-back "woods" growing to dog-hair regrowth after several years. At the first slight incline in the road I got a fleeting look at a grouse flushing out on the upper side - a strangely small looking bird going out parallel to the road.

Quest was in the area and moments later I caught my arm and said Grouse! and I looked into the blazing sun to glimpse a bird coming directly over me. It was gone down the hill even as I turned with no possibility shot. There had been no sound from either.



INTO THE SUN AND AWAY

Ray thinks Quest may have pointed; I feel he should have.

We chose the front land to follow out the road in excellent cover, planning to return on the lower level and loop to run # 2.

Far out, we came to the end of the short cover above, and climbed the hill on a trace of log road that soon disappeared. We were in beautiful regrowth with poppies, logs, brush, tangles, and rocks, many rocks. At the top, under the brunt of the hill and in the main ledge, we paused to eat lunch. My God, how you miss them.

After eating, we tipped out to a fence with the Wrights' cows (cattle) in the field about working at fertilizing the pasture, with much success. I remember so vividly seeing Ray and

Brian against this skyline as they was leading him back to the car on one of his days on ~~the~~ chemotherapy and the way he kept holding back, looking back at me. Their great loyalty, and it cuts through my gut each time that memory comes back.

We held below the barbed wire fence and circled the rock ledge along piles of smaller rocks that had been dragged from the field on top. Back down along a small spring seep we came again to the road and turned back at 4:15.

The area I'd planned to hunt back turned out to be barren pole-skip and so we returned by the same road with no contacts. One day I missed 12 quail in the same area when we heard 2 ~~quail~~ ~~and~~ ~~was~~ ~~lucky~~.

Below us was where Bear found a ^{large grouse whose} ~~red~~ ruff ~~was~~ beautiful
is on my d.t. Bear hat, the day the little black-and-white
hound puppy followed us all the way from the Whyet House and
back. Thanks - to for those memories.

Thursday 27 January
clear, sunny, perfect 40°
3:30 - 5:30 / 2 hrs.

Laurel (bridge)
march 2-2
o

Quest 1 prod

This day was perfect before we even started, having found
Belton so much improved at Paw Prints hospital after yesterdays
bad condition. After a good visit with him we stopped off at Big Laurel
and hunted up the woods road on the east edge. It proved slow going
with countless fallen trees across the path.

Not fifteen minutes after we started, I saw Quest go birdy
fifty yards ahead, working with tail part up the bank on the
right. I say saw him stop on point (I missed it in the thick laurel)
and also saw two grouse flush back through the cover about us.

We hunted up the road, which was getting more obscure, with
the magnificent stream [below us, straight down]. The path ended, unlike
my memory of this place, which I hadn't hunted for many years, and
we took to the steep hunch/hundred cone, following about the first tributary
that comes down the ridge. It was a longer climb than I remembered
(the years?) and at last came out on an open impediment (ice-covered)

at a mouse cleared with a trailer cabin. MR & MRS. -- TEETS.

(38)
'88

This, too, was not the house I thought should have been there. We found a traveled road and took it south to hunt back.

There were old fields that belonged there but not the good cover I expected. This road was clearly as I recalled and I realize I had been confusing this and the woods road as one.

~~at one place after~~ We stopped to eat, leaning against small maple saplings for want of a log or stump in the old field, then hunted the top as the sun went down, a huge white-gold globe in a fringe of low trees on top the skyline.

The only really good cover was a small area of grapevine / greenbrier tangle on the left of the road, which I hunted ~~out~~ out with Quest while Kay stayed on the road, which pitches steeply toward the valley. At one place I saw Quest stop and hold statuesquely in the middle of the road, ^{with a high head} pointing ^{into} the hemlock cover on the lower side. I hurried to him while Kay took pictures, but there was no bird, at least when I got to him. But it was a handsome moment.

On the way down, Quest worked into cover above the road at what appeared to be new strip-mining and came back elbow-deep in black { decayed } / Kay says "decomposed" mud smelling ^{putrid} awful. A good hunt. (putrified)



A HANDSOME MOMENT

George Bird Evans Papers

West Virginia and Regional History Center

10070 ✓

ind p 190

Wednesday 1 February

Ray Guthrie

Quest

39/88

perfect weather, clear sunny 59°

12:35 - 2:35 / 2 hrs

Buried Belton this a.m., an awful experience and a terrible hole in our life. Felt this place an escape, but mostly it was sad memories.

Heard exactly nothing. Never have I found my good coverts so barren. Quest worked beautifully.

Saturday 18 February

Bitley (Carl Spiker)

Quest: 1 PROD

Sunny, clear, cold 35°

moved 5-5 flutters

2:25 - 5:30 / 3 hrs.

We broke our no-Saturday rule today, a day we just couldn't stay indoors. Parked at the forks with the big hollow oak and hunted up an old stripmine road. There was only the smallest traces of snow left, with perfect conditions at the bottom of the 35-45° temperature bracket.

I have never seen Quest work more beautifully at a fine fifty-to-seventy-yard range, constantly in touch and never letting up. Mike Bitley had reported grouse seen around the stripmine scars in deer season, and we concentrated on that area.

On top I saw Quest to a good patch of cover beyond what proved later to be a long cleared strip that Bitley had hunted out as a landing strip! Quest moved into the limited piece and I heard a grouse lift but didn't see it. Kay also heard a wing flap against trees. In the limited piece I expected to reflash it but we didn't in spite of Quest's careful search. After our circle, we paused for lunch once more on the edge of the cleared strip.

After eating, we humped back to the road to Birtley and entered large woods on the top of the Laurel Hillside, a lot too open but for the laurel. Holding to the upper margin I hunted south with a couple of horses checking us out from beyond a ^{wire} fence.

I was headed toward what I remembered as a good draw of thorns but hunted inside the upper margin of the long cane. ~~At~~ In front, I saw Quest on point, his head high but with tail rather below level. I don't understand his low tail this season; other than that his high head is all I can ask, and I wonder of his lack of force on the near end as from too few contacts with game.

This time game was there. The quon flushed before I could get to Quest - a low flush out the woods' edge and much too far for a shot. Quest broke, and I don't blame him after all this time without birds, and as he did, a second quon flushed crossing right and pitching down over the laurel for the valley; followed by a third one that took the same way down over. Neither was close enough for a shot. All three looked rather small to me.

We decided to hunt for #1 rather than get involved in that laurel hell, and so made straight ahead. With no further contact, we faced the decision to go down over for a chance at the other two.

Going down wasn't too bad; it was steep but there was footing with adequate cover to cling to. At the bottom we came to a metal water tank with an exposed pump to left water in a plastic hose to the stove on top.

It was dense laurel even down to the stream, which had a good flow, and we hugged the base of the ~~cliff~~ ^{stream} trying to find the

41/88

I remembered as being here. What's now totally filled up with brush or washed out by the stream. Like it or not, we had to climb back to the top in a slow pull, laurel-by-laurel, stepping-by-stepping, with small patches of snow slipping under our boots. We made it, climbing with the ground only a couple of feet from our faces going up a surface like a ladder. It was reminiscent of the climb up from Muddy Creek on the Sells' ridge years ago. I was proud of us back then, and fifteen years or more later I am proud of us now. May said she felt every bit as good shape as she was at 70! What a gal!

It is surprising how little fatigue we experienced today. We went out longer than almost any day this season, but the motivation factor, even without a chance to shoot, makes a world of difference.

Once more on top at 5:00 pm. we continued the circle out the edge. At one place where the #1 grouse might have been, Quast made a handsome point down over into laurel that proved empty. These birds don't give you reflexes.

In a good cover with large aspens and large laurel, I saw a grouse lift far ahead, with no relation to Quast. It simply heard us ^{and} left. That was it, but it had been a good afternoon.

As we circled the house, now emitting wood smoke, we saw the remains of two small planes, evidently Britlip's folly in connection with the landing strip.

We had another good picture-point on the road back down the hill. Quast is solid and if there is scent, will point, try to find. We reached the car at 5:30. A wonderful afternoon and it puts new light in us to locate 5 grouse.

We spoke of Belton numerous times. This was a count he had enjoyed.

On the way out, I stopped the car and I saw a bunch of laurel that had spotted.

Monday 20 February
cloudy, cool, 45°
2:25 - 5:40 / 3 1/4 hrs

Little Sandy North
moved 5 (2 new) - 5
o

Quest 1 prod

Hoping to move the three birds as found here in December.

Kay saw a grouse flush (looked red) near the steep road that comes off the ridge and at base of rocks, flying east. I neither saw nor heard.

On far edge of powerline where we moved the first one on our previous trip, Kay heard a flush along stream. I heard nothing.

On the path along side of ridge, Quest had a nice point into steep slope above. I hurried to him but had no good approach. Quest broke as grouse flushed east. Kay heard and glimpsed it; I ^{did} neither.

Beyond the trail down to Beaver Hole while waiting for Quest to ~~cover~~ ^{supper} area, Kay heard a faint sound of flush. I heard nothing.

We hunted the lower log road/trail below ~~log~~ log Cortez's old house and then I worked up the slope to upper edge through good cover with no results. At length sitting on a tree stump, looking west at our wooded ridges to far Chestnut Ridge.

On return down the valley, we held to upper edge. In the exact place where Quest pointed on former hunt and Balton, the rascal, ignored it and circled in front! Quest pointed again, empty. I wonder if there could be a groundhog hole there?

I stayed down in the woods below fence while Kay walked the field edge. This is excellent grapevine / brushpile / log cover and rocky-rough and where I shot a grouse on that log.

Thanksgiving Day hunting alone with Blue (39 or 40?) when I
lost a grouse that fell in Sunday and rushed away. 43/88

I rejoined I day on top where Quest had another empty point
on the edge of the top flat woods.

It was getting on toward 5:00 and we hurried to the powderline.
Instead of going straight down now, we tried the fore edge of the
moss grassland flat that was reclaimed strip, hoping to find an
easier way. The spoilbank didn't let up all the way to a pine planting
unfamiliar to me.

At the south edge of the pines we were doubling back east,
trying to find where the spoilbank let off, and I day exclaimed
that a grouse had flushed from a pine above me, having let me walk
under. I day said it climbed to the pinetops, then leveled off.

I neither heard nor saw it. First grouse that flushed and I was
unaware of any. My hearing and my vision are about wiping me out
as a grouse quiver. Normally, I at least see well but today I had
changed back to my regular glasses with clip-on, the "shooting glasses"
having given me trouble with double vision last Saturday. To my surprise
and dismay, the clip-on combination today gave me bad reaction, with
the left eye not coordinating properly. It may be that by wearing the
shooting glasses with 3Δ so regularly my eyes wouldn't go back to the
old glasses. Add to the vision problem today, Quest's having hunted too
the week, unlike Saturday's lucky range, and I was less than happy in
a glorious coveit with 5 grouse.

Summary 1988

This was a lost season, with Belton's condition discovered on the eve of our first trip to the Canaan, my reinjured right shoulder making shooting impossible, the lack of chance to try the new little 28-lb. AYA fairly, the almost all-time low in grouse, and Belton's death on the last day of January.

We gave him as much pleasure as was possible, and he enjoyed it with his wonderful courage, laddy boy. We did find a fair number of woodcock in the Canaan, although we were closed out of our Net. Storm covert at Rehobeth by new posting. It was a year of sadness and frustration, a season of losing what was dear to us. It wasn't fair. We gave Belton 17 of the 21 days.

How many more seasons will there be to give Quest a chance at life, and us? There has been almost no sketches in the year's diary for the reason there has been almost nothing to remember that I don't want to forget. In West Virginia, around 22 grouse, the number we used to meet on one day in the 1940s and '50s.

Bellon of the trophy head. A magnificent bird dog.

WEEKLY ...
 1.157 = 1.2
 13 | 15.0
 13 | 2.0
 13 | 70
 13 | 65

COVERTS	DAVS	GR0USE	SPRTS/HRTZ	LOCK	SPRTS/HRTZ	SPRTS/HRTZ
2	2/10	2/10	0	22/28	2/0	4
1	2/24	1/1	0	10/13	1/0	1
2	2/2	2/2	1/0			
2	4/7	2/2	0			2
1	1/24	2/2	0	BEER SEASON		1
-	1/2	0	0			
1	1/4	0	0			
1	1/24	2/2	0			
1	1/2	2/2	0			
-	1/2	0	0			
1	1/3	2/2	0			
-	1/24	2/2	0			
14	11/24	2/25	1/0	32/21	2/0	4
17	4/28	2/2				
21	1/21	22/31				

WEEKLY 1988

BELTON

QUEST

PROD - BACKS - KILL - RET

PROD - BACKS - KILLS - RET

10/17 thru 10/22

COVERTS	DAYS HOURS	GROUSE	SHOTS/HITS	COCK	SHOTS/HITS	PROD - BACKS - KILL - RET	PROD - BACKS - KILLS - RET	
2	2/6 $\frac{1}{4}$	5/6	0					
2 4	3/8 $\frac{1}{4}$	0		25/38	5/0	4	14-1	thru 11/5 thru 11/11
1 1	2/3 $\frac{3}{4}$	1/1	0	10/13	1/0		6	thru 11/12
2	2/2	2/2	1/0				1	thru 11/19
3	4/7 $\frac{3}{4}$	3/5	0				2	thru 11/26
1	1/2 $\frac{1}{2}$	3/3	0	DEER SEASON			1	thru 12/24
-	1/2	0	0					thru 12/31
1	1/2	0	0					1/14
1	1/2 $\frac{1}{4}$	2/2	0					1/21
1	1/2	2/2	0				1	1/28
-	1/2	0	0					2/4
1	1/3	5/5	0				1	2/18
-	1/3 $\frac{1}{4}$	2/5	0				1	2/28
14	17/39 $\frac{1}{4}$	22/26	1/0	35/51	6/0	4 PROD	5-20-1	
17	4/7 $\frac{3}{4}$	3/5		bird/covert W.V. 1.57			$\frac{2}{7}$	
	21/47	25/31						

1988

GEORGE: 21 DAYS / 47 WOODCOCK / 17 COVERTS

WV: 22 GROUND / 26 FLUSHES

PA: 3 " / 5 "

Total 25 " / 31 "

1 SHOT / 0

35 WOODCOCK / 51 FLUSHES
6 SHOTS / 0

WV 17 COVERTS / 22 GROUSE

PA 3 " / 3 "
 1.57 bird/covert

1.0 bird/covert

BELTON DIED 31 JANUARY '89

13th season 12 3/4 YEARS

17 DAYS

'COCK: 4 PROD

A grand dog:

LIFETIME '76-'88

389 DAYS

139 PROD

36 BACKS

26 KILLS (6 OP) 21 RET

167 PROD

57 BACKS

49 KILLS

28 RETS

QUEST 4 1/2 years / 5th season

21 days.

GROUSE: 7 PROD

'COCK: 20 PROD

1 BACK

LIFETIME '84-'88

137 DAYS

24 PROD

5 BACKS

1 KILL

1 RET

48 PROD

14 BACKS

4 KILLS

1 RET

1988

BIG MOUNTAINS MT. STORM

✓ CLYDE DAVIS 031-0

✓ FAR EDELMAN 031-3.4.0

CANAAN VALLEY

✓ HANK MALLOW / POWER CO NI- 9.12.0 / N3-1.1.0 / N8-5.6.0 / N9-4.6.0

BLACK BEAR THORNS N3-12.21.0 / N8-1.1.0

CANAAN MOUNTAIN N9.0

PENNSYLVANIA

✓ HINERMAN PLACE N22-1.1.0

DEER LAKE N23-2.3.0 / N25-1.1.0

HENCKEL N26.0

LOCAL 1988

TOTAL WV 22/26

count 17/34 $\frac{1}{4}$ = bird/count 1.57

RAY GUTHRIE 017-2.2.0 / F1.0

HARTMAN 020-3.4.0

CORINTH N15.0

PAUL UPHOLD N18-2.2.0 / D27.0

LITTLE SANDY N. D22-3.3.0 / F205(2).5.0

UPPER SPIKER J10.0

ASA WRIGHT J19-2.2.0

LAUREL (BRIDGE) J27-2.2.0

BITELY F18-5.5.0