

Shooting 1997

73rd Season

October
Thursday 23 ~~November~~

Little Sandy South

Wanton

Beautiful day, sunny and clear.

5:00 - 7:00 / 2 hrs.

no gun

Wanton is $6\frac{1}{2}$, I am nearly 91. (Age 91. Season opened on 18th, but my left hand is still too painful to mount gun (injured on July 13). Armstrong road open (As in camp) so drove in to little run bridge, where I shot my first WV grouse in 1939. Parked at trace of log road and climbed the ridge - very steep and rough footing, following course of small stream. We got started at 5:00 fast time with sun hitting upper extent of ridge, with us in shadow. The road, very dim, jiggled out before we reached the top and rather than retreat the bad footing, we kept going through thick roughness.

Wanton, overambitious, walked a bit wild. At top we came to the large field (two deer) I used to know, and with sun touching the ridge to the west, we struck out for the old woods road that cuts down ^{to} the road of Benson's house. It was grown over and at west end of field, turned north into recently cut woods and died out.

The sun had gone down and light was failing. We turned into woods to find the recent log road as navigation at Armstrong gate, which proved nonexistent. Faced with no roads behind us and imminent dark, we kept going, very gingerly, through cuttings and finally found the log road we wanted. Footing difficult, we went much farther than we expected and at last came to the blessed Armstrong road at bottom.

Leaving Ray to wait, I took Wanton and lit out in the car, with a strange illusion of illumination striking leaves on road from behind. Counting to about 700,

I at last came to the little footbridge, and the station wagon.

As I got in and turned on lights, staring back the road, my head lights picked out Day, just short of bridge! She had arrived almost as soon as I!

Somewhat lashed but exhilarated, we decided 5:00 pm is too late to start out. Moved nothing the had flushed 2 quans recently at old road.

Wednesday 29 October

Paul's Place

Monton

4:45 - 6:15 hr

no gun 0

Sunny clear

We had to go to Paul's Place. Now that he's gone, it's not the same. The new owner has built a weekend cabin and has gravelled the road back past Paul's, with the only trace of the "residence" and the chicken house being a pile of boards. We hunted past "Belton's clearing", where, tired as he was, on that last hunt in here, he loyally hunted every shred of cover. There had been much bulldozing down the steep mud road, taking out a lot of grand grassmics, evidently to widen it.

To our surprise we found the light failing due to "winter time," and gave up plans to hunt around by the pond. Instead, we turned west into old strip terraces and, with much trouble, got up over to the large clearing, only to find it more grown-up and slow walking.

Hoping to find birds in pine stand, we followed a new truck road along the margin and out to "Belton's clearing." That was it - lovely color at sunset when we came out to county road. I think this covert is a has-been.

On drive home I noticed a strange rattle noise in front end and a suspicious pull of steering wheel to the left. At MacLoy's where we stopped to pick up mail, found we had been driving on a flat left-front tire.

Friday 31 October

June's

Newton

3/97

Cloudy, cool
4:45 - 5:45 - 1 hr.

no gun

This was another late start with daylight running out. Parked short of Summers' at opening of June's road. Progress has overtaken June's sign, ~~sign~~ with lettering changed mostly to rust. We skirted the lawn of a house where once there was a wonderful grouse cover, with a second house down where I've shot grouse. Difficult to remember that here was where we took Puff and Shadows and Dixie on New Year's Day of 1962. We had our first grouse find just below, a bird I shot, which Dixie started to retrieve, then abandoned it and Puff finished the delivery.

Today we found walking hard, with large stones in road covered ^{with} by millions of fallen leaves, making footing uncomfortable. The road seemed much steeper and we felt it in our loots. The cover is not much different, and looked great. At bottom - in my 73rd year running grouse, the distance to the bottom seemed farther and Roaring Creek bridge beyond where I remembered. My pedometer clocked it at $3\frac{1}{4}$ mile.

The lower cover is a nice lot of mountain laurel. The bridge is a horror of loose boards, but car tracks indicate someone got over - I can't say if they got back.

Lower road out to Lake Run School shows no evidence of use by car.

The sun was lowering and gone before we realized we had to abandon plan to go to June's. Frankly I'd had enough. I'm concerned that we are not in condition for this kind of walking.

Two far-spaced shots indicated squirrel hunting on ridge up under the paved road, then a rapid 1-2-3 all-to-loaden blast said grouse, probably a miss.

With light dimming fast, we turned back and climbed the road, much easier than coming down, and seeming shorter. At top we talked to a Cosner girl - shades of Mt. Storm - who lives in first house. I realize I'm only filling space, but that's about all there is.

Wednesday 5 November

Charlie Seese

Winton

④ '97

Cold, sunny lovely

3:40-5:00 - 1 1/2 hr

no gun

This was a deluxe hunt, at least to start with. Drove in through Ben Seese's yard and across field to the woods, a saving of a long walk.

We entered cover on the old ridge road and followed it all the way to within sound of the thoroughway. It was a beautiful walk in ideal situation and fair cover, bringing back memories 58 years old. Winton wore the duck collar with good result, quartering nicely until he became enamored with the woods road, then began following it. Clay touched him with the shocker, which worked well. At far end we came to some slashings intermixed with ferns, which looked good. But a lot of shooting (we eventually decided clay targets) from across the highway on Scott place, deterred us, together with proximity to highway.

As usual, the sun was dropping and we abandoned plan to return by grapevine woods road on lower level, returning to car via the way we came. It was a good brisk mile walk; but it is unpaired with hunting. We should have moved at least one grouse.

Day after Xmas, December 26 The Thorns

Cold, sunny
One hour

Winton eager and hunting
but no birds.

Parked at east end as usual. Noticed plastered ^{deer} on every tree on both sides of road. Am sure it is a hunting club, but you hate to be the kind who ignores posted land. Winton covered both sides thoroughly, making nothing. I stayed on road. At far end where we used to park, we found new gate. Clay returned for the car while I hunted on down to Ward Moyer's road and found the same yellow notices glaring at us there. They are everywhere. We gave up and drove home via the west end and Hog Run.

Warm, saw thawing

5 January
one hour

Glenn's
0

Wenton

5/197

A mild, thaw, with water in field and underfoot. Climbed hill
by way of field — old road obliterated. Hunted last six woods ~~as~~ road
(Carl Collins)
to end into field and back in face of strong wind. Nothing but one
rabbit.

9 February
one hour, late

Muddy Creek
3-3

no gun

Wenton; prod.?

We explored the Home Linnigood Road to find the stripmines where
Henderson "shot two grouse." We found fields and, true, some stripmines,
but with little cover. Left on the road, just to see, and came out on a
paved road that after a moment I recognized as the Cuyper Road. There was
still some daylight and to get Wenton, and us, a walk, I turned and
drove to Cuyper and down the Center School Road to Muddy Creek, where we
found the cabin very much the same.

Parked and started up the Clint Reckert road, traveled now
— to where? — with car tracks in the snow, making loud walking
but what wonderful air. The sun was still about the treetops but
sinking, when suddenly there was a grouse flush on the left,
from brushy clear-cut regrowth too dense to penetrate. The
bird flushed left and just about the thicket — a good left-
crossing shot, but I had come without a gun. There was a second
grouse flushing from a few yards from the first, a sound but
only a motion in thicket.

I've asked if I had a shot at "the other one," which I took
to mean the second bird, and then I realized there had been a
third grouse I had not heard. God, a miracle!

The cover is all dense regrowth of several years, almost entirely cleared, and plastered with Muddy Creek Recreation Club notices.

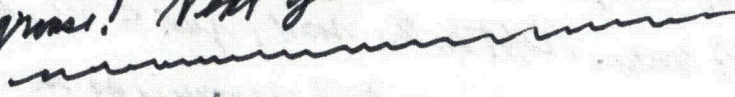
It was terrain I had hunted in the past as part of the Tramroad, but had never seen notices here.

The sun was behind the trees now and we turned at a landing clearing with a pile of old logs and retraced ^{our} way down the mountain - much more difficult footing in the soft snow than coming up.

There was one set of car tracks, recent, in a pull-off that was wholly a hunter. Would like to hunt this but awkward in the face of the club posting.

It was nearly dark when we reached the station wagon.

Glong be! grows! Next year?



LOCAL1997

Little Sandy S. 023.0

Pauli Place 029.0

Juni 031.0

Charlie Sese 115.0/115.0

Thoms D26.0

Glenn 129.0

Muddy Creek F9.3