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Night Shooting at Yorklyn: For at least 50 years, trapshooters loved to shoot “under the lights.” This was possible by having high-powered flood or spot lights shining toward the flight of the clay targets, which had a white or yellow band painted on their top sides. The target then looked like an electric light bulb flying through the normal trajectory to be fired upon. When the target was hit and broken, small fragments of light would fly in all directions, and if the target was “smoked” (that is, hit with the full charge of shot), a cloud of smoke would momentarily appear before drifting away. Millions of bugs, prevalent in the summer time in this area, would also be lit up from the lights and looked like tiny white specks all over the place.

The first night shoot at Yorklyn was staged by my father and W. W. Bissett, manager of the Snuff Mill, in a meadow on snuff mill property on July 4, 1916. This was possibly the first night shoot ever, but I can't prove that. In 1921, when my father started his annual tournaments on Poplar Hill, southeast of the fibre mills, night shooting was a part of the program, along with the “registered” events during the day. The night shoots were usually 50-target events, as opposed to the longer 150 or more targets shot during the day program. The shorter 50-target “races” often attracted a larger number of shooters, as they were more affordable. The entry fee was about \$3, including ammunition. By the early 1940s, more than 200 shooters were taking part in Yorklyn's night shoots, with six traps (now called “fields”) lighted. At many clubs equipped for night shooting, the high-powered search lights were mounted on high poles about 30 yards behind each trap house to be lighted. At Yorklyn, however, an earlier lighting method was employed, using two 1,000-candlepower bulbs with reflectors behind on each side of the trap house, with a standard 40-watt bulb with a “pool table” reflector above, directly over each shooter about 10 feet off the ground. These were needed so the shooter could see to sight his gun.

Direct current was generated by a 1917 Second Series Packard Twin Six motor attached to a large dynamo and wired from there to the places requiring illumination. This was replaced by A.C. in the mid-1930s, however, when poles up the hill brought commercial power to the gun club grounds. It was not unusual to blow fuses with the heavy demand for power, and my father would always have an electrician friend on hand to deal with emergencies. Prizes were awarded on the “Lewis Class” system, which meant that except for the top score, others were awarded on sort of a lottery basis. They usually consisted of small utility items, always costing less than \$10 each.