

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, June 20, 2010

Arthur A. Fink (ca. 1878–ca. 1960): If Fink had been a character actor in Hollywood, the configuration of his face and overall shape would have put him in top demand. Hired by my father to report the Yorklyn trapshooting tournaments to the press, he was on hand annually during the “shoot” for at least 20 years. Like a few of the shooters who wanted to “rough it,” he slept on an iron cot under a big tent or in the clubhouse and took his meals in the dining room on site. He never drove a car but hitched a ride from his home in Reading, Pennsylvania, with one of the several shooters who attended from that area. He always wore a black suit and a shirt that started off white but may have lasted him all week.

Despite his peculiar appearance, he knew the sports editors with the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and other papers well and had the know-how to get bold headlines reporting the shooting events at Yorklyn. While the winners were featured, everyone who shot in a particular event could read his or her score in the paper. Like others of his generation (and of my father's), a flowery style of writing was his stock-in-trade. Examples: “At the hilltop traps overlooking the vast Marshall acreage ... Steve Crothers, the Chestnut Hill crack [meaning crack shot ... popular trade man [meaning a shooter who worked for a gun or ammunition company]]” ... and “missing only one of the elusive clays.” With all these flowery descriptions, he was extremely accurate nonetheless. At the end of the week, he wrote the account of the 4½-day tournament for the *Sportsmen's Review*, the magazine of trapshooting published weekly in Cincinnati. With the two-finger method, he used an old typewriter located on a discarded desk in a small building we called the “engine room” next to the clubhouse, but he was fast. This building housed a 1917 Packard Twin Six motor hooked to a direct current generator that powered the 1,000-candlepower lamps on each side of the traphouses, which illuminated the clay targets for night shooting.

Al Cartwright, sports editor for the *News Journal* papers, who had started his career with the old *Reading Eagle*, told me this story about Arthur Fink: Fink kept reporting the scores of baseball games in a local league around Reading, and his readers looked forward each morning to finding out how the previous day's game turned out. Games were not yet broadcast on the radio; all were daylight games, and only a few working people had an opportunity to attend a league game, so they had never seen the players. Actually, there were no players, no ball teams, and no league. Fink had made the whole thing up, and got away with it for some time!