

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, July 21, 2014

The Year My Dad Was President: On the evening of August 24, 1938, Clarence Walker and I waited in our room at the Dayton Biltmore Hotel for my dad to return with election results from the Annual Meeting of the Amateur Trapshooting Association of America (ATA). He was running for president against incumbent R. C. "Rock" Jenkins of Orleans, Indiana, who was seeking his third term. Campaigning had been intense in the days preceding, and each side had wooed the elected state delegates, the only ones eligible to attend and to vote for the national officers. All this took place during the Grand American tournament at nearby Vandalia.

My father returned and told us he had won by a vote of 18 to 10 (the *Sportsmen's Review* reported the vote to be 19-10). His victory opened up a wonderful year of trapshooting for me, as he wanted to attend as many tournaments as possible during his year in office. The day after the Grand American closed, there was a small shoot at the National Cash Register Gun Club in Dayton, and shooters were entering for 25 targets at a time. My father and Clarence Walker did not intend to shoot, but my dad wanted to put in an appearance. Arthur Cuscaden of the Hercules Powder Company and his championship squad were there, but they were missing one member, Ned Lilly, who had gone home to Michigan. Cuscaden asked if I would like to shoot in Lilly's place. So, here is this 14-year-old, son of the new ATA president, shooting #2 in the squad led by Arthur Cuscaden, with Hale C. Jones of Illinois #3, Joe Hiestand of Ohio #4, and Lela Hall of Missouri #5, all in their normal positions! Jones was a frequent state champion in Illinois, Hiestand had just broken 900 16-yard targets straight at the "Grand" for a new long-run record, and Lela Hall was recognized as the greatest female shooter of that period. She had replaced Bill Eldred in 1937 as the squad member at #5 position. I broke 24, and the great Joe Hiestand (arguably the best shot of his time) broke 23, but he shot with someone's pump gun with which he was not familiar. I can't recall the other scores (possibly they were all 25s).

My father wanted to attend as many registered shoots as possible in 1939, his year as president. This meant I could go along, except during school, and I shot a lot that year. At the age of 15, I won my first state championship, the 100-target handicap, with 97 from 19 yards at Yorklyn. In addition to Delaware, we attended the District of Columbia "State" shoot and those in New Jersey at Fairfield, Maryland at Baltimore, Pennsylvania at Reading, Connecticut at Danbury, and New Hampshire at Maplewood. I shot at the Yorklyn tournament in early August but was not allowed to shoot the 500-target "Marathon" until 1940. We attended the ENTIRE Grand American, including the preliminary days (allowing me to shoot for eight consecutive days!). In early fall, we attended the Westy Hogans at Asbury Park and the Atlantic Indians at Shawnee-on-the-Delaware.

The ATA's ex-president, Rock Jenkins, and his brother Ralph had been frequent shooters at Yorklyn, and in late March 1939, my father and "Pete" Guest drove to Orleans, Indiana, to attend the Jenkins Brothers our-day shoot at clay targets and live pigeons (Indiana was one of four states that allowed live bird shooting). My father remained good friends with the Jenkins brothers, and in 1941 we attended the Okoboji Indians shoot at Cedar Point, Ohio. "Rock" was the perennial president of the Okobojsis, similar to but smaller than the Atlantic Indians. His brother Ralph, a class triple A shooter, was A.T.A. president during World War II, when shooting was severely curtailed. When I was on the Glidden Tour at French Lick in 1984, I tried to find the Jenkins Brothers shooting grounds, but everything was changed and nothing remained. It was about 15 miles from French Lick to Orleans, both in southwest Indiana.