

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, March 5, 2018

Roaming Trapshooters, 1941: When I went west with my family in 1941, my father and I were ardent trapshooters, and we made sure the following were included in the itinerary, where we could take part for one day each (at Portland, Oregon we shot for two days): The Pennsylvania State Shoot at Bradford, the Okoboji Indians at Cedar Point, Ohio, the Utah State Shoot at Ogden, and the Pacific International Championships at Portland, Oregon. In addition, we visited gun clubs in Kansas City, Denver, Salt Lake City, Long Beach (California), and Calgary, Alberta, and took part in a one-day shoot at a new gun club in Santa Monica, which was unplanned. Nearing the end of our trip, we shot several days at the Grand American tournament in Vandalia, Ohio.

Russell Elliott was the manager of the Kansas City Gun Club, and he was an excellent shot who won the North American Clay Target Championship at the Grand American later that summer. His cousin, Bob Elliott, was a regular at Yorklyn. Although no shooting was in progress, Russ was on hand when we stopped by, and we had a nice visit. At the Denver Municipal Trap Club in one of the city's parks, no one was around, but the week before our friend Charlie Gunning of Longmont had won the Colorado State Championship there. On Sunday, July 4, we called at the Salt Lake City Gun Club (near the location of the present Salt Lake Airport), where my father's old friend Sam Sharman, a regular at Yorklyn and a past president of the Amateur Trapshooting Association, greeted us warmly. Sam was the Cadillac dealer in Salt Lake, and he and my dad always joked about which was the better car: Cadillac or Packard. Two or three other shooters were there as well, including Dean Hurd, 1940's Utah State Champion, and they gave us directions to the Ogden Gun Club where their State Shoot was being held on July 5 and 6.

The gun club at Long Beach, California was the most active club on the West Coast affiliated with the Amateur Trapshooting Association. Unfortunately, 10 or 12 years before, O. N. Ford of the well-known Del Monte Club at Monterey, had fallen out with the A.T.A. and formed the Pacific International Trapshooting Association, which was strongest in Oregon, Washington, and western Canada. Nothing was going on when we stopped at Long Beach, but several of the active shooters were there and told us of a shoot two days later at the new Santa Monica club, and invited us to participate, which we did. Charles Winninger, a great Hollywood character actor (Abel Frake in 1945's "State Fair"), was there and shot that day. Finally, we stopped at the Calgary Trap Club in Alberta where they were having a twilight shoot. They invited us to join them and lent us shotguns (as ours had been checked at the Canadian border).

At Bradford (PA), we shot on Preliminary Day, 150 16-yard targets. At Cedar Point, it was 25 pairs of Doubles (I won the event with 47 out of 50), and 100 handicap. A very neat sidelight of the Cedar Point experience was the 15-inch-gauge steam train that took us from the old Breakers Hotel to the shooting grounds, about 1-1/2 miles away. At Ogden, we shot 100 16-yard and 50 pairs of doubles, and in our 5-man squad was the great Ted Renfro of Dell, Montana, one of the best shots in the country. He had shot at Yorklyn several times, and while he never won the 500-target "Marathon," he won the Doubles in 1934 with 140 out of 150. In 1941, he had not shot for some time and was out of practice, and this 17-year-old beat Ted Renfro, 95 to 93- what a thrill! At Portland, we shot two days in the P.I.T.A. annual championships. Wounds from the A.T.A. split ten or twelve years before were healing, and we were treated royally. One of the greatest of all trapshooters, Frank Troeh of Portland, greeted us warmly, as he had attended the Yorklyn shoots annually for about 10 years, finally winning the "Marathon" in 1934 with 496. I shot well in the doubles and came in one target shy of Troeh's score, 112 to his 113 out of 120 (60 pairs). However, Joe Cotant of Pocatello, Idaho, won the event with 114.

My mother and my cousin Meta Shallcross did not have to put up with all this shooting. They didn't go to the shooting grounds at Cedar Point, Ogden, Portland, or Vandalia, and did other sightseeing or shopping instead (we dropped off Meta to visit an uncle who lived in Milwaukee, and we put my mother on the train for home at Dayton, Ohio). The 1937 Packard Twelve performed flawlessly for the 10-week, 12,000-mile trip. A couple of times it cost \$7 to fill the fuel tank, however. At 25 cents per gallon, that was a lot of gasoline. For the entire

trip, we averaged 9.75 m.p.g. Our trap guns, checked at the Canadian border north of Bonner's Ferry, Idaho, were retrieved at East Glacier, Montana a few days later. Canada, as part of the British Commonwealth, had been in World War II for nearly two years, but in the summer of 1941, the United States was still hoping to stay out.