

Tom Marshall Weekly News, October 17, 2005

General Description of Trapshooting Program at Yorklyn, 1921-1950: This experience was available to shooters in the decades of the 1920s, '30s, and '40s. Trapshooting was always considered an expensive sport, and very few people were able to shoot (or to practice) as much as they'd like because of the cost of it. So shooting for 4four or five days at Yorklyn was beyond the means of many trapshooters, but the event had such a reputation that some saved for years in order to come a great distance and "shoot the program." Many others, however, took part in one, two or three days, and many shot only in the night shoots, which were at 50 targets and were much more affordable. Since no shooting took place at Yorklyn on Sundays, Saturday was always the final and largest day, when the "T. C. Marshall Handicap" was held. In handicap trapshooting, a shooter's average and ability were taken into account, and the best shots were stationed 25 yards behind the traphouse (in present-day shooting, the maximum is 27 yards). The poorer shooters were at 17 or 18 yards, and "average" shooters somewhere in between. The object, of course, was to give all shooters an equal chance to win. For many years the Marshall Handicap was at 150 targets, but in 1940 this was reduced to 100 as attendance had grown to the point where there was not enough time between 10 am and 5 pm to complete the program with the larger number of targets for each shooter.

On the first day of the week's "shoot", Tuesday, there was usually an introductory program, and sometimes the doubles championship. In trapshooting, "doubles" does not mean two shooters teaming up but rather each competitor shooting at two targets thrown from the trap simultaneously. On Wednesday was the "Marshall Marathon," the 500-target world's amateur championship (from the normal distance of 16 yards), and on Thursday and Friday the "Brandywine" and the "Auburn Special" respectively, both 200-target* 16-yard events. (*Prior to 1938, these events were shot at 175 targets; in 1940, the "Auburn Special" was reduced to 150). The 2 night shoots, the "Twinkling Stars" on Wednesday and the "Silvery Moon" on Friday were always well attended, with nearly 300 shooters counted on several occasions. The next installment on trapshooting at Yorklyn will deal with where the shooters stayed, where they came from, and who they were.