

Central PA. There I missed my first grouse and many thereafter. I also remember he said something about turkeys, I had never seen one. I started hunting ducks and geese again. I had trap and skeet barrels for the Remington (this was before screw in factory chokes). One day while hunting geese, I bent over to pick up a goose and unknowingly jammed some mud in the end of my field barrel. On the next shot my friend said, "That shot sounded funny!" I looked; the muzzle had split back like three pieces of banana peel. As a second flock made a pass at the decoys, I shot two more birds with the barrel in that condition. After that I had a polychoke installed and the barrel shot excellent patterns.

Pheasant hunting in South Eastern PA started to decline in the mid-seventies. I thought about hunting deer but could not get vacation at that time of year due to my low seniority at the plant. I read about turkey hunting. Since there were no birds in my area of PA, I had to travel. An uncle had a camp in Clearfield County PA and in 1976 invited me to hunt turkeys in the fall. I shot a fall gobbler with my new Tikka 12ga/.222, from the top of a rock which over looked a spring seep, where I had been waiting for two days. The bird appeared from nowhere. I knew turkeys had been digging in the seep from sign around it. I was hooked. I read books, watched videos, attended seminars, and went six years without shooting another bird. During the fall of 1982 I was introduced to an experienced turkey hunter from Montrose PA, and was able to hunt a few days with him each season for six or seven years. I will always be indebted to him for what I learned during that time in the turkey woods.

My interest in call making history, along with interest in turkey hunting led to my desire to learn more about how these birds were hunted in the late 1800s and first half of the 1900's. During study of that era's turkey hunting masters and their calls, I decided to make a suction type yelper. Experimentation had me trying all kinds of materials, man-made and natural, also taking two night school courses in machining. After some time, the calls improved to the point where they would imitate the yelp of a hen turkey. The people who most influenced my call making are Larry Proffitt for his mentoring skills, Earl Mickel, now deceased, for his encouragement, and Parker Whedon, also deceased, for his knowledge of turkey hunting, and vintage calls. I had the honor of visiting with Parker and examining calls, first hand, that normally are only seen in books on the subject.

My ability has progressed to the point of making many different styles of yelpers, from my own original designs to interpretations of vintage yelpers. Most of these calls have turned barrels, custom mouthpieces, and brass ferrules stamped with the call's number on one side and my initials on the reverse. The calls have consecutive numbers according to style. High quality of sound, ease of use, and low production not only make these calls great in the field, but also very collectable.

I live with my wife Linda and son Andy in Old Zionsville PA.

