

## GEORGE BIRD EVANS

May 1, 2017

Without question, George Bird Evans ranks as one of the major figures in upland shooting literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was a masterful writer, a fine researcher, and a man who figured out fairly early in life how to make a living doing precisely what he loved. However, I would be less than honest if I didn't admit that certain things about him give me pause. He was unquestionably an elitist, and for someone like me, raised in the simplest of circumstances and close to the good earth, that fact sounds an "off" note. Similarly, it is my personal opinion, one shared by some knowledgeable bird dog men of the first water, that he hyped and hoorahed his Old Hemlock line of setters a bit more than they deserved. That being said, different strokes (and dogs) for different tastes make sense.

There was also an exceptionally mercenary side to the man, exemplified by a personal experience I had with him. I had written glowing reviews of two or three of his books (and they merited every word of praise) for *Sporting Classics* magazine when I got the idea that an article on "The Grand Old Man of Grouse" would be appealing to a fairly wide readership. Accordingly I pitched the concept, got a "go ahead" on the assignment from a magazine editor, and called the Evans household quite excited about the opportunity. That delight soon turned to dismay. I was bluntly asked by Kay (it was virtually impossible to get through her to talk to her husband): "What's in it for us?"

At first I wasn't sure what she meant and then I realized she was talking about monetary payment. I stumbled a bit and muttered something to the effect of "Nothing, other than due recognition of George's literary achievements." I was told to call back in a couple of days, which I did, and at that juncture was bluntly informed that there didn't seem to be any return in such a piece for them and, besides, my title, with the word "Old," was inaccurate (Evans was well into his eighties at the time). I'd be less than honest if I didn't say it left a sour taste.

Nonetheless, I recognize a masterful literary craftsmen when I see one, and certainly Evans was such a man. He may have killed the same grouse time and again in print, but he did it with such eloquence and style, indeed sometimes with panache, that it scarcely mattered. His books are and will remain little jewels, and thanks to the fact that many of them were done in quite limited editions, they are rare and promise to become even more so with the passage of time. Here's a nice selection of them.

Postage is \$5.00 for the first book and \$2.50 for each subsequent one up to a maximum of \$12.50. Insurance, which I highly recommend, is extra (\$2.50 for the first \$100 and \$1.25 for each \$100 beyond that). International customers should contact me first on shipping rates.

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1. George Bird Evans, *An Affair with Grouse*. Bruceton Mills, WV: Old Hemlock, 1982. 1<sup>st</sup> edition. Hardback in dust jacket. Illustrated. [xii], 214 pages. Book and dj very fine. Foreword by Kay Evans. Signed and inscribed. \$100. **SOLD.**

- 1A. *A Dog, A Gun and Time Enough*. Bruceton Mills, WV: Old Hemlock, 1987. Signed, inscribed, and numbered copy 920 of 1250. Very fine in very fine slipcase. \$250.
2. George Bird Evans, *George Bird Evans Introduces*. Bruceton Mills, WV: Old Hemlock, 1990. Hardback in slipcase. #605 of 1150 copies. Ribbon marker. Illustrated. [v], 248 pages. Very fine. Profiles of 28 great hunting writers. Pages 100-118 are on Buckingham. Signed and inscribed. In considerable demand, as are all of Evans's limited edition books. To some degree, although by no means totally, this work repeats coverage found in the earlier *Men Who Shot*. More than a dozen individuals are profiled in both books, although there are a number of additions in this one. \$115.
3. Another copy. This one the trade edition. Hardback in dust jacket. Both very fine. Stated first edition (although this is misleading because the limited edition came out first). \$125.
4. George Bird Evans, *George Bird Evans Introduces*. Bruceton Mills: Old Hemlock, 1990. Hardback in slipcase. #605 of 1150 copies. Ribbon marker. Illustrated. [v], 248 pages. Very fine. Signed and inscribed. A sequel to *Men Who Shot* with some of the profiles being repeated in little changed form. Rare. \$150. **SOLD.**
5. 5. George Bird Evans, *Grouse Along the Tramroad*. Bruceton Mills, WV: Old Hemlock, 1986. Hardback in slipcase. Copy 920 of 1500. Ribbon marker. viii, 181 pages. Signed and inscribed. Very fine (book and slipcase). \$250.
6. Another copy, this one unbound page sheets. There is a typed note from "Lynda" at Pioneer Press of W. Va., Inc. tipped in which reads: "George Bird Evans has asked that we send this pre-publication copy of his newest book, *Grouse Along the Tramroad*, to you. I understand that the book is for review purposes. \$25.
7. George Bird Evans, *Living with Bird Dogs*. Bruceton Mills, WV: Old Hemlock, 1992. Hardback in slipcase. Ribbon marker, illustrated. 218 pages. Very fine. Copy #605 of 1500. Signed and inscribed. \$125. **SOLD.**
8. George Bird Evans, *Men Who Shot*. Bruceton Mills, WV: Old Hemlock, 1983. Hardback in slipcase. #605 of 990 copies. [x], 203 pages. Very fine. Signed and inscribed. Profiles of 25 great shooters. Pages 146-55 cover Buckingham. The book is divided into five sections—"Englishmen and An Anglophile," "Two Who Cared," "Shooters Who Wrote," "Shooting in Paint," and "Writers Who Shot." Among those profiled are Buckingham, Rutledge, Babcock, Spiller, Harold Sheldon, and Charles Norris. One of Evans's rarer titles. \$300. **SOLD.**

9. George Bird Evans, *October Fever*. Bruceton Mills, WV: Old Hemlock, 1989. Hardback in slipcase. Signed and inscribed copy 920 of 1250 copies. Book and slipcase very fine. \$250.

10. George Bird Evans, *Recollections of a Shooting Guest*. Clinton, NJ: Amwell Press, 1978. Hardback in slipcase. Xviii, 186 pages. Book and slipcase very fine. #779 of 1000 numbered copies signed by Evans, the illustrator (Gordon Allen), and the publisher (Jim Rikoff). A treatment of Dr. Charles Norris which incorporates his unfinished manuscript for a book with other material gathered by Evans. Quite rare. \$250. **SOLD.**

11. George Bird Evans, *The Ruffed Grouse Book* and *The Woodcock Book*. Clinton, NJ: Amwell Press, 1988. Special commemorative edition. 2 volumes. xv, 258; xvii, 285 pages. Hardbound in single slipcase. Illustrated. Very fine. Selections of some of the finest writing on the two grand game birds, with Evans offering commentary and lots of delectable tidbits about each piece and its author. \$250. **SOLD.**

12. George Bird Evans, *Troubles with Bird Dogs*. NY: Winchester Press, 1975. Hardback in dj. [viii], 307 pages. Illustrated. Book and dj fine. 1<sup>st</sup> edition. \$60.

13. Another copy, similar in every sense except the dj for this one is price clipped. \$57.50

14. Another copy, this one the 1985 limited, slipcased, and revised edition of 1500 copies from Old Hemlock [viii], 301 pages. Ribbon marker. Illustrated. Signed. Copy #1097. Very fine. Includes "Afterthoughts" by Evans which is entirely new. Beautifully bound in red composition leather. \$175. **SOLD.**

15. George Bird Evans (Editor), *The Upland Gunner's Book*. Clinton, NJ: Amwell Press, 1986 (trade edition). Hardback in slipcase. Viii, 263 pages. Illustrated. Very fine. An anthology with selections from more than two dozen writers. \$60. **SOLD.**

16. George Bird Evans, *The Upland Shooting Life*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971. Hardback in dust jacket. 1<sup>st</sup> edition. xii, 302 xi [index] pages. Illustrated. Fine in very good dust jacket. \$45. **SOLD.**

17. Katharine Harper, *George Bird Evans: Life of a Sporting Gentleman*. Winterset, IA: Wind River Press, 1999. xx, 268 pages. Signed copy #252 of a boxed, limited edition of 1500 copies. Leatherette, ribbon marker, all edges gilt. Very fine in very fine box. \$100. **SOLD.**

18. Another copy, this one #333, still in plastic shrink-wrap cover. New. \$100.