

"YES, I HUNTED OVER JOE Jr. MANY, MANY TIMES"

An interview with Mr. Allen Campbell of Spring Hill, Tennessee
by Bill Cooper and Herm David



This might be called the story of a boy and his dog, except that the boy grew into a very unusual man -- and it was a most exceptional dog. "The boy was Allen Campbell, one of several sons of M. C. Campbell who was a civil war veteran, a plantation owner, a breeder of horses, cattle and bird dogs.

We were on a business-trip that was carefully timed to allow us a look-in on the running of the Amateur Shooting Dog Championship at Somerville, Tenn., about 45 miles east of Memphis. We had started early enough to allow a bit of time to see if anyone in Spring Hill could remember the Campbell Setters that were near invincible back along about 1875 during the days of the first American field trials.

A first inquiry directed us to Mr. Allen Campbell. It was raining rather hard and we scrambled from the car to the porch of a neat, modern brick bungalow. A tall gentleman, perhaps six feet, two inches, and very straight, answered the door. We had telephoned first and he was expecting us. It was hard to believe that this vigorous man, born in 1869, was 89 years old. He-introduced us to his charming wife and his attractive, redheaded daughter, Miss Catherine, who is the home economics teacher in the Spring Hill High School.

For the next thrilling hour we sat and talked bird dogs. "Why, yes, I remember Joe, Jr., very well, I hunted over him many, many times". This about a dog that has been dead for nearly 70 years. Mr. Allen explained how Double Champion of America Joe, Jr., met his death under a train in Spring Hill in 1886 while Mr. Allen was away attending college at the University of Virginia. The dog lies buried along the side of the tracks, near where he fell.

Mr. Allen, whose memory is clear on the many fine dogs his father and his bachelor uncle, George W. Campbell, bred and. owned, told many stories and we wish space

would permit retelling of them here, but one is especially illustrative of the kind, of dogs they were.

For many years a battle of words had raged in the sporting journals of the day as to whether the bird dogs imported from the British Isles or the so-called native setters were the most desirable bird dogs. On December 15, 1879 the matter came to a head with a match race between the Campbell, Joe, Jr. and Gladstone, bluest of the blue from the kennels of R. Purcell Llewellyn and owned by P. E. Bryson of Memphis. The dogs ran full tilt for two days for; \$500 with on1y productive points to be scored. Before it was done both dogs were running crippled and it. It was a matter of regret to all concerned that the running rules had not been more wisely agreed upon. The Red Setter won, 61 points to 52, although he ran much of the latter part of his race on three legs. Mr. Bryson wanted M. C. Campbell to stay and keep on running for an additional side bet, but Campbell explained that he had. a very sick daughter at home and felt he had to hurry back to her. With the family occupied with the sickness, it fell the lot of ten-year-old Allen Campbell to go down to the train and get Joe. Jr. from the baggage car that was bringing him back from his triumph at Florence, Alabama. If the boy had expected to find a bone tired canine cripple, he soon discovered otherwise. The baggage car door opened and out bounded a dark red streak that went straight for a hilltop a quarter mile away. Mr. Allen tells it: Joe knew that there was a covey of quail that lived there and he'd probably been thinking about those birds on his trip home. "Well, he soon-found them- an I had to walk up that hill and flush his birds for him before I could get him to come on home."

We brought an original oil painting of Joe Jr., away with us and it will p1ease those of our readers who set great store by such to learn that he was a dark, mahogany red, and that he had a high tail, about 10:30 or 11:00 o'clock. His rear toes were dabbed with white, but he seems to have been otherwise solid in color.