

40 YARD DASH

for a Turkey

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #52 —

It took a while for me to decide to tell this story, because I was running with a loaded gun; so hopefully everyone understands that as an experienced hunter, and someone who has participated in shooting competitions that require moving with a loaded gun, I felt perfectly safe. Please don't try this if you don't have the experience to do it safely.

Spring turkey hunting in Missouri can be frustrating; sometimes the gobblers go quiet and other times they gobble their heads off -- hung up just out of range. This morning was the latter. I was positioned in the edge of a woods near the bottom of a long, narrow field that

came to a point. The woods behind me was called "Turkey Hollow" -- and it's one of my favorite hunting spots.

A lone tom was with some hens on the other side of the field about 70 yards out; and I'd been working him for twenty minutes or so -- but to no avail. The field was slightly higher in the middle, so that when down on my knees I couldn't see the

turkeys and they couldn't see me. Standing up behind a tree, the top half of the birds were in sight and the gobbler was in full strut at the edge of the field, with a few hens. The rest of the hens were moving out through the woods; it was now or never, but I needed to get 40 yards closer!

After checking the safety on my Winchester Model 12, I took the position of a sprinter, ready to spring out of his



Larry at the Cabin, with Turkey and Model 12.

blocks; then I gave a cluck. Knowing that it took a tom turkey a second or two to come out of strut, as soon as the next gobble hit my ears I made my dash, keeping low with shotgun in my right hand.

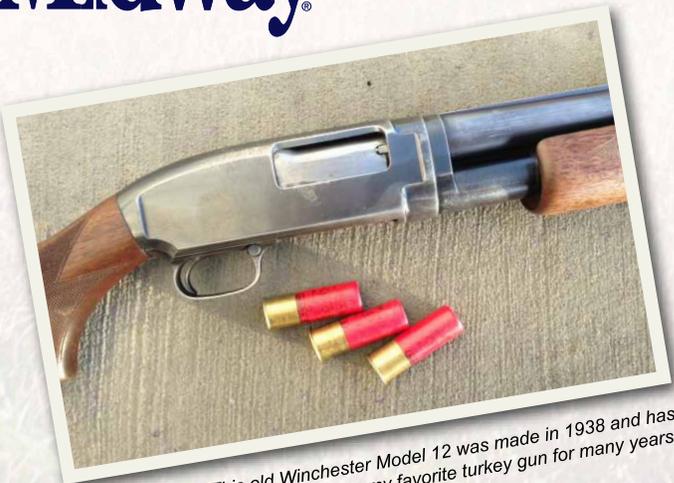
As I neared the top of the ridge, the first birds to fly were the hens; then, there was the gobbler -- just coming out of strut. I kept going straight at him; he started to run downhill to my left and took flight. As soon as he got in the air, I straightened up, stopped and shot him from about 30 yards, just like you would shoot a clay pigeon. And that was the end of my 40 yard dash for a turkey.

"...it was now or never..."

Larry Potterfield

Midway Farms
Fayette, Missouri
5 May 2001

USA
Midway



This old Winchester Model 12 was made in 1938 and has been my favorite turkey gun for many years.