

*THE TIME-FLYING  
TIPPLER  
PIGEON SPORT*



**JOHN T. CURLEY**

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TIPLER PIGEON  
SPORT**

By

John T. Curley

*Illustrated*

HOWELL BOOK HOUSE, INC.

575 Lexington Avenue

New York 22, N. Y.

1961

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Published Simultaneously in Canada by  
General Publishing Co., Toronto, Canada

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Library of Congress  
Catalog Card #60-6398

Printed  
in  
U.S.A.

## *Foreword*

For as long as I can remember, I have been a pushover for a pigeon. I acquired a few of another breed when I was four but switched to Tipplers at the advanced age of seven (proof that I had reached the age of reason). All pigeons, including the religious ones living in the church steeples, are, to me, objects of untiring interest and beauty. But the breeds that hold the greatest fascination for me are the three that, in America, are used as sporting animals, the Racing Homer, the Birmingham Roller, and the pigeon about which this book is written, the Flying Tippler.

The Tippler offers so much in the way of enjoyment that I feel very keenly the loss of potential Tippler pleasure by those who are deprived of it simply because it has never been brought to their attention. There are countless numbers of those who like sports, pets, and pure-blood livestock culture, and in the flying Tippler sport these and many other areas of interest are combined.

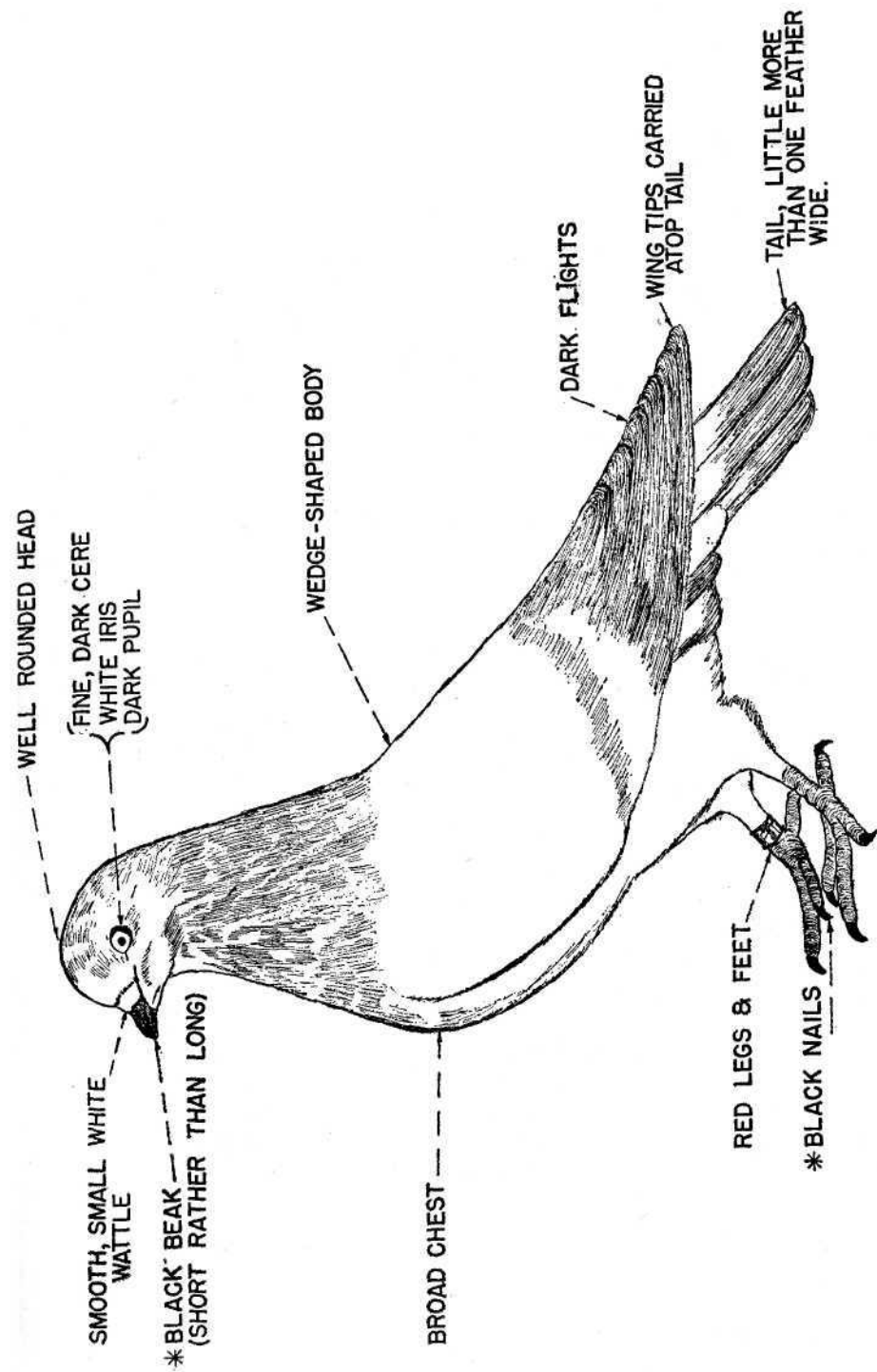
Here is an earthy hobby, dealing with the basic fundamentals, that gets its devotees away from the artificiality that results from losing touch with nature.

The purpose of this book is to try to make this fact better known.

For their valued assistance I am grateful to Tom and Therese Manger for the picture they permitted me to include and for typing of the manuscript; Jack Stubs for the drawings of the loft plans; Henry and Mary Ann Prenger for all of the other illustrations included in this book.

John T. Curley





\* IN DILUTES (DUN, SILVER OR YELLOW), THE BEAK AND NAILS ARE AN AMBER OR HORN COLOR.

Desirable points of the show pigeon.

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## *The History of the Breed*

THE DEVELOPMENT of the time-flying pigeon which resulted in today's Tippler, the king of the long-time high-flyers, is thought to have begun prior to the middle of the last century. It was not until the time of the Civil War, however, about a quarter of a century later, that Americans took up the culture of the Tippler.

The first American club specializing in this breed was organized during the "Roaring Twenties." Although countless numbers of "pigeon keepers" had taken it up prior to this time, their activities were on an informal basis and little is now known of their accomplishments.

The organization now active in the United States, The Flying Tippler Association of America, was organized in 1936 and first called The American Tippler Union. It was reorganized in 1944 and today serves the American fancier as the springboard for his flying and showing ambitions. Several other associations of Tippler enthusiasts preceded the F. T. A. and are now inactive, or at least their activities are not greatly publicized, which, as is commented upon elsewhere, is typical of the Tippler owner.

Many explanations have been given for the name Tippler. Some say it is traceable to the fact (?) that the breed was originated by English coal miners who worked the tipples at the mine openings. Other stories have it that the originators of the birds were, themselves, "tipplers" in the worst sense of the word.

The characteristic "gull-like" markings of the Flying Tippler, with its darker colored tail and wing tips, might also have had something to do with the choice of a name, but equally believable is the view held by those who say the

name was suggested by the bird's actions in flight. The Tippler is the least acrobatic of the three breeds developed at about the same time by the English fanciers of the flying pigeons. These sporting breeds were the Roller, the Tumbler, and the Tippler.

The Roller performed a tight revolution at great speed in a deep drop; the Tumbler executed one, two, or three loose turns; the Tippler, the long-time flyer, merely "tipped" over occasionally. This "tipping" action has been just about completely bred out of the modern Tippler but it was present in the breed's formative years long enough to have been the real reason that we call it the Tippler.

Because the breeds used in the production of the Tippler varied so greatly, the different strains of the long-flying pigeon may almost be considered different breeds.

The interest in developing a pigeon notable for its endurance flying was known to exist well over a hundred years ago, and the fanciers taking part in this project used just about any likely prospect that was handy at that time. Cumulets, Bald Tumblers, and other long-time, high-flying breeds were crossed in, with no attention being paid to type or color. The originators of this splendid little athlete were looking for ability and the records will show that they must have known their business. The two outstanding types of Tipplers are the Sheffield and the Macclesfield. Their conformation and their color give one little reason to believe that they share many common ancestors. While the truth of the statement cannot be vouched for, the claim is often made that the darker birds do better in the damp climates, while the birds of lighter shades excel where the warmer, drier fly days are more frequent. One kit of all black Tipplers are known by the writer to have flown their best times in the rain.

In the Tippler of today may be seen the results of the efforts of many fine pigeon men of the past. Their work has been commemorated in the strain names that we still hear, although the men themselves have long since passed. Among them are Pass, Waterfall, Hall, Lincoln, Platt, Westcott, Curtiss, Rennison, Baxter, Storey, Guise, Whitney, Billingham, Jolley, Redney, Beechy, and Smith.

Your taste in colors would have to be very odd indeed if



it could not be found in the Tippler breed. The colors are many and varied and are combined in eye-appealing patterns. Because Tipplers do not breed true to color, each round offers the possibility of a very colorful surprise; look at some of the possibilities!

Light and Dark Prints.

Light and Dark Mottles.

Blue and Silver Bars.

Blue and Dun Checkers.

Light and Dark Blue Grizzles.

Blacks, Bronze, Gray, Slate, Silver, and Silver Dun.

Prints, Mottles, and Chucks in Black, Red, Yellow, and

Dun.

Selfs (solid colors) in Black, Red, and Yellow.

Variations of each.

## *Fraternity of Fanciers*

THE FLYING TIPPLER Association of America was organized to provide a centralized body to regulate the flying and showing of the enduring blue-blood, the Tippler, for all local clubs and individual fanciers in the U. S. A. and its possessions; to provide low cost bands; to lend its aid in securing legislation that might touch upon the sport; to organize local clubs and encourage their affiliation with the national group. To better perform these services, the F. T. A. bylaws call for an area representative at such time as the need requires, for each of the six areas into which the U. S. A. has been divided: Area No. 1, Mid-western; No. 2, New England; No. 3, Middle Atlantic; No. 4, Southern; No. 5, Rocky Mt.; No. 6, Far Western. The President is William G. Hoffman, 23 Hampton Road, N. Linthicum, Md. The Vice-Presidents are Charles Dvorak, 8031 Old Philadelphia Road, Baltimore 6, Md., and John H. Berger, 425 E. Seventh Street, Marysville, Ohio. The Secretary-Treasurer is Robert B. Funk, 933 East 20th Street, Hialeah, Florida.

Any reputable person who is interested in the Tippler sport, and who agrees to abide by the rules that govern its conduct, may apply to any of the above-named officers for membership. The dues, at present, are \$3.00 a year. The entry fee for each race (\$1.00) is used to provide the various trophies that are given to the winners. Seamless bands are manufactured for the F. T. A. in such a large quantity that the association is able to pass them on to its members at the cost price of three cents each.

An inquiry at almost any feed store or pet shop will reveal the location of local pigeon fanciers, who, in turn, can

usually supply the names and addresses of the Tippler owners in your city. You'll be surprised at the warm welcome these fanciers will accord you as a prospective fellow flyer.

The Tippler associations usually issue bulletins at regular intervals of every month or so, and extra newsletters when necessary. In addition to this there exists a "grapevine" of personal communication that keeps those in the game close together no matter how widely scattered they may be on the map.

The spirit of fraternalism is great in this sport and the exchange of letters among the fanciers permits the finer points of Tipplerology to sift down from the Tippler tycoons to the Tippler tyros, to the enrichment of those on all the levels between. This sport is more than a hobby; it is an all-consuming interest and anything that touches upon it is considered worth passing on to the next fellow.

A typical letter from one Tippler owner to another is a serious discussion of one or more of the matters that have to do with the activities of the Tippler fancier. Meteorology, genetics, diet, loft building, selection of breeding stock, training, showing—all are studies that come under the probing eyes of the students of the sport, and a smattering of such knowledge is contained in the "just a few lines" the Tippler man "drops" so regularly to his friends. A distillation of the information contained in such letters would fill the kind of book the Tippler followers would love to have.

Personalities of the sport, outstanding birds, impressive pedigrees, and the like never seem to lose their interest when the scholars hold class around a water-filled washtub (in which they watch the reflection of the flying kit in the sky, to avoid the Tippler watchers' "occupational disease" of stiff neck), their discourse being interrupted by an occasional look into the sky, sometimes through a pinhole in a piece of cardboard to cut down on glare of the sun. Like the angler's fish that got away, which seems to grow in length each time it is described, some of the retold flying performances get closer and closer to the 19 hours and 35 minutes world record. But the understanding listeners always automatically take off 20% for the pardonable pride a man has in his Tipplers.

## *General View of the Sport*

WHEN the brilliant silks of the millionaire thoroughbred owner flash under the wire, and the Kentucky Derby is his, great indeed is the thrill of accomplishment. His selection of a stallion to complement his blood stock, the scientific care accorded the growing foals and yearlings, the wise handling and training of the two-year-olds, all have at last borne fruit.

The time-flying Tippler man knows this thrill. His has been the deep pleasure of spending the long winter evenings going over pedigrees and, only on paper at first, bringing together the bloodlines that might, just might, in the great gamble of the genes, roll out the "naturals" that could make a kit of world-beaters. He has gone through the nail-biting first few days that the youngsters spend outside the loft. Will their inbred, intense desire to fly take them up and off before they know their "landing field," and thus lose them? Or will the fancier's pigeonaire know-how overcome this "get-up-and-go" until it can be harnessed by training, to assist them in their efforts to fly a "time" that will do them proud?

In training, he has flown them the time-honored "four hours every two days" and a few days before knocking off training, has stretched them out to six or eight hours, to see if he has them "right." Are they right? Should the "feed-up" stress "high octane" to key them up for the contest, or would this cause them to reach their peak too soon and lose their edge before the "target date?" All these doubts are put aside with their release early on the morning of "Fly Day." When the team takes off from the loft roof and soars into the blue, the Tippler fan knows he has shot



his bolt; he can change nothing; he can do no more; this is it!

With your kit up there doing its best, you turn your mind to the opposition. You know who's in this with you and you know what you're up against. A few phone calls here and there and you get a fair idea of how it's going. Fred is out of it. Five hours was the best he could do. Ernie's were getting ready to come down with little more than seven hours to their credit. Yours are as fresh as they were when they started, but the tension is beginning to mount. The phone isn't ringing as much as before. These are the good ones flying now; but one by one the boys start coming into the yard and it starts to dawn on you. Your birds are the last ones on the wing. You give them the signal and down they come. This is the Derby, the Preakness, and the Belmont all wrapped up into one. Tell me, how can you top this?

Thoroughbred horse racing has as its reason for being, the purpose of improving the breed. The pigeon racing sport serves the purpose of maintaining a civilian reserve of highly bred, expertly trained message carriers ready at a moment's notice for use in any emergency by the Signal Corps of the Armed Services, Civilian Defense, or any other body needing the service of these silent, dependable substitutes for radio and telephone. The Tippler game is conducted only for the sport itself and to the Tippler fancier that is enough, for what a sport this is!

One of the most beautiful sights to be seen in flying the Tippler, and it is seen in training as well as in racing, is the climb into the blue—higher, higher, higher, until the kit is completely out of sight. Tipplers have been seen above a plane flying at 10,000 feet (approximately two miles). The average top altitude would be closer to 5,000 feet, as compared to the 700 foot height that the Racing Homer seems to prefer. However, it is not facetiously that the claim is made that the time-flying sport is conducted on a very high plane. To the point is the story of the incurable gambler, in a strange city and knowing no one, who, upon being overcome by the urge to risk a little something on the turn of a card, put in a long distance call to a friend in his home town. Listen.

Gambler: "Pal, it's me. How about cutting the cards for a thousand?"

Pal: "Sure, but I ain't got no cards here."

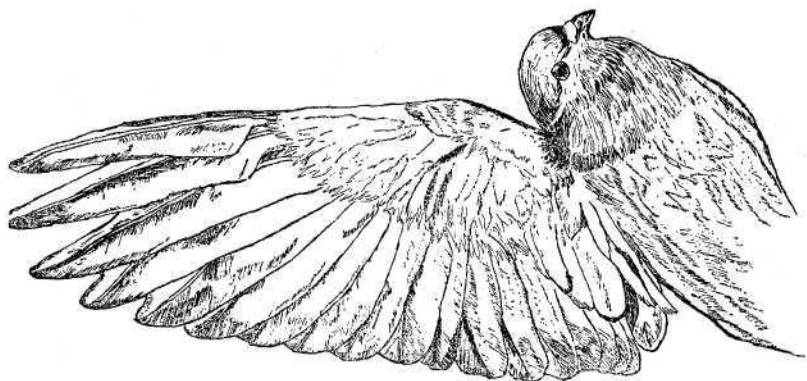
Gambler: "That's okay, I got a deck. I'll cut for both of us."

Pal: "Go ahead."

Silence on both ends while deck is being cut twice.

Gambler: "Pal, I'll send you a check in the morning."

This type of honor is a notable trait of the good Tippler man. In many of the Flying Tippler Association National flies conducted while I served as race secretary, some of the contestants, unable to secure an "outsider" to serve as a timer, have had a member of the family occupy this position of trust. I have yet to hear the first word of dissatisfaction or distrust. Such is the high opinion one good Tippler man has for the integrity of another, one of the better examples of judging others by yourself.



The wing of the pigeon, showing the ten primary and ten secondary feathers. The pigeon achieves most of its "lift" with its secondaries (the flights closest to the body) and provides the "thrust" with the primaries (the ten long feathers farthest from the body).

## *Tippler Performance*

THE TIPPLER is a specialist. In the field of endurance performance he doesn't take a back seat to any domestic creature anywhere on earth or in the sky. Of all the breeds of pigeons originated and developed to meet the requirements of a widely differing fancy, the Tippler is the flyingest flyer of them all. This breed is so outstanding in the field of time-flying, that "Tippler" is often used as a generic word applied to long-time flyers of other breeds. Tippler enthusiasts have, by selective breeding and exhaustive tests to prove the breeding, perfected a type of pigeon whose inborn love of flying compares with the thoroughbred race horses' innate urge to run. This is true to such a degree that difficulty is encountered not in getting the birds to fly, but in keeping the youngsters from flying until they know their loft and its surroundings.

The length of time that a kit\* of Tipplers will sometimes fly, with no training or conditioning, but just for the sheer love of flying, is truly amazing. This is particularly true of young birds, which seem to feel instinctively that the sky is their proper element, and remain aloft, skyscraping, hours on end, apparently not bothered by hunger, thirst, fatigue, or any other deterrent, but motivated by the exhilaration that flying itself provides.

The racing pigeon flies to race home, the Roller pigeon flies to roll; but the Tippler just flies and flies and flies and flies. This is pigeon flying in its purest form.

The Tippler sport has many advantages to recommend it. The fanciers of these excellent examples of blooded stock can compete against others anywhere in the world without

\* Three or more pigeons flying together.

leaving the confines of their own back yards. Many sportsmen fly them from the roof. No track or field is needed; they display the results of their breeding and their "ground crews" ability as trainers on their own "proving grounds" high in the vast immensity of the sky, and there is no more beautiful sight to be seen, according to the dyed-in-the-wool fancier of high-flying Tiplers. Among the many advantages enjoyed by those who engage in the Flying Tippler sport is the fact that the fancier actually needs no outside competition. He can, if opponents are scarce, fly against himself in that his efforts can be directed to bettering the records for time-flying that he has already set. In flying without the competition provided by other fanciers, the unaffiliated Tippler owner can have the clock and his own best record serve as his opposition.

In the standard-bred harness-horse sport, drivers in time trials try to reach a definite speed classification in order that the horse, having met the standard (thus proving his standard-bred status), will be enhanced in value. This same satisfaction is available to the man who is not interested in clubs, shows, races, or anything but the flying of Tiplers and wants to do it better than he has ever done it before. The records he achieves may never be officially recognized, but if you play eighteen holes of golf and do it one stroke under the record made by Ben Hogan on the same course, you don't have to have the record books know it—you know it!

Because this sport is usually carried on, in this country at least, on an amateur basis, the flyer can race as often as he cares to without each race proving an additional drain upon his pocketbook. Unlike the racing sport (in which mob flying of a large team might be of advantage but very costly), the Tippler team is best when small, so "buying a win" is harder. A prospective Tippler flyer can, by purchasing a few young birds, engage in this excellent animal sport within a few weeks of his starting. No long, never-ending waiting period goes by between his entry into the sport and his actual racing, as is true of so many other like pastimes. He can start almost any time of the year. There are many other much-appreciated advantages which the Tippler game enjoys over some other forms of justly popular pigeon sport.



The losses suffered by the Tippler owner are usually somewhat smaller than those of the Racing Homer and Roller fanciers. The Tippler's homing instinct is better than the Roller's and while it is nowhere near as good as that of the Racing Homer, this latter pigeon is called upon to put his powers to a greater test than the Tippler, which remains ever within sight of his loft and uses his instinct for homing only when he has been blown away from his neighborhood for a few miles.

The Racing Homer and show-bird fanciers are often loud in their complaints about the diseases that their birds pick up in their shipping crates and show cages. The Tippler flyer never has this disagreeable condition to foul up the clean, orderly operation of his loft. His birds are not thrown into contact with other birds and contagion is not any trouble to him. Many Tippler lofts are kept in a state of extreme cleanliness, for the sport seems to lend itself to the fairly easy accomplishment of this praiseworthy condition.

The horse breeder, having decided upon the mating that he hopes will produce that "good one," must wait eleven months before the finished product comes off the assembly line. Even then, he must wait another two years before the colt or filly can be put to the test.

The dog fancier waits two months for the product of his breeding and almost a year before it can be placed in training.

The pigeon man has youngsters in the nest three or four weeks after the breeders are mated. Training begins when the Tipplers are six weeks old, and two or three weeks later they are "off to the races."

For the blooded-stock enthusiast who has breeding systems he's just dying to try out, here is the perfect medium. Why spend a lifetime setting up a system and then slip off this mortal coil before you have had a chance to prove it?

This quick "turnover" is important. More units, produced in a shorter time, kept in a minimum of space and all easily handleable, make possible a comprehensive study project with maximum convenience. To the Tippler fancier, however, these individual birds are more than mere "units"; they are personalities, and strong ones at that. If you doubt this, just listen in on a "gab fest" of pigeonaires. Band

numbers are reeled off glibly and ring like proper names, and what pictures they bring back!

In this connection, it might be mentioned that the Tippler fraternity maintains one of the hottest of the "Hot Stove Leagues." The flying season comes to an end, so does the show season, but the pigeon talk goes on forever.

In most forms of sport the competition afforded in each contest is necessarily limited by the size of the playing field, the width of the track, and other space considerations. In horse racing, as an example, the available space in the starting gate makes necessary the "star system" under which a horse that is denied a chance to start in a race is credited with a star. When another race with the same conditions is scheduled, the horses with the largest star rating are given preference when the entries are received.

In the Tippler sport no such limitation prevails. The number of contestants is without limit and they may be as widely scattered as the size of the world permits.

In the Racing Homer sport, such things as "drag," wind, etc., have a very telling effect upon the outcome of a race. But in Tippler flying, the conditions that help or hinder one contestant will have no effect upon another.

A strong east wind, for instance, will blow the Homers toward the lofts in the west end and away from those on the opposite side of the city; thus the same wind helps one and hurts the other. A Tippler flyer is helped or hindered without any effect upon the opposition. The Tippler owner can concentrate upon his own problems that are close at hand, knowing that conditions prevailing elsewhere will not affect him. He can work toward the development of birds that are best suited to his location and climate, trying at all times to do the very most with what he has to work with.

A Racing Homer fancier, after the birds are shipped, is without control of the situation and must take what comes in the way of wind and weather. The Tippler man does not start if the weather is not to his advantage, and even if the birds have been started, he can drop them\* if he changes his mind. Seldom, though, are these royally bred pigeons forced to quit. Tracing their pedigrees to the best in the past, they may be expected to set an example for the future.

\* Bring them down.

The Tippler sport is a "good thing" being overlooked by many individuals and groups that could enjoy it to the utmost with the expenditure of little money and effort. If it is not the least expensive of all the purebred animal sports, then it surely ranks with the "top" in this category.

The "ringside seat" for this sport is your own back yard. There are no costly shipping charges, no expensive timing devices, no crates, etc.

These little thoroughbreds, because of their size, require very little feed (less than an ounce per bird per day during training), and a loft so small that it requires a minimum of space. Most of the outstanding time records have been chalked up by three-bird kits, so it can be easily seen that it is not necessary to maintain a large number of birds in order to compete successfully.

## *Form in Performance*

TO A VERY notable degree, form (the word in this sense refers not to the pigeon's condition, but to style of performance) is an important factor in the flying of the Tippler.

Beyond the basic form requirement that the kit must not split, or land anywhere but on the loft, the true connoisseur of Tipplerdom's elite has an appreciation of the high, wide, and handsome beauty of pigeon flying. To approach the high standard he sets for them, his birds must not be tree-toppers or roof-walkers; nor must they go to the other extreme and spend all their time so high up in the blue that keeping them in sight is difficult. Good form consists, partly, of rising to great heights, gradually working themselves to a lower level, returning to the clouds again, and mixing this up and down movement with a plentiful exhibition of "raking" back and forth in all directions. In a word, variety.

Variety is distinctly unwelcome, though, in wing action, another important part of form. Here, similarity, motion in concert, is looked for.

A team flying well, all members displaying identical wing action, has the confidence-inspiring beauty of a well-built engine hitting on all cylinders. This matching action of the component parts of the kit imparts a uniformity that is as productive of results as it is eye-filling.

Achieving this picture-perfect form is possible only after the fancier has gotten "under his belt" lots of "know-how" producing experience.

He must keep before him always the mental picture of what he wants, he must know how to get it, and he must



recognize it when it shows up. This last requirement is often the most difficult. "What he wants" would come closer to an embodiment of personal preference than to an approximation of a general standard. The one aim all Flying Tippler fanciers have in common is long-time flying. How this is to be accomplished, and the type of pigeon best suited to the task, leaves the fancier with a wide choice, limited only by common sense. This preference is expressed in the size of the pigeon, the color, the color pattern, the wing action, the height at which the bird flies, its adaptability to the climate and conditions under which it is housed and flown, its response to the kind of handling the fancier is able to give it, etc.

The logical first step to achieve such a goal would be to acquire for breeding stock, birds that have performed well under similar conditions and that meet your preferences as to size, color, etc. Subjecting their progeny to rigid tests and strict culling should bring you within sight of your goal.

Because experience is so important in Tippler flying, this is the only pigeon sport in which the beginner is allowed a "handicap," 2 hours being given to the novice until he has developed a kit that flies at least 10 hours. This is the equivalent of the "bug" allowance that the experienced jockey enjoys. Perhaps this experience-given control of flying form is the reason that so many participants in other pigeon sports ultimately graduate to the very demanding, but satisfying, game of the Time-Flying Tippler pigeon. Economy and convenience have something to do with the changeover, of course, but I am sure it is due even more to the obvious fact that in no other sport is the application of experienced effort so readily and so satisfyingly rewarded.

The element of luck, while not absent, enters into Tippler flying to a lesser degree than is true of other pigeon sports. The Time-Flying Tippler sport is more nearly an exact science.

## *Types of Competition*

BECAUSE of the differences in length of days, climate, national tastes, etc., Tippler flying assumes different forms in different sections of the world.

In the British Isles, the Low Countries, and in Toronto, Canada, the competition is on a local basis. In Canada, the contestants are located in or around the city of Toronto and all fly under the same weather conditions. Overseas, even though the Dutch, English, Irish, and Welsh (strangely enough, the Scotch Tippler man, if he exists, is not heard from) flyers are located in different countries, they are actually so close together that their competition, while international, is almost as local as Toronto's.

In the United States, on the other hand, flyers participating in the same race are as far apart in flying conditions as they are in miles.

In some of the recent races sponsored by the Flying Tippler Association of America, contestants were located far down in the southeastern section of the country (Florida), up in the northeastern part (Massachusetts), out in the mid-western States (Ohio), and in Northern Michigan and Illinois. F. T. A. membership is held by flyers in California, three thousand miles away from the Maryland group.

The overseas schedule of flying events is just about the same as the Canadian program, featuring a few races, but each of considerable importance, each year. The Flying Tippler Association of the United States generally lists ten or twelve races. Six in the spring (three for old birds, three for young birds) and five or six in the fall. A young bird is one hatched during the current year, and in order to qualify for young bird competition, must bear a seamless

band issued for that year. Any bird wearing a band issued for any previous year is regarded as an old bird, regardless of its actual age. The first old bird race is usually about the middle of April, the rest following at two week intervals.

The autumn setup generally calls for a stock race for a minimum ten-bird kit and several races for any-age birds. There are usually no age restrictions for birds entered in the stock fly, but, of course, this is a matter of the preference of the fancier participating. An agreement could provide for limiting the contest to youngsters, yearlings, or old birds. The ten or more flown in a stock kit would almost certainly be owned by one fancier (the one at whose loft the birds were flying) because only his birds would be "settled" at his loft. Any not "settled" would fly away when released and would not return to the loft.

The fall series starts with the stock race late in September, the others following every other week, all races being flown on Sunday. Trophies are given for the best young bird time, the best old bird time, and the best aggregate time in each series. By "aggregate time" is meant the total of all the time flown in the three races of each series.

The flyers in the United States operate on an amateur basis, flying for the sport alone, but reports from other sections lead one to believe that considerable sums often have been known to change hands. However, this is one sport, its devotees will assure, that doesn't require "a little something on the side to make it interesting." A type of competition not now practiced in the United States, but certainly very interesting in its possibilities for enjoyment of the sport, is team flying. In this form of the game the flyers in a locality will form teams of perhaps three lofts each. The total of the times flown by the members is the team's time.

A timer's card will look something like this:

*East End Team*

Smith	9 hours and 11 minutes
Jones	8 hours and 24 minutes
Brown	8 hours and 15 minutes

---

Team            25 hours and 50 minutes

## *Fly Rules*

IN THE CONDUCT of the Tippler clubs, wherever found, the members are guided by pretty much the same rules that govern other similar activities. The bylaws serve to make smooth the workings of such things as band purchases at a nominal cost, the collection of dues, entry fees for trophy costs, the selection of race dates, and the formulation of flying rules.

While there is nothing sacred about the flying rules under which just about all of the Tippler centers operate, there is almost universal agreement that these laws that control the manner in which competition is conducted are well calculated to serve the best interests of the majority of the world's Tippler flyers.

This was shown once again, a few years ago, when William Hoffman, President of the Flying Tippler Association, appointed a committee consisting of William Mair, Michigan, Robert Funk, Florida, and this writer, to examine the rules under which the F. T. A. had been conducted, with the idea of modernizing or modifying them in whatever manner the need for this was indicated. This resulted in the adoption by the F. T. A. of the rules (word for word) that the Canadians use, and which in turn they had taken from the British Tippler societies. This was accompanied by a notation to the effect that the rules pertaining to strictly local competition were to be in force only where they could be applied to city-wide contests, and not as between fanciers in widely separated localities. This universality of governing requirements is a desirable thing, but should not be permitted to scare off anyone with progressive ideas for flying Tipplers under some other form of sport. New ways could be tried along with (not instead of) the old and proven form.

Following are the regulations which comprise the orthodox rules. These rules, while not word for word, are substantially as they appear in the rule books of the associations from which they are taken. Every one of the organizations does not employ all of these rules. To provide further clarification, in some instances explanatory statements have been included in parentheses.

Each competitor to fly from 3 to 20 Tipplers.

All birds to start at time set; winner to be the last kit on the wing that flew according to all rules. (The word "kit," as a verb, means to fly together in a compact unit rather than each bird flying independently. As a noun, it means a team.)

Competition not necessary in long-time flies, and in such tests, kit may be started at any time. Timer must be on hand to check birds out and in on long-time flies. In other flies, Timer is allowed one hour after start to begin timing.

All young birds must be banded with official club rings with year and number.

Young birds may be flown in old bird races.

In old bird races, any band is eligible.

Birds must settle within flyer's boundary and be checked off same day as started.

Band numbers taken at end of fly must correspond with those on birds started.

Timer must time from spot where loft can be seen. Time taken when kit is last seen, not when found.

A flyer's boundary measures not more than 100 feet from all sides of flyer's loft, and the whole of any building, any part of which is in this boundary.

Disqualification results from kit not starting within agreed upon limits, usually 10 minutes of time set for start. Time up to 10 minutes is deducted from flying time. The same applies if kit goes out ahead of time.

Flyer is allowed 5 minutes from beginning time to restart any bird that settles at starting time.

Timer must report any attempt by anyone to frighten or chase birds, and note time of such incident, reporting same with time flown.

Competitors must cooperate fully with Timers.

Only those who fly in race have any say as to starting time of said race.

Kit must not be out of sight over one hour.

Kit not considered on split if all can be seen at any time during hour. Exception is made at start of race as noted. ("On split" is the Tippler man's way of saying that the team is not flying together, that one or more of the birds is flying off to itself.)

If one or more birds drop out of kit and land in owner's boundary, one hour is permitted for dropping rest of kit. However, if kit has flown at least 6 hours, the rest of the day is allowed for dropping the remaining birds. (The time with which a flyer is credited is that flown by the first bird that comes down. However, until they too drop, all other birds must fly according to all rules, but only the first bird's time is accepted.)

Droppers may be of any breed but the Tippler. The Dropper must be shown to the Timer before it is used and time is taken when first Dropper is put out. (Flags or whistles may be used as Droppers instead of pigeons.)

Only after first bird is down is the flyer to be allowed to show lights on premises to induce birds to drop.

Time is taken and flyer is disqualified if birds land outside the boundary lines. Flyer may catch any bird roosting inside of boundary.

Only with the Timer's permission is anyone allowed near the loft while race is being flown.

Appearance of loft must not be altered during period of one week prior to race.

No nuisance must be allowed on premises during race time.

If, during the first hour, the birds rake away from sight, they shall be allowed the remaining portion of the first two and one-half hours. (Tipplers usually circle about high above the loft, climbing at times quite high but generally keeping the loft in sight. However, occasionally they fly in a manner similar to that of the Racing Homer, and race off, ahead of a tail wind for instance, then return to the neighborhood only to fly off in another direction. This is the action the fancy calls "raking.")

Should the flyer be disqualified, the Timer must inform him of reason before leaving premises.

Timer enters time on card and signs same only after birds are settled to his satisfaction. (To the pigeon fancy in general, the word "settle" means to accustom the pigeon to the loft, to have the bird accept it as his home and return to it when he is released. The Tippler flyer also uses the word to describe the end of a flight, when the pigeon's actions upon alighting show plainly that he is not down just for a breather but is through for the day.)

In cup races, cup and monies can be won only if time is at least six hours.

In open races, monies can be won only if flying time is no less than three hours.

If above times are not flown by any of the kits entered, the race, with no added entries, must be reflown the following week.

Any member who entered but did not fly in race is eligible if re-fly is necessary.

Times must be actual flying times; handicaps do not count.

Relief Timers may be used but birds must be timed continuously. Reliefman, supplied by same flyer who furnished original Timer, must arrive before other Timer leaves. Timers in club races must be acceptable to club. (Timers are selected in a number of ways. Some clubs permit the flyer to select his own Timer, if he is acceptable to all of the competitors. In some clubs the Timer is furnished by one of the flyer's opponents. Some Timers are appointed by the club. As long as all members agree upon it, just about any method can be used to furnish the high-flying sport's equivalent of the "third man in the ring.")

If Timer fails to arrive on time, flyer must inform club within three hours or be disqualified. Flyer sending Timer is penalized as many minutes as his Timer is late, after first hour. Time of arrival of Timer shall be noted on back of time card, according to flyer's watch.

When competitor lives unreasonable distance from flying center, the selection of a Timer shall be left to club.

Only when a flyer changes his residence is he permitted to change the loft location he declared to be his for the first race of the season.

If Timer is not qualified, in the opinion of the flyer, the latter shall notify two officers of the club, and request a different one.



If flyer is incapable of looking after his birds, Timer shall notify two club officers and flyer shall be liable to disqualification.

Each flyer must phone to appointed member between 12:00 noon and 1:00 P.M. to check watch, and must phone same member within half hour after birds are checked in.

A handicap of 2 hours is given to any flyer who has not flown 10 hours in competition. This handicap is not allowed in the race in which he first flies 10 hours or more. (Not all clubs favor including this handicap allowance in their rules, but where it is used it is not restricted to any particular type of race.)

Any flyer flying in the young bird races with birds bearing stretched or tampered bands shall be disqualified.

Any flyer failing to turn in time card or duplicate shall not receive credit for time flown. 7 days is usually limit of time allowed to return card. Flyer must return same time card he received. (Some clubs distribute Timer's cards at the regular meeting prior to each race. The F.T.A., for the last few years, has sent each member as many cards as he will need for the races on their program for that year.)

Timer shall not be allowed to examine loft while birds are flying.

No gadgets, flags, sticks, etc. shall decorate loft to keep birds flying.

Only on permission of Timer is anyone allowed near loft while birds are flying.

Any objections must be filed in writing and submitted to secretary. (Objections are lodged with either club or national secretary, depending upon whether the contest is a local or a national fly.)

Timer to check flyer's watch with Western Union before liberation of birds, also at 12:00 noon and 6:00 P.M. Any difference shall be corrected, but a difference of 30 minutes or more at 12:00 and 6:00 shall be cause for disqualification.

To enter a race, the fancier must be a member of the organization conducting it (this is not a requirement for "open" races, of course). He must send to the race secretary, prior to a previously announced deadline, the entrance fee (if any), the band numbers of the birds he intends to fly, and the name and address of the person who will time.

Band numbers of young birds are to be registered with national secretary 15 days in advance of national fly.

Old bird band numbers must be registered 30 days in advance of fly.

Full details of any substitutions in national fly must be sent to national secretary and central Timer.

Flyer must not have out any more birds than the kit started.

Should a bird kit in, fly two hours or more and drop on flyer's loft and go in, Timer shall note band number and report same to club. (To "kit in" is the Tippler fancier's jargon for the actions of a strange pigeon joining the team in the air.)

Birds on split longer than hour are disqualified. Birds to be timed as if entire kit is flying. (If flyer is able to get birds together again, he is permitted to continue to fly them as though split had not occurred. Disqualification results if he is unable to reassemble kit in required time.)

If birds are on split, time is taken and flyer is allowed 30 minutes to decide whether to take a chance on getting them together again or drop entire kit.

If Droppers are out within 30 minutes of time birds went on split, flyer is given one hour from Dropper time to drop entire kit, getting credit for time up until Droppers were tossed.

If Droppers are not shown within 30 minutes, flyer has only the balance of the hour's time from the time the birds went on the split to drop kit or get them together again. (One of the rules forbids the use of "gadgets, flags, sticks, etc." or anything to keep the birds flying. If your club observes this rule, you have just about no way of signaling your birds, and the only recourse left to get them together after a split is fervent prayer. Seriously, you must rely upon the Tipplers' gregarious instinct to do the job for you. Training flights have revealed which of the birds have strong kitting tendencies, and only these should be flown in your team.)

If kit is dropped within the hour, flyer is credited with time up to the time first bird drops, if no Dropper was thrown.

Time is credited up until first bird lands or Dropper is thrown, whichever is first.

After first bird lands, flyer has one hour to drop rest of kit if no Dropper was thrown before first bird landed.

If Dropper is used before first bird lands, then flyer has two hours from the time Dropper is thrown to drop the entire kit, except in case where birds have flown less than 6 hours, in which case kit must be dropped within one hour.

Timer must enter on time card the time when first bird drops, when the remainder of kit drops, and when the Dropper was tossed.

All of the foregoing rules are not used by all of the clubs; the different situations facing certain groups make some of the regulations superfluous.

Upon first reading, these rules may appear to be extremely complicated; such is not the case. All are dictated by logic that becomes clear once they are called into action. New clubs should select those that appeal to the majority of the members and write them up, being sufficiently definitive to avoid misunderstanding.

## CHART SAMPLES

### *Weather Chart*

Sometimes used to record conditions under which fly was held, as an aid to determining conditions best suited to birds.

TIME OF DAY	6 A.M.	9 A.M.
HUMIDITY (%)	97	96
BAROMETER (INCHES)	29.8	29.6
WIND DIRECTION	S.E.	S.E.
WIND SPEED (M.P.H.)	14	17
TEMPERATURE (DEGREES)	44	45

Notes can be taken every few hours, or whenever major changes occur.

*Timer's Worksheet*

RELEASE TIME: 5:00 A.M.

ALL BIRDS SEEN AT:

5:00 - 20 - 35 - 50

6:00 - 35 - 55

7:00 - 05 - 25 - 40

8:00 - 20 - 30 - 55

9:00 - 25 - 50

10:00 - 10 - 25 - 55

11:00 - 05 - 30 - 45

12:00 - 05 - 10 - Down at 12:15

*TIMER'S REPORT*

DATE: May 25, 1958

LOFT: John Smith

AGE OF KIT: Young birds

STARTING TIME: 7 A.M.

DROPPERS: 7 P.M.

DOWN: 7:20 P.M. - 7:27 P.M. - 7:28 P.M.

TIME FLOWN: 12 hours

NO. OF BIRDS IN KIT: 3

BAND NO.'S F.T.A. 58 - 3312, 3322, 3331

WEATHER: Clear, cool, S.W. wind.

REMARKS: Flew very well, kitted perfectly, were not too tired when they landed. Think they'll be "hot" for the next race.

TIMER'S SIGNATURE: Joe Doaks

CERTIFICATE

(Front of Card)

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE LOFT OF *John Smith*,  
*608 E. North Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland*, IN AN OFFI-  
CIAL CONTEST OF THE F.T.A. OF AMERICA ON *May 8*,  
*1958*, PLACED *2nd* WITH A TIME OF *11 hours and 24 min-*  
*utes*, FLYING A KIT COMPOSED OF (BAND NO.'S) *F.T.A.*  
*58 - 123, 124, 125*.

THE WINNER OF THIS CONTEST:

*Sam A. Jones*  
*642 Greentop Road*  
*Baltimore, Maryland*

FLEW A TIME OF *12 hours and 7 minutes* WITH A KIT  
COMPOSED OF (BAND NO.'S) *F. T. A. 58 - 184, 185, 186*

(Back of Card)

OTHER COMPETITORS WERE:

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SIGNATURE OF SECRETARY: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Training the Tippler for Flies*

A STORY familiar to every racing pigeon fancier is the one involving the crossing of Carrier pigeons with parrots, to enable the pigeons to deliver their messages verbally. Even better would be a cross between a parrot and a Tippler.

In the meantime, we've got to work with what we've got, and while some of these Tipplers are real sharp cookies, "they ain't talking, see?" So the Tippler man has to figure them out, and a knowing one can hold the guess work down to a minimum. However, this "know-how" comes only with experience, and there are no short cuts that I know. The veteran can tell the newcomer plenty, and is almost always more than willing to do so, but the latter can learn it best in his own fashion and will thoroughly enjoy the process all along the way. So don't just stand there; get to it, have fun.

What goes up must come down. The rules insist upon this. Band numbers of the birds making up the team are noted before the fly begins and checked off after the team drops. The ones that come down must be the ones that went up, or the time flown is not credited. As I said, what goes up must come down, but it must not come down until you want it to and give the signal. It must stay up there, knowing the job is not done until the Droppers appear. The kit must fly that extra time that makes the difference between winning and losing.

Training Flying Tipplers is simplicity itself. It consists of teaching them where they live; to land only on the loft where they live (never anyplace else); and to land only when they have been given the signal to do so. Simple?

Yes, but it is in the bringing of this simple design to fruition that the Tippler sport rises to a high art form.

The time to start training the young birds is almost always determined by their age. The successful exceptions to this rule are rare. If a Tippler is allowed to mature before training is started, he will have acquired so many bad habits (any one of which might make him unfit for racing) that his potential as a competitive flyer is rather low. A good Tippler is one that has never made a serious mistake, such as landing out of bounds, or dropping before getting the signal. If experience has taught him that such things are tolerated, he may be expected to use this knowledge on race day. The Tippler sport, the specialized ornithology of the bird-watching purist, exacts a great deal from its performers, and if they are to meet the requirements, they must be started right.

Because of the innate desire to fly on the part of the breed with which they are dealing, Tippler fanciers, probably more than any others, are confronted with the problem of losing youngsters while trying to "settle" them. A Tippler only six weeks old is able to take off into the sky the first time out. With some strains, even the five-weeks-old birds are too strong to trust. To avoid "flyaways," take youngsters from the nest at the age of twenty-five days, transfer them to the young bird section for about three days, and place them on the loft roof or landing board when they are about four weeks old. This is best done the first few times at dusk. Put them out hungry, let them move around a bit, then push them through the trap door into the loft and feed them along with the Dropper. After a few lessons, they will get the idea. Keep the Dropper handy, ready to be tossed if any of the youngsters should take off. Put them out a little earlier each evening. (Later on, when they are being conditioned for a race, they will be released every other day). After they have learned to recognize their loft from the air, start them off each evening by driving them off the loft and into the air. This should not be done until they are well settled. By the time they are eight weeks old, they should be able to fly several hours every other day. They should not be permitted to fly themselves out



during training—save something for the races. Three or four hours should do the trick.

Considerable experimentation will be required before it is known what in the way of kinds and amounts of grains, exercise, etc., is required to get the most from your team. Approximately a week before race day, fly the kit for about six hours instead of the usual four hours. The following night increase the diet either in amount or in caloric power, or both. The next day fly six hours again. They will probably want to go longer, but drop them while they still desire to fly. This is the last training flight before the race, and probably will be on Wednesday or Thursday. The next few days are given over to the rest-up and feed-up. A drink of water before their release on race day winds up the routine.

The novice often asks: "How do you get the pigeons to fly together in a kit?" The answer is: "To a large extent you don't; the instinct of the breed does it for you." Breeds such as the Croppers and the Oriental Rollers are independent individualists that fly singly, refusing to "bunch," as the racing pigeon man calls it. The Birmingham Roller and the Tumbler (from which the Tippler descended) prefer to fly in a tight flock. Some show this tendency much more than others. The stronger this instinct, the less likely they are to go on a split.

Equaling training in simplicity and demand upon the fancier's resourcefulness is another important requisite: conditioning. There are almost as many variations of the conditioning operation as there are fanciers who find this phase of the game one of its most compellingly engrossing activities. Each one boasts of a "secret" that is peculiarly his own. However, these methods, different though they may be, are all related to the same basic fact: a well-bred, well-fed Tippler can and will fly ten hours or so, and enjoy every minute of it, anytime he feels in the mood—but there is the rub. You don't want him to turn in his best performances when he wants to; you want him to give his all when you want it, on the day when the race is flown and the chips are down. Then he should fly around the clock and then some. This is brought about by a well-balanced program of fly days, rest days, low-feeds, and feed-ups.

Rest days and their effect upon the birds in training can be easily understood by anyone who has done much horse-back riding. The horse that is ridden every day is easily handled. Skip a day or two, and his pent-up energy begins to show itself. Let him rest a week before you ride him and you'll need assistance even to get the saddle on him. Much the same idea underlies the use of rest days by the Tippler flyer. By feeding lightly once every evening, and flying every other day, the energy from the rest day helps the pigeon to give his four-hour training fly on fly day without suffering any privations from his low-feed. (How was that again?)

A few weeks before the racing season begins, the trainer flies his four-hour every-other-day exercise schedule and determines how little feed each bird in the kit requires to perform without losing form. After several weeks of this, the team has become accustomed to flying in this low-fed condition and staying up until given the signal to drop. This becomes their normal flying condition. About three or four days before the contest, the birds are given their last training flight and the feed-up is begun. This is the build-up. Now they are getting four days rest in a row and a "high octane" bill of fare that is going to send them up on race day just "raring to go."

Now, as has been noted, these well-fed pigeons should fly about ten hours or so before they burn up their calories and return to their normal flying condition. If they've been trained properly, they should continue to fly until signaled down fourteen or more hours after they started flying.

In putting into effect the low-feed system, the fancier makes a pretty close approach to the impossible: he almost gets something for nothing; or rather, he gets something for almost nothing. He exercises his flying team on energy produced by enforced rest and a diet short in quantity and low in nourishment. In most instances the grain make-up of this low-feed is wheat and/or barley. The strain of Tippler, the climate of the loft location, the training schedule—all play a part in determining which grain or what percentage of both is best employed. The amount is generally three ounces for four birds. This is an approximation, the exact quantity being determined by results obtained from

experimenting with different quantities. Barley is the "lowest" of the grains used by the Tippler flyers. Wheat is a little bit "higher." In an effort to maintain as great a difference as possible between low-feed and feed-up, the trainer tries to have the birds train on barley alone. If this is not sufficient to keep the team in form, a small amount of wheat replaces a like amount of barley. This percentage of wheat is increased if necessary. Only as a last resort is it advisable to use all wheat, or to add peas or corn, which is sometimes necessary. It must be admitted that this is not always applicable. Whether it is the climate, the training, or the type of Tippler, some fanciers simply cannot get their birds to do anything worthwhile on barley. But, if it is possible to do so, it is best to start at the bottom.

At the opposite end of the scale from low-feed is the feed-up, the concentration of energizing and stimulating food properties that will impart to the birds' diet the quality that the advertising copy writers for gasoline refer to as "total power." This is aimed at making the team want to get up and go, enabling it to stay up and keep going.

The energy and stimulation come from a combination of two kinds of feed mixtures. The first is usually the kind known to the Racing Homer fanciers as "Racer-Breeder," and is a combination of such grains as corn, wheat, peas, Kafir, and others that supply the energy to fly long hours. The second is a blend of canary seed, flax, hemp, linseed, etc. that stimulates the birds to want to fly those impressive lengths of time.

Wherever Tippler fanciers gather, petitions are probably being drafted to banish me from the company of truthful men for oversimplifying this to an unrecognizable caricature of what they know as low-feed and feed-up. And if I weren't the one who wrote it, I'd be in the forefront of the movement, because this explanation falls far short of the whole picture; for example, quite often pigeon foodstuffs are used that are not mentioned here. Some flyers use only one or two grains. Some use the same feed all the time but increase the amount for the feed-up. Some of the flyers, mostly in the old countries, bake what they call "cake" from a grain and seed mixture that they keep a deep, dark secret. As I mentioned earlier, there are almost as many methods

as there are flyers, and obviously I cannot give them all. What I have explained will give the new fancier a general idea of what is to be done and how to go about it. As he progresses in the sport, he will discover that certain parts of his original plan are, for reasons of time, facilities, strain, climate, etc., unsuitable to his way of training and he will replace them with parts of another plan that better suit his needs. There is no one way that is the only right way. It is right only if it is right for you. Two old sayings sum it up: "One man's meat is another man's poison," and "All roads lead to Rome."

Experience and common sense will point out to the observant flyer a number of "tricks of the trade" that will make him a more successful fancier. Some very obvious ones are given here. At least once a week all birds should be given greens in some form, cut up lettuce, dandelion stems, etc. that have been sprinkled with a little salt (but no salt should be given for two days before a race). The effect of the greens upon your birds' condition will indicate which are most suitable and how often they should be given.

During the moulting season and the show season, rub some cod liver oil on the palms of your hands and handle the grains just before feeding. Do not mix oil with feed to be stored as it will become rancid. The feed storage problem in general is one that should be considered carefully. Clean, dry, airy containers are recommended. Feed dealers can show the newcomer what is best for this purpose.

Do not feed in daylight. If always fed by artificial light, birds will fly longer knowing they will not be fed until dark. Wait until at least an hour after birds have landed before feeding.

Except for race days, when the birds should be given water just before they are released for the fly, give water only after feeding. After a pigeon has eaten enough to meet his needs, he will stop and look around for water. Sometimes he will return for more feed. Some fanciers contend that permitting birds to do this is overfeeding. In each case a check on the resultant condition of the birds will reveal whether this is true. But in no case should birds (except breeders) have feed left around after feeding time.

Grit for pigeons is a special kind made up into a formula

that supplies all of the grinding agents, minerals, trace elements, charcoal, etc., the elimination of any one of which detracts from the total good health of the pigeon. Grit should be available at feeding time except on the two days prior to the race, for the grit usually contains salt which might increase thirst and make flying more difficult.

If the race day is likely to be cool, add some corn to the feed-up, but if the weather is warm, make sure that none is included. It is recommended that on the night before a race, a few drops of port wine be added to the water to serve as an additive to the small-seed feed-up. Port wine may be given with toast and hard-boiled egg yolk at the first feeding after a very long hard race.

Ordinarily, baths are given several times a week, and a healthy pigeon loves to splash in the bath pan no matter how cold the weather is. Ideally, the bath pan should be available for use in the morning sun, and it is not necessary on rainy days. Tipplers are hardy creatures and it is not necessary to heat the water for bathing. Pigeons often take advantage of a pouring rain to take a "shower," opening the feathers and extending the wings to get its full benefit. The race team should not be permitted to bathe for at least three days before a contest as water removes the desirable "bloom" from the feathers and the birds are likely to fly better if they are in a powdery, corky-dry condition.

The foregoing pointers regarding the feed-up and the bath apply to preparing a pigeon for a show as well as for a race.

With the advent of very warm weather, the moulting of the feathers, which has been proceeding slowly and almost unnoticed since spring, is suddenly accelerated and the bird, as the pigeon man puts it, "falls apart."

Moulting is a yearly occurrence, and a perfectly normal phenomenon. Young birds hatched well before the moulting season have a moult that is attuned to their age and condition, independent of the seasonal one. Other than this, a loss of feathers is an indication of illness or poor condition.

When birds are in heavy moult, all of their energy and resources should be directed to the production of good feathers and should not be drained off by hard training, racing, or breeding.

## *Control of the Tippler in Flies*

IN NO OTHER form of pigeon flying sport is control possible to such a degree as in Tippler flying. In fact, it is a vital necessity if the fancier's efforts are to be rewarded with satisfying results.

From the time when Racing Homers are released at the race station until the time when they arrive home, they are entirely beyond the control of the fancier who is flying them. He can do nothing to prevent their stopping on the way, nothing to increase their speed. The Roller man can do absolutely nothing to increase the frequency or depth of the roll of his birds once they are in the air. However, the Tippler flyer can, with the aid of signals, increase or decrease the time of flight. And as this *time of flight* is the all-important quality in the performance of the Flying Tippler, the desirability of being able to step on the "gas" and the "brake" can be readily seen.

The "gas" in most instances is a flag of some sort. This consists of a white cloth on a pole attached to the loft. Most club rules forbid its use in a race, but if used in training, this is generally sufficient. At first it is necessary to wave the birds off with it as they attempt to land. After they have learned what it is for, it is necessary only to mount it on the loft where it can be seen.

The "brake" is usually a flashy white or white-marked bird of a non-flying breed used as a *Dropper*. By *non-flying* is meant that they are incapable of sustained flight, but of course they can get off the ground and perhaps take a few swings around the loft. Two very popular breeds used as Droppers are Fantails and Nuns, although any breed except the Tippler may be used.

The fancier's preference for either the Fantail type or the Nun type as a Dropper is usually quite pronounced. Some seemingly do better with the Fantail, which will move about on the loft roof very actively but will not fly up. Others prefer the Nun type which will fly up to meet the Tipplers and entice them down after flying around the loft, very low, a few times. There is no reason why both cannot be used.

It is sometimes suggested that the flag be used along with the Dropper to get the kit together when it is on a split. The Dropper is thrown to attract the birds that are in sight. When they start down, the flag is put out to drive them up before they land. They will hover about watching the Dropper and waiting for the flag to disappear. This hovering action will cause the other birds to join them. When they are no longer on split, the Dropper is removed and the fly continues.

The three pinpoints moving high, wide, and handsome in formation against the sky are like a kite on a string when controlled by a competent Tippler flyer and can be reeled in almost at will.

Yachtsmen apply the word "yare" to a craft that is beautifully responsive to controls. In the hands of a good pigeon man, a kit of high-flying Tipplers is often a remarkably good example of "yare."



## *Race Schedules*

AS LONG as the present "dark flying" rule is in effect, the flyers on the North American Continent will never be able to compete successfully against the Tippler fanciers in the British Isles. The present regulation governing this matter requires that the birds not be out of sight for more than an hour, except at the beginning of the fly when they may be started at such a time as will enable them to fly the first two hours in darkness. This two-hour limitation will have to be removed as it is obviously unfair. The American and Canadian flyers must be permitted to fly a greater percentage of their time in darkness. We just do not have the long daylight hours that are enjoyed by our overseas fellow-fanciers.

With rules that permit it, and special training to help the Tippler to do it, it is just possible that the world Tippler record might someday be held by America. At least we could enjoy the thrill of trying to achieve this honor if the regulations did not rule us out before we even got the birds off the loft.

Almost without exception, the long-time Tippler records, young bird and old bird, world, North American, United States, English, Irish, etc., have been made by fanciers flying competition teams containing only three birds. To the experienced Tippler man there is nothing surprising about this, the reason being very clear, indeed.

To mention only the most obvious, keeping in mind that a kit capable of flying long hours must be well balanced, with all members in equal condition, it is certainly much easier to get three birds in the same degree of condition than it is to shape up five, seven, nine, or more birds. (Inciden-

tally, Tipplers are flown in odd numbers, three being the minimum kit size.)

Even if it were not difficult to keep all members of a large kit flying without at least one backslider dropping out and ruining the kit's chances, it is one whale of a lot harder to get all the members of a big team down out of a darkening sky and into the loft, than it is to drop a three-bird kit. Additionally, if there is any advantage or disadvantage to flying many or few, when all contestants fly the same number these inequalities are evened.

All-year-round competition is not feasible due to extreme heat in midsummer, time out for moulting, severe weather during the short days of winter, the desirability of getting the pigeons into shape for the show season, etc. The F.T.A. actually schedules ten races a year, but the fifteen race program which follows is suggested to make possible even greater opportunities for competition. The races which are designated as "Regular" are those scheduled at the approximate dates upon which the American fanciers regularly fly their races year after year. Unlike that of the flyers overseas, the Tippler sport in the U.S.A. does not observe national holidays with races. That is why these suggested additions are here called *specials*. A Tippler race series traditionally consists of three flies. The suggested *extra* series is so called simply because it is competition over and above the three regular series and specials.

It is possible to invest your race program with a good deal of local color, naming each race and series after some person, place, or occurrence famous in the history of your section. This makes the publicity of your club activities much more impressive reading.

This 15 race program can be broken down into five separate series, each one complete in itself. Fanciers could train for participation in the races that best suit them. Those who lean toward the type of program that the British favor (a few widely spaced races each year) or the American type schedule (a race every other week) could, by picking out the races to fill such requirements, set up a schedule to suit themselves perfectly. There is no need to enter all of the races. You have the right to pick and choose.

However, they are all open to the ambitious flyer who likes to get into all of them.

All races should be flown for overall, old bird, and young bird honors. A young bird kit (composed of birds hatched during current year) could fly for young bird honors and overall (best time regardless of age of kit) honors. An old bird kit (no age limitation) could fly for honors in the old bird and overall classes. Such a program could be started and carried on by as few as two flyers in any locality. There should be no hard and fast rules relative to starting time or kit size.

Using the Baltimore area as an example, the following, which could be adapted to your locality, will give some idea of a sample program.

#### 15 Races

March 30	Early Bird	Extra
	Baltimore Our Baltimore	
April 13	Monumental City	Regular
April 27	Patapsco River	Regular
May 11	Oriole	Regular
May 25	Free State	Regular
May 30	Memorial Day	Special
June 8	Chesapeake Bay	Regular
June 22	Blackeyed Susan	Regular
July 4	Independence Day	Special
Sept. 7	Labor Day	Special
Sept. 21	Fill-in	Extra
	Maryland My Maryland	
October 5	Fort McHenry	Regular
October 19	Federal Hill	Regular
Nov. 2	Flag House	Regular
Nov. 16	Wind-up	Extra
	Star Spangled Banner	

The records do not always support such a belief, but it is generally felt that because of their maturity, old birds have an advantage over the young birds, although the latter's youthful vigor sometimes overcomes this. However, recognition is given this to the extent that young birds are permitted to fly for old bird honors, but old birds are barred from young bird competition.

Recognition could be given for the aggregate times flown in each of the following separate series:

#### Baltimore Regular Series

April 13	Monumental City
April 27	Patapsco River
May 11	Oriole

#### Maryland Regular Series

May 25	Free State
June 8	Chesapeake Bay
June 22	Blackeyed Susan

#### American Regular Series

October 5	Fort McHenry
October 19	Federal Hill
November 2	Flag House

#### Holiday Special Series

May 30	Memorial Day
July 4	Independence Day
September 7	Labor Day

#### Anthem Extra Series

March 30	Baltimore Our Baltimore (Early Bird)
September 21	Maryland My Maryland (Fill-in)
November 16	Star Spangled Banner (Wind-up)

## *Single Bird Flies*

WITHOUT the "glue" supplied by its teammates to help keep it up, a Tippler flying alone will not stay aloft for times comparable to those turned in by a kit. To my knowledge, no group has ever made any effort to fly single birds competitively. I think if such an effort were made, a good deal could be learned about single bird flying and great improvement made in the times flown by the few interested individuals who have tried it.

Perhaps a single bird flying alone from start to finish will never achieve the results given by a team. In fact, the very best might fall so much short of a good kit performance that flying in darkness may never be necessary.

This opens up a field of Tippler flying in which North American fanciers could expect to compete on even footing with the flyers in the British Isles and on the Continent. The United States does not have the long daylight and twilight hours that the overseas fanciers have and use so advantageously. A little thought on the matter will reveal that single bird flying has many advantages to recommend it.

This is suggested, not as a replacement for but as an addition to kit flying, perhaps as match races, or off-week extra races.

The lazy fancier will find it to his liking, since it is easier to pick one bird in good condition than three or more for a kit balanced by matching condition.

By the application of a bit of ingenuity, the members of a Tippler organization could devise a number of different ways that the birds could be flown either in special novelty races, or as features in all the races on the schedule.

An interesting possibility is the *best bird time* (this is different from the *single bird fly*, just mentioned, in which only one bird is started). In the *best bird fly*, after the kit time is taken, the time should be recorded for each bird as it finishes. Honors could thus be won by a fancier for *best bird time*, even though his kit did not win. Except for kitting, birds would fly according to rules. This might make possible "out-of-area" contests (similar to the racing pigeon sport) on an international basis with all birds being flown at one loft or several lofts in a good Tippler section of the world. Fanciers in poor locations could send birds there with a chance to fly under better conditions in a big "Washington International" of the air.

As an experiment, an "average-time fly" could be given a trial—all contestants to start the same number of birds. As each bird drops, its time is taken. Times are totaled and divided by the number of birds in the kit for average time.

Another type of contest that would prove interesting would be one based on a percent of maximum system, in which an allotted flying time is set (for example: official sunup to sundown, with a known maximum time), and the winner would be the loft with the best percentage of the maximum time flown in all the races in a series. This would make for greater consistency in all races rather than one all-out race in each series in which the birds fly from dark to dark. The flyer who is ahead in the standing could fly in each race only as long as was necessary to keep ahead, and not burn up his birds needlessly.

If the fanciers felt really "radical" they might try a race in which they purposely did what they occasionally do against their wishes in an "overfly." By starting a fresh eager team at dusk in the late spring or early summer, when the dark hours are short, they might fly the birds into the dark, keep them up and have about eight hours of flying time to their credit when the sun came up to start the flying day. This is admittedly a wild idea and the sticklers for Tippler tradition will, of course, have none of it, claiming it cannot be done. Maybe they are right, but I would rather withhold my opinion until it has been given a good try, and to my knowledge it never has. It is worth trying. What can you lose?

## *Outstanding Time Records*

MANY magnificent performances have been turned in by flying teams in the long years of Tippler history. Almost unbelievable records have been set and some have remained on the books untouched for great lengths of time, despite the strenuous efforts to better them.

The World Record of 19 hours and 35 minutes was set by Jack Cockayne of Sheffield, England, on June 5, 1922, flying a kit of three old cocks.

The World Young Bird Record of 17 hours and 18 minutes is held by the Dutch, having been flown in 1949 by Van Kolk with a three-bird team.

On June 18, 1950, Bill Adams, of Richmond Hill, Toronto, Canada, set a new North American Record of 17 hours and 25 minutes, flying a kit of three cocks (two yearlings and a five year old). This kit is now in the United States, owned by Bill Mair of Detroit.

The North American Young Bird Record of 15 hours and 58 minutes was flown by Douglas Prud'Homme of Toronto, Canada, on July 10, 1955, with three fourteen-week-old youngsters. He released them at 5:30 A.M. and dropped them at 9:28 P.M. This bettered by three minutes the record which Jack English had held since 1933.

On May 23, 1937, Fred Erbach of Maspeth, Long Island, flew a kit of three old hens for 17 hours and 18 minutes to establish the United States Record. At that time this was also the North American Record. Two years later, Ed Robinson of Toronto, Canada, bettered this by one minute, to take the North American crown to Canada.

The United States Young Bird Record of 13 hours and 12 minutes was set on May 20, 1956, by a five-bird kit flown by



William G. Hoffman of North Linthicum, Maryland. The previous holder of this record was Virgil Schiavone of New York, whose 12 hour and 35½ minute record was made on September 17, 1939.

In the Flying Tippler Association, the best performance in some time was carded by Bill Hoffman, North Linthicum, Maryland, on May 13, 1951, when his kit of two yearlings and one two-year-old flew 13 hours and 27 minutes, flying from 7:00 A.M. to 8:27 P.M., and meeting all the rules to the very letter.

In official F.T.A. competitions, a number of clean sweeps have occurred. The most recent was that of John Duerr, Westmont, New Jersey, who took all four of the races scheduled in the Fall Series of 1954. Bill Crowell of Lynnfield, Massachusetts, and Julius Kievitt of Wallington, New Jersey, in 1950 and 1952 respectively, each won all of the three any-age races and earned the hard-to-get triple crown. However, in F.T.A. records, 1949 goes down as Charley Dvorak's year. That was the time when the eyes of the F.T.A. Tippler men were turned on Rosedale, just outside of Baltimore, where the Dvorak high-flyers were knocking off the opposition. Charley won the three young bird spring races in a row, won the free-for-all to make it four in a row, stretched it to five in a row with the first fall race, and almost got the second fall race but was disqualified despite the fact that he had the best time in the contest.

Each club and flying center record is almost as highly cherished by its holder as the world and national records are, and enjoyable indeed are the efforts made to break them.

There is many a human interest story behind the setting of Tippler time records. After trying for forty years, Bill Adams set his North American mark just a few months before he died. Imagine all the pigeon enjoyment and thrilling near misses that were his before he wound up his last year with the record that eluded him and so many others for such a long time.

Among some of the better-known time records are the following:

Dutch Old Bird, 15 hours and 45 minutes.

Welsh Young Bird (Davies), 15 hours and 52 minutes.

English Young Bird, 17 hours and 8 minutes, set by A. Metcalfe, Doncaster, in 1938. This bettered by eight minutes the time Jack Holland made in August 1932, beating his own 16 hour and 56 minute record made five years before.

The Irish Old Bird Record was set in 1938 by A. Henderson, Belfast, with 14 hours and 4 minutes.

W. Tweedle, Downpatrick, in 1938 flew a time of 14 hours and 14 minutes to win the Irish Young Bird Record.

One shining goal that is suggested by a study of existing records is the possible "killing of three birds with one stone" by a United States fancier flying young birds for better than 17 hours and 25 minutes. In one fell swoop, such a performance would gain for the fancier the North American Record, the United States Record, and the World Young Bird Record (the latter two by at least 8 minutes). Successfully performing such a feat, while a very challenging undertaking, is by no means impossible. For about two weeks during June, the United States has about sixteen hours of daylight. By flying the first hour and one-half or so in darkness (starting about 3:30 A.M.) the birds could fly about 17½ hours by 9:00 o'clock P. M. Many adjustments would probably be called for, such as an earlier start in the morning, dark flying after nine, flying the race in May (possibly cooler), exchanging daylight for cooler weather, taking advantage of the full moon, etc.

This could be the top effort in your yearly schedule, with all other flies serving to get the team in shape for the supreme test, and as noted, it is possible. A really smart Tippler fancier who knows how to take full advantage of the young bird's well-known zest for flying, can come close enough to get his all-time Tippler "kick" even if he never quite sets the record.

Many fanciers have broken the world record unofficially. The official time is 19 hours and 35 minutes, but times of 24 hours and over have been flown, to the satisfaction of fanciers whose birds have turned in these fantastic performances, but in doing so infractions of the rules have been committed. In most instances, it is the hours of "dark flying" which rule out the acceptance of the record. The rules require the kit to be seen every hour (or rather they must not

be out of sight over one hour). Obviously, they cannot be seen in darkness.

There are a number of ways in which Tipplers indicate (not prove) whether or not they flew all night. If, when last seen at dusk, they are flying high and in formation, and are flying the same way at dawn, they have probably been up all night. However, if dawn finds them coming back, flying low, from all directions, then most likely they have been down. Another test is to get them in and feed, then turn them out again. If they go up, you can be pretty sure that they have not been flying long. If they have been flying all through the darkness, you will have a difficult time getting them to take to the air again until they have had a good rest.

The best test of all is provided by the fancier's "know-how." An experienced pigeon man can hold a bird in his hand and tell fairly accurately whether that bird is tired or rested. But he cannot prove it, so the good performance cannot go into the records. Some of these outlawed flies are really "lulus," though. One very representative time comes to mind. Out in the Gardenville section of Baltimore, one of the Tippler fans got his kit off to a late start, putting them up about 10:00 A. M. He was unable to drop them at dark. He and his Timer, feeling that the birds were still strong, were on hand before dawn the next day. Except for the "darkness clause," the team flew according to the rules until about 1:30 P.M. They passed all the tests to their owner's satisfaction. He just "knows" they flew 27 hours.

Some Tippler authorities claim that the birds cannot fly long in darkness. Others point to the Army's night-flying Homers as successful contradiction. Take your choice, you will have lots of company, including those who claim that on moonlight nights they can see their birds every hour in accordance with the rules.

## *Showing the Tippler*

IN AMERICA, classes for the Flying Tippler are included in almost every all-breed show. Most large pigeon centers stage several shows each year, and the state fairs have pigeon sections which Tippler men find to their liking.

The Standard for the show Tippler (not the show specimen of the Flying Tippler) calls for a shapely bird in four color groupings: Sells, Chucks, and Mottles, the latter either Light or Dark. The show Tippler, like its cousin, the Flying Tippler, has a varied background tracing back to the Smerle, Owl, and Tumbler, so getting them to color breed true to form is not the easiest of pigeon games.

Like the thoroughbred horse, the Flying Tippler comes in different sizes and shapes, no one of which is superior to the others under all conditions. The general appearance and bearing of a typey Tippler is suggestive of the classic beauty of the purebred Arabian horse, with the same sturdy, compact body; well-arched, shapely neck; head small in relation to body; and nose and mouth small in relation to head. The Tippler standing alertly at attention has "good breeding" written all over it. Although not characteristic of all types of Tipplers, a broad chest and wings that seem large for the body add a desirable, athletic look to the bird. Any feature, characteristic, or condition that detracts from such an ideal is not to be tolerated by the "builder-uppers" of the breed.

Feathers that are loose, dry, broken, or that show signs of insect damage or poor health, watery eyes, a listless lack of animation—all show plainly that conditions are not as they should be.

A pigeon that is well always feels, looks, and acts the part. Silky, smooth, tight-fitting feathers that slide through the hands, dry, bright eyes with a challenging look, a prancing, wing-beating behavior, reassure the fancier that he has "got them right."

In Canada, and in England too I believe, show classes have been provided for the show specimens of the Flying Tiplers that have demonstrated their ability as long-time flyers. Before their owners can enter them in the show, they must prove, by presenting signed certificates, that the birds have flown a certain length of time in actual competition (whatever the class minimum calls for). This type of show class, the equivalent of the Racing Homer Diploma Class, has been discussed, but, to my knowledge, never included in any American show. This is unfortunate because such a class would enable interested fanciers to see the very best Tiplers—not just beautiful ones, but those that by their records have proven their superiority in the sport for which the breed was originated. Such birds would be real exemplars of "handsome is as handsome does."

They could be entered according to their best time: eight-hour birds, twelve-hour birds, sixteen-hour birds, etc., and all birds having qualified for their class would be regarded as equally good flyers and then placed as to their quality as show birds. The best in the class would then be the bird conforming most closely to the Tippler Show Standard and exhibiting the finest condition as a flyer. Almost any experienced Tippler fancier-flyer could judge a class of this kind, because he performs half of this task every time he flies his Tiplers in a race. Knowing whether or not a bird possesses the points called for in the Standard requires only an examination of the bird and an understanding of the Standard. A judge, keeping in mind that the Flying Tippler is an athlete, not a hot-house plant, would know which of the points should be given greatest consideration.

A dual-purpose strain of Tiplers for long-time flying, and for showing in the "time-flown" show class, would be a really all-round pigeon. Its developers could, with a small, select stud, participate in both fields of Tippler activity and keep pigeon-busy all year around. Producing that good one that has a chance in both games would be a job that was doubly difficult, but once achieved, doubly satisfying.

Here would be the purposeful task of producing, not a useless show bird conforming to an artificial Standard set arbitrarily, but a beautiful specimen of a breed designed for a specific sporting purpose. The goal would be clear, though, and a good pigeon man could reach it.

In so many games, sports, and cultural pursuits, there is an unsatisfying quality of impermanence, the present having no direct descent from the glories of the past or hope of connection with the greatness of the distant future. This is not the case with those who engage in the panoramic continuity of fine livestock breeding. The man whose hobby is blueprinted by pedigree in the ascendancy, who develops, holds, and improves, step by step, generation after generation, the desirable qualities of the finest of the bloodlines of his favorite breed, works hand in hand with both the fellow enthusiast who is long since gone and with those yet unborn. He enjoys an awareness of the worthwhile nature and timelessness of his work. This is not something to be taken up and then set aside, but an interest worthy of his continuing attention. Such a man is an artist, one who works not with paint, clay, marble, or musical sound, but with a flesh and blood, living and breathing medium, to create the "thing of beauty" that, upon being taken up in turn by the the fanciers of the future, in a finite sense at least, "is a joy forever."

### SHOW STANDARD OF POINTS

The National Pigeon Association's Standard for the Flying Tippler awards:

50 points on general condition.

20 points on feather condition.

30 points on remainder of make-up.

No preference to be given to any particular strain or type.

Only 5 points given for color. (No preference.)

Tippler to be judged as a working bird.

## *The Breeding of Tipplers*

EXCEPT for the fact that they are capable of being trained and conditioned to fly for extraordinarily long times, Tipplers are little different from other breeds. In all of pigeondom there is no more "natural" breed than this long-time high-flyer. No extreme aims of breeding for show points have destroyed this bird's ability to take care of itself and its young. In fact, Tipplers are often used as foster parents to feed the young of other breeds, so capable are they in this respect.

The biological aspects of Tippler husbandry vary not at all from those pertaining to all pigeons. But much more often than is justified by common sense, the Tippler fancier, in his breeding schedule, puts all his eggs in one basket, or, more literally, gets all the eggs he can possibly hatch advantageously in the first round of nesting. This reduces the flexibility of his training program and race participation to such an extent that he often finds himself with too many birds in training to give any of them individual attention. And just as frequently, he has every one of his flyers in heavy moult at the same time and misses race after race while the necessary feathers are growing back in. The solution to this problem is simple, easily handled, and economical.

Keeping in mind that the kit of small size is more likely to be handleable and consequently more successful, only as many breeders as are necessary to produce these few top flyers should be considered for breeding purposes. With perhaps a pair or two of probationary breeders held in reserve for emergencies, the front line of breeders should consist of four pairs.



Since each pair will produce two young, their first round of eight (really optimistic, huh?) youngsters will be enough to give two kits of four birds each (three for the team and one spare). And if each pair of breeders is represented by a bird in each kit, the sameness of bloodlines of the flying team will enable each to serve as a "control" on the other in feeding and training experiments.

If one of the kits is lost, the other is available. If both go the way of the unlucky, there is another round only weeks behind, for when the first round is five or six weeks old, another round of eight comes along. A like number of weeks later, the third batch is in the nest.

The beauty of this is that all the flyers are not likely to be in the same condition of moult at the same time. Unlike the "eggs in one basket" arrangement, with this system it takes more than one "bad break" to knock a loft out of competition, and you'll have as many birds as you actually need—and what's more, you'll have them when you need them.

Like all pigeons, Tipplers mate at about six months of age when not restrained, but most breeders do not put them into production until they are about a year old (at the following breeding season). Tipplers remain mated for life and are typically prolific, the parade of production being slowed up only by extremely cold or hot weather.

By tradition, the breeding season starts on St. Valentine's Day, the 14th of February, but this is ignored as often as it is observed. If you can be sure of receiving your new bands early in January, your breeding season can be started before the middle of December.

The Tippler fancier's schedule usually is such that it will give him young birds of about ten weeks of age when the first young-bird race is held. A couple of weeks one way or the other shouldn't matter. Within a day or two after they have been paired, the breeders usually mate. About eight days later, the first egg is laid. The second egg is laid two days later. Depending upon the weather or anything else that affects the temperature, the eggs should hatch from fifteen to twenty-one days later, usually about seventeen days.

Having provided himself with breeding boxes (which should be at least 18 inches high, 18 to 24 inches deep, and 24 inches long, with a front that can be closed), the fancier

places his breeding pairs together, being careful at first that fighting does not occur. Ordinarily, pigeons mate readily.

For this early-season breeding, nesting facilities should be provided indoors. Some really fine flying pigeons have been hatched around the furnace in the dead of winter and kept in the outside loft only in the daylight hours until they were settled. The theater of operation is moved out-of-doors only when the weather has improved.

It is only after careful consideration of all the factors involved that the progressive Tippler fancier selects the pigeons to be placed in production, or "set down," as he phrases it. The make-up, genetic and otherwise, of each pigeon should be such as to complement that of the breeding partner with which it is to be paired, if the breeder is to have a reasonable expectation that the offspring will be as good as, if not better than, the parents.

Not many pigeonaires are in the position where all of their breeders are their "best." The difference between the proven quality of the "top pair" and the pair at the bottom of the list is usually quite marked, indeed. Why, in the light of this, the latter birds are used at all for breeding is not easy to understand. Good management dictates that only a very few of the very best breeding pairs be used to produce all of the birds bred in the loft of the fancier whose Tippler culture is in the ascendancy.

If the controlling hand of the fancier were removed, the pigeons would very likely produce twice as many pairs of youngsters as the three or four rounds that the sport finds sufficient; for when the young are about two weeks old, the breeders have two more eggs, and thus the parade continues.

It is not necessary to provide special food for the breeding birds or their young. Through a natural process, the parents transform elements of their regular diet into food ideally suited to the needs of the young. If any doubt of this exists, the almost unbelievably rapid growth of the nestlings should dispel it. A few days before the youngsters hatch, both parents develop a crop secretion called "pigeon milk." This they feed to the young birds for the first few days. Gradually, seed and grain are added by the parents, starting with the smaller parts of the feed mixture and increasing the size until the young are being fed the same diet

that the parents eat. The fast-growing nestlings receive by regurgitation the grains which their parents have partly digested. Before they are a month old, the young are picking up the feed themselves and are ready to leave the nest.

At five weeks of age the young Tipplers are ready to try their wings. Tippler youngsters are possibly the most precocious of all pigeons in this respect, being quite capable of flying completely away the first time they become airborne. It is for this reason that the fancier must exercise great caution in "settling" them, as the Tippler flyer phrases it, or getting them to know the loft as their home.

A fancier with a thorough knowledge of the strain soon acquires a remarkable knack of being able to recognize a subtle quality that reveals the sex of the youngsters. However, because there is no outward physical manifestation, this cannot be determined definitely until the youngsters have reached the age of five or six months, when it is revealed by their actions, the masculinity or femininity of which cannot be mistaken.

Tipplers do not reach full maturity until they are two years old. Care is advised to avoid injuring young birds and yearlings by too much hard flying if they are expected to give good accounts of themselves as old birds. Sometime during their first two years, pigeons should be given a chance to "catch up with themselves," as it were. This can be either as young birds or as yearlings. But whenever it is, they should be taken completely out of training, fed plenty of nourishing feed, and allowed to exercise only when the spirit moves.

With the always-present exception, the Tippler seldom remains at his top efficiency as a flyer for more than five years. A really good one is hardly ever allowed to, being promoted to breeding to reproduce his like as soon as his good qualities have been proven in the air.

## *Banding*

WHILE the bird is still quite small, at about the age of five or six days, a seamless band is placed upon its leg. This band bears the initials of the banding association, the year of issuance, and a serial number. Because it cannot be removed without being broken, it serves as a life-long identification of the pigeon.

The act of banding the bird is a simple operation, every step of which is directed by the mechanics involved. The three front toes are held together in such a manner that the band will slip over them easily. The band is then pushed up over the back toe which is held against the back of the leg.

If the banding is done when the bird is too small, the band may slip off and have to be replaced. If the youngster is banded a bit late, difficulty will be encountered, but it can be overcome by greasing the leg and clipping the nail of the back toe. If banding is delayed too long, no attempt will be successful and an open band will have to be used.

A fancier can suit himself as to the way his pigeons are banded. Some prefer the right leg, others find the left leg easier to handle when holding the bird to read the band numbers. For the same reason, preference is expressed in the matter of bands being right side up or upside down. Others endow these positions and placements with significance by having them indicate the strains or families to which the birds belong.

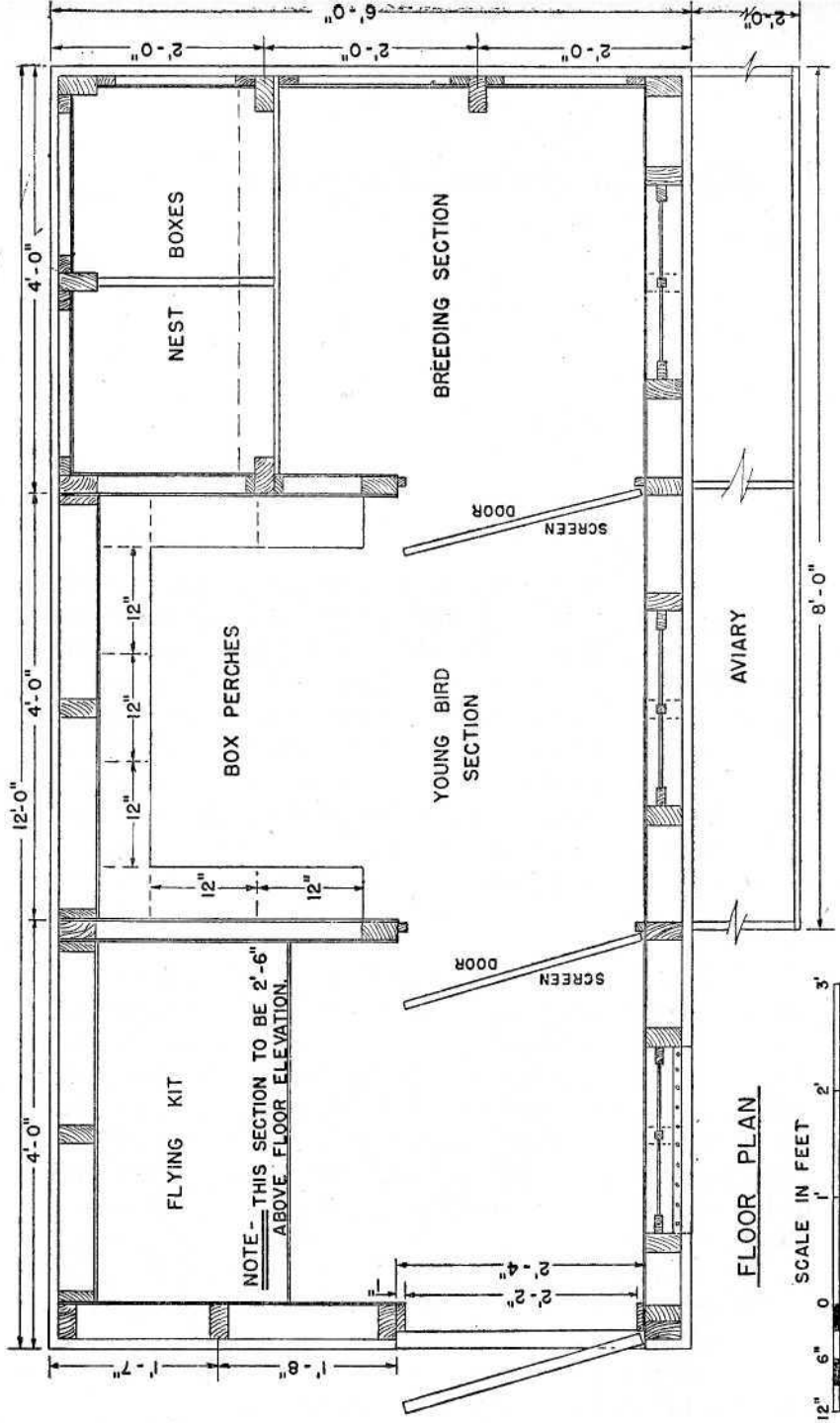
Fanciers belonging to clubs will usually receive their bands from the secretaries very early in the year. Unattached fanciers can buy them from pet shops or from club members, who usually can spare a few.

## *Banding for Record Purposes*

AS AN AID in keeping records and to facilitate instant identification of pigeons by their band numbers, the following banding system is suggested: The last two figures of the serial number on the band are the key to the identity of the young bird and its parents. The next to the last figure indicates the number assigned by the fancier to the breeding pair. The last figure indicates the young from that pair in the order of its hatching. Thus, a bird banded F.T.A. 58-2134 would be the fourth bird hatched by pair number three. Nest mates on the first round of pair number four would be something like F.T.A. 58-3541 and F.T.A. 58-3542.

In this system, bands numbered below 0011 would not be used. The first and second digits in the four digit serial number are of no importance, unless the breeder has more than nine pairs. In this case, the breeding pairs may be referred to as the ten pair, the eleven pair, the twenty pair, or the forty pair, etc. When pairing is changed, the cock of the original pair retains the number. The record book would include not only the number assigned the breeding pair, but also the individual band number of each, thus identifying the hen and the cock even though the pairing was changed.

The careful breeder keeps records and pedigrees and leaves nothing to the unreliable mercy of his memory. A royally bred Tippler whose performance has added to the luster of his line deserves no less than this.



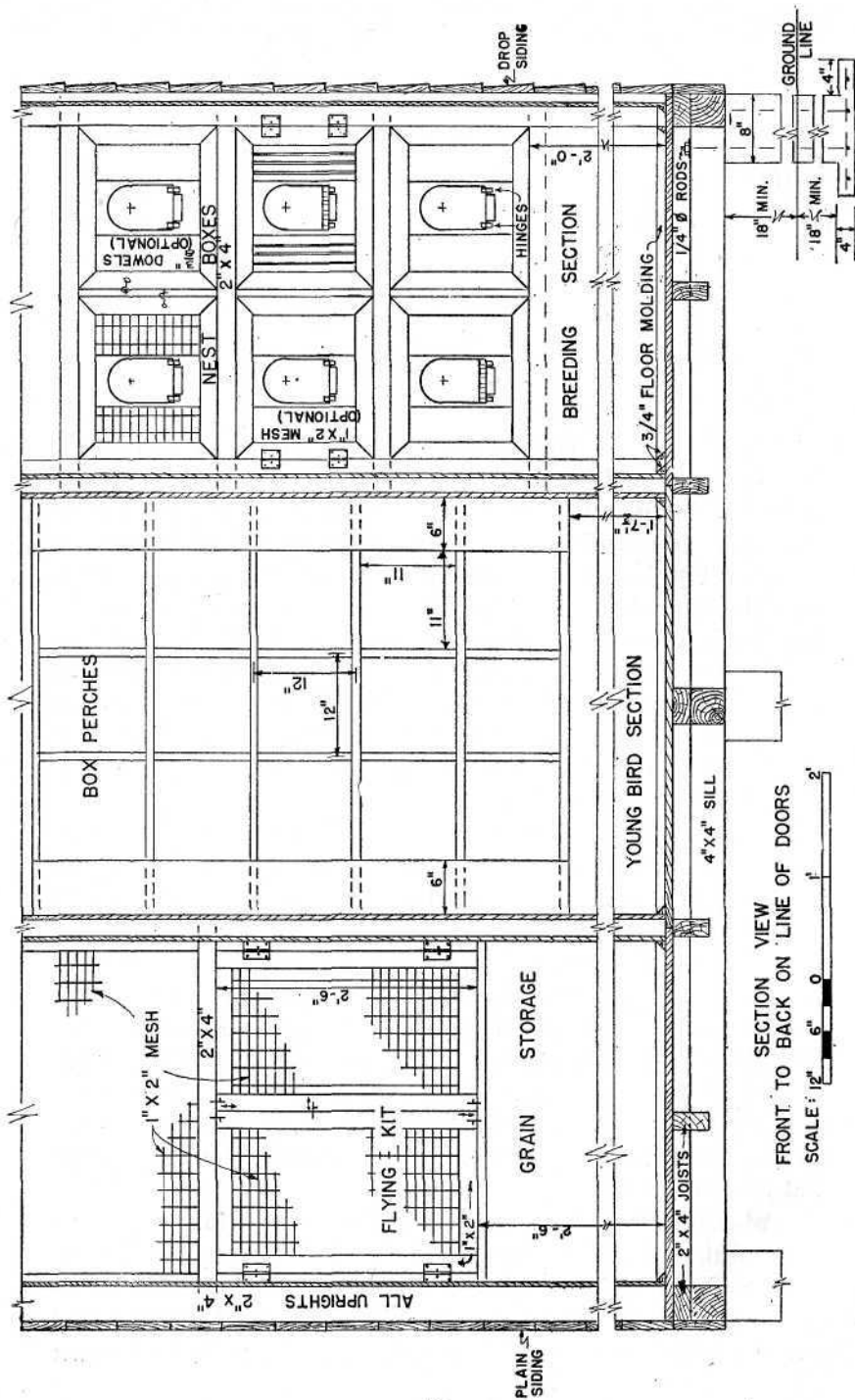
## *Lofts*

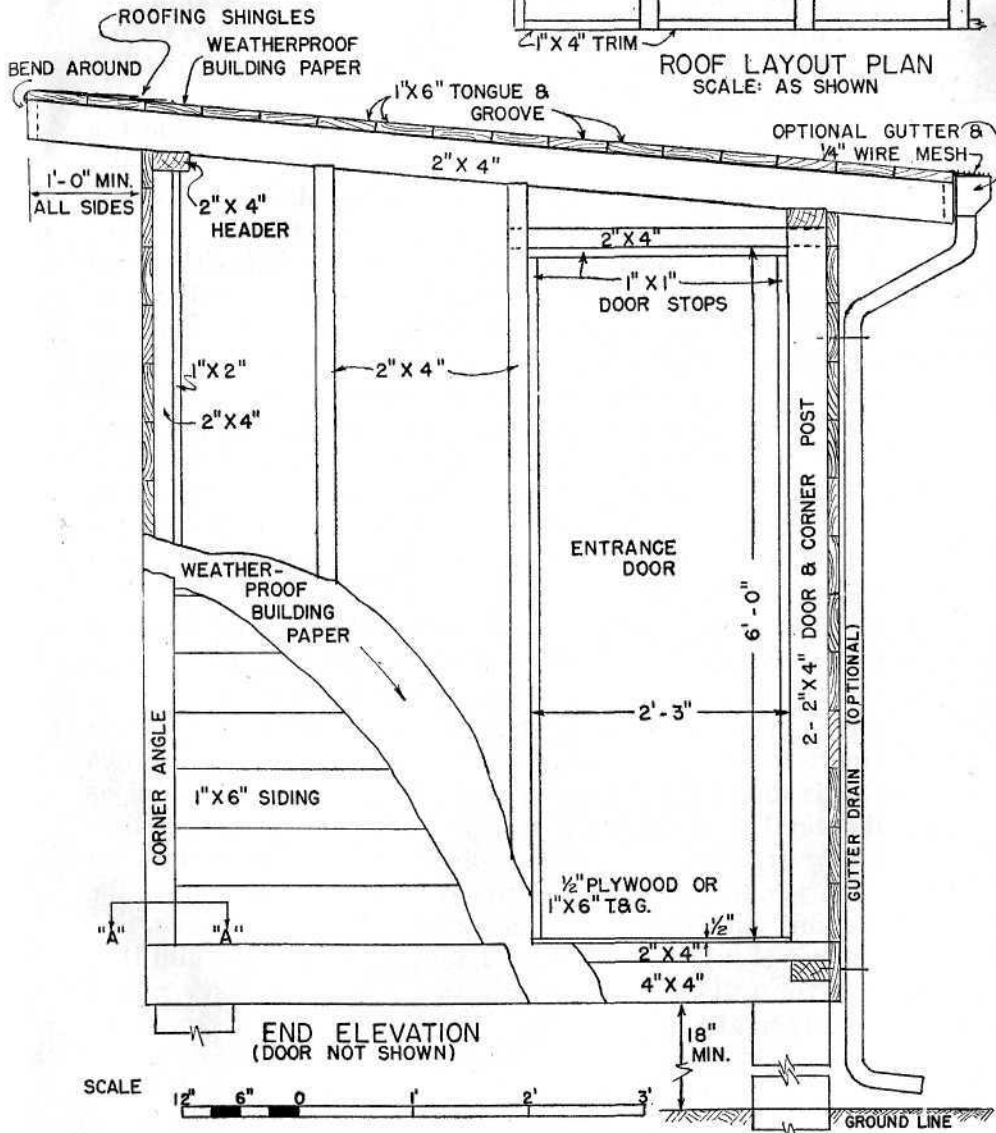
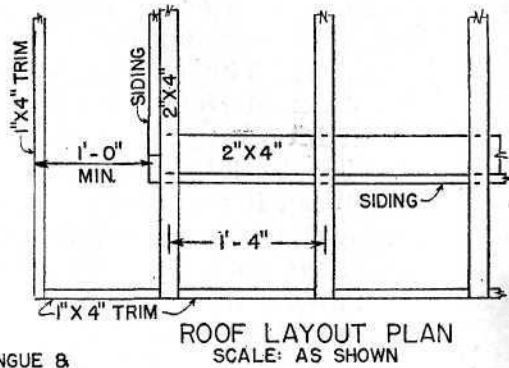
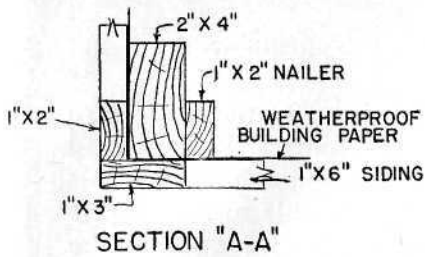
HOUSING for the Tippler is as flexible as it is possible for anything to be. Good times have been carded by birds flying from lofts that differ as greatly as day and night. Beautiful, large lofts erected specifically for the flying of Tipplers, while, of course, desirable, are not necessary. Rooftop structures, converted attics and garages, crates atop back fences, anything that provides the few necessities the Tippler requires, can and have been known to serve well as the "hanger" for these time-flying pigeons. These necessities are: dryness, sunshine, fresh air (but no drafts), and a landing board large enough so that the team can see it when landing in darkness.

To this list of necessities must be added cleanliness. Clean birds, clean loft, clean equipment, all add up to finer health, better appearance, and greater success. The degree of cleanliness is determined by the fancier's own standards which dictate whether the perches and other fixtures require the scraper, the scrub brush, or both, and how often. Be sure of one thing: overdoing it is impossible. This is particularly true of the containers for water, feed, and grit, which should be kept spotlessly clean and disinfected. Dry sand, woodshavings, or a combination of both used as a covering for the floor, nest boxes, etc. help to achieve the cleanliness that should always be a must.

In planning housing for the Tippler, a visit to a few lofts will point out to the newcomer to the sport a number of features from which to pick and choose. But for best results there should be a breeding section, a young-bird section, and a flying-team section. Competent flyers have been known





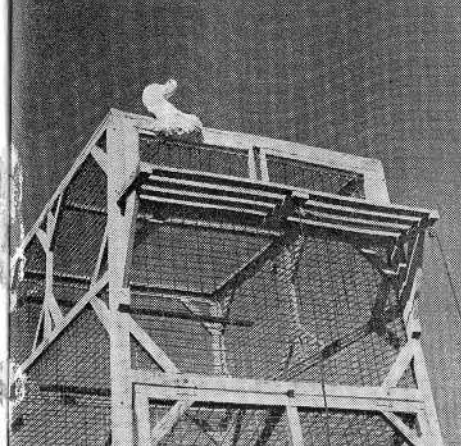


to attain satisfactory results without separate sections, but the job is more difficult.

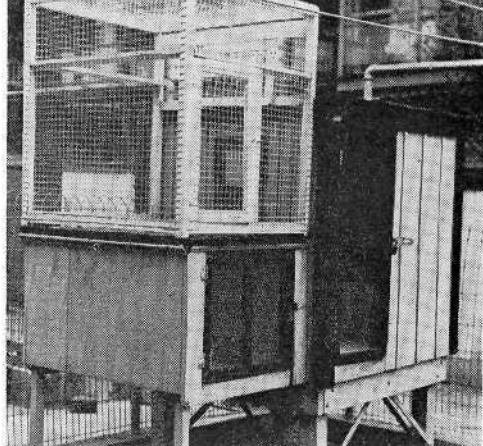
For the Tippler, nest boxes, perches, fly pens, etc. are no different from those for Racing Homers, Rollers, and other breeds. Only the kit box, or flying-team section sets the Tippler loft apart from all others. This may be quite small but it must have a separate "stall" for each of the flying pigeons. These stalls are small boxes at least fourteen inches in each dimension. The flying bird in training is permitted out of his box only for flying, feeding, and taking a bath. The stalls should be so arranged that getting the birds in and out can be done without handling them.

Most lofts are equipped with aviaries so located that the young birds being settled are able to walk in and out of the loft and fly up to the roof without being able to get away. The value of this aviary (the top, bottom, and all four sides of which should be made of wire netting) is increased greatly if it can be raised above the loft (on a pulley, for instance) to enable the youngsters to learn to recognize the loft as seen from above. Many early bred youngsters are not able to be settled because the ground is covered with snow at the time when they are at the proper age to be put out for the first time. When the snow has melted, the birds are too strong on the wing to risk being given their freedom, and must always be kept as prisoners and used only for breeding. A moveable wire cage, such as described, will enable the fancier to settle his early birds no matter what weather or wind conditions prevail at the time the four- or five-week-old Tipplers are ready to be put out. The dimensions of the wire cage would depend upon the number of birds for which it is to be used. It could be as small as eighteen inches square or as large as handleability permits.

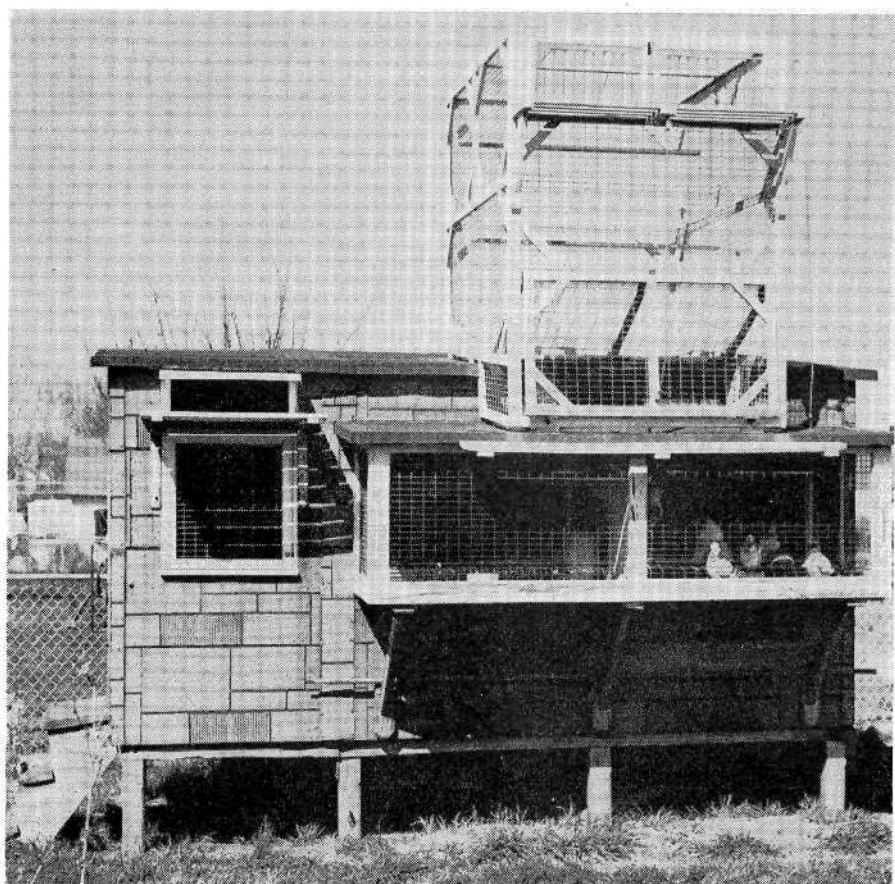
It is to the flyer's advantage to keep the loft as small as the number of pigeons permits, keeping in mind, of course, that overcrowding must be avoided. If the handler does not have to move around too much to reach all sides of the sections, the birds will be much tamer, easier to catch, and become accustomed to being handled. However, build it to suit yourself and it will suit your Tipplers. They adjust readily to almost anything.



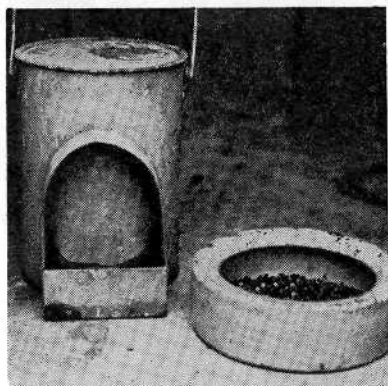
Hoffman's dropper at work.



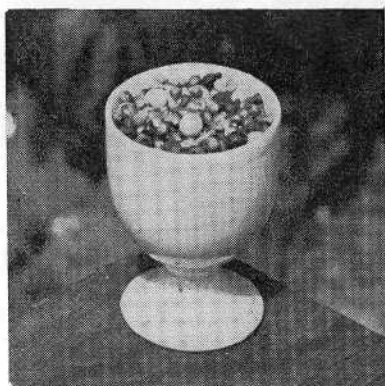
Loft of Leo Logue, Baltimore, Md. Good example of small loft for city back yard.



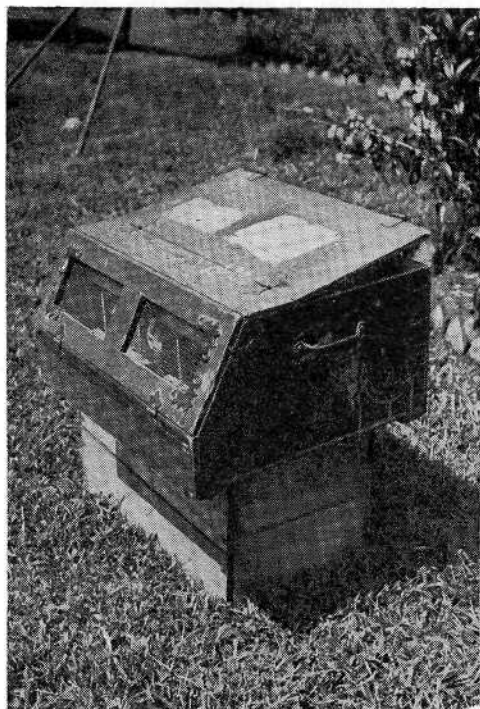
Loft of William Hoffman, North Linthicum, Md. Divided into three sections, the compartment on left (with open trap over window) is for flying team. The other two are for flyers not in training and for breeders.



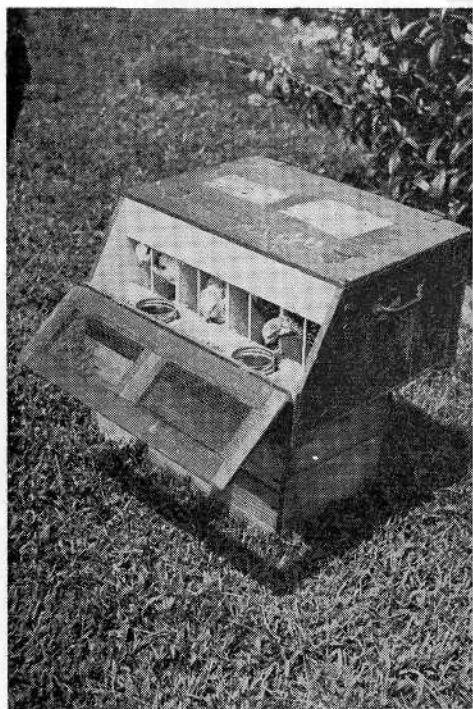
Popular type watering can and feeder used in the Logue loft.



Egg cup used for many years to measure feed for birds in training. This relic is owned by Hoffman.



Shipping crate shown with front closed to protect birds. Partly lifted top shows how crate can be opened to remove pigeons.



Shipping crate with individual stalls for birds. Containers for feed and water are in front of pigeons.

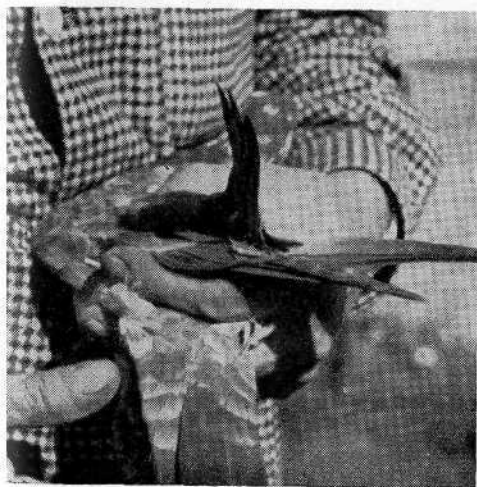




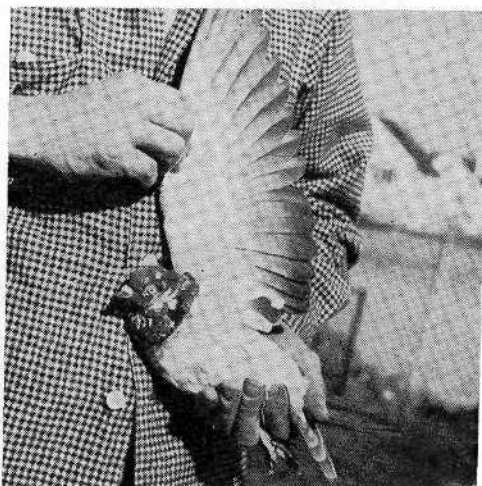
Tail "fanned out" as used for the brake and stabilizer.



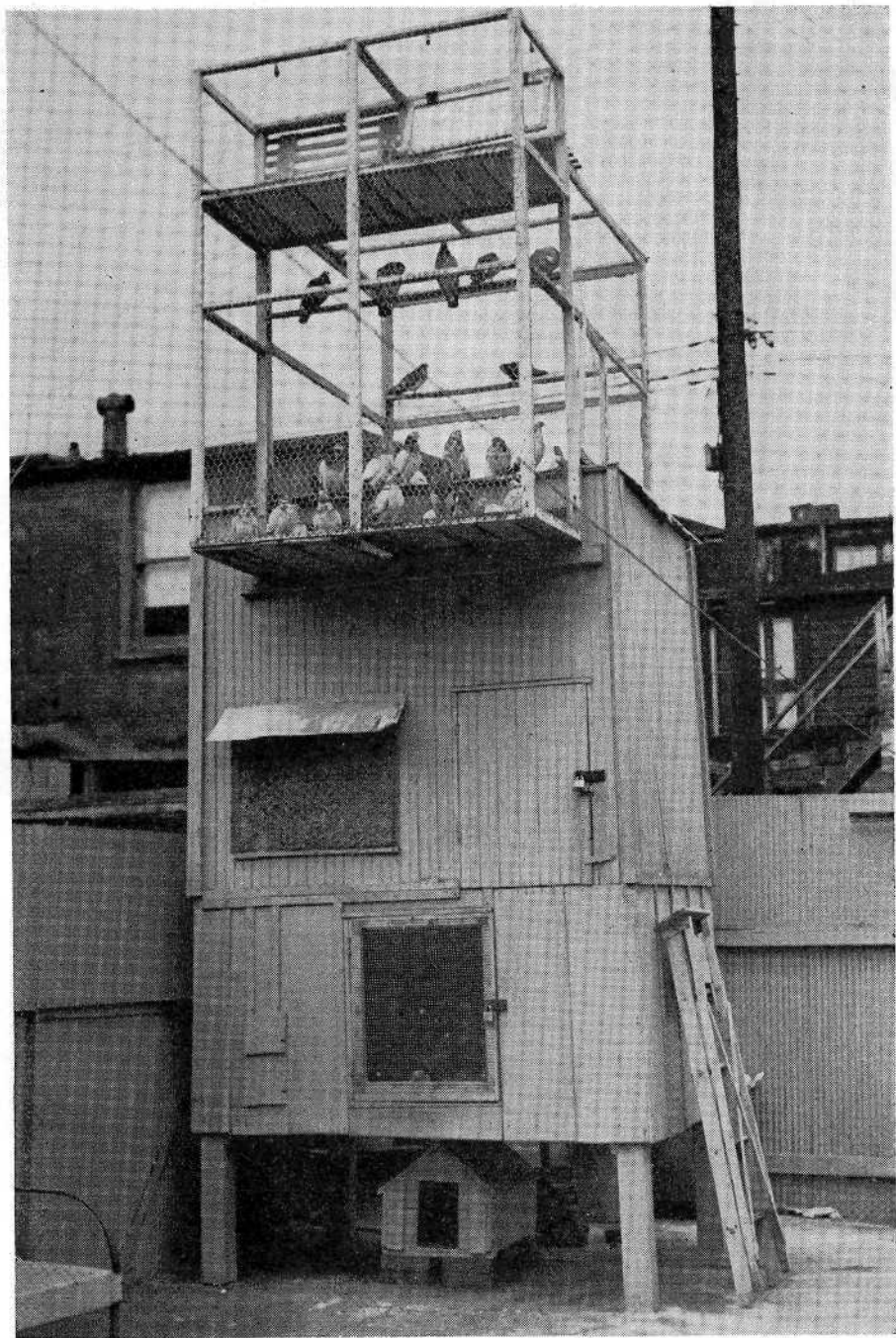
Checking the band number. Necessary before and after the race.



A good tail folds in upon itself so that it is little more than one feather wide.



One of the Tippler's "tools of the trade"—the extended wing.



Loft of Joseph Skirvan, Baltimore, Md.



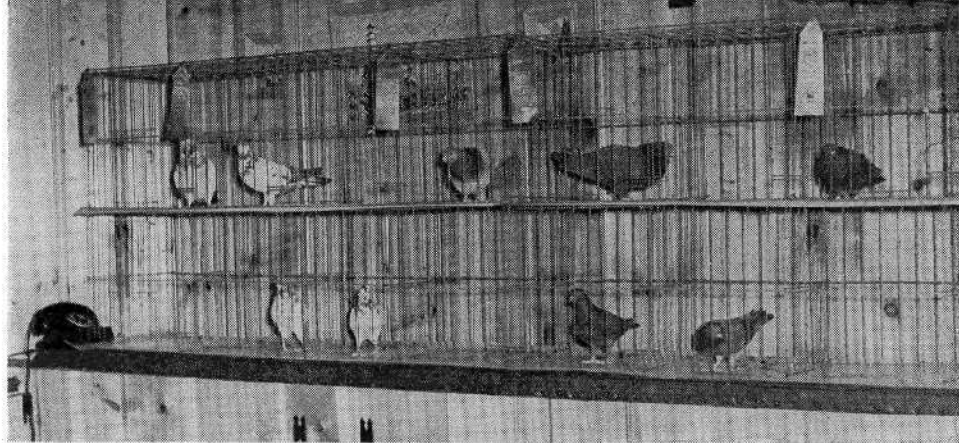
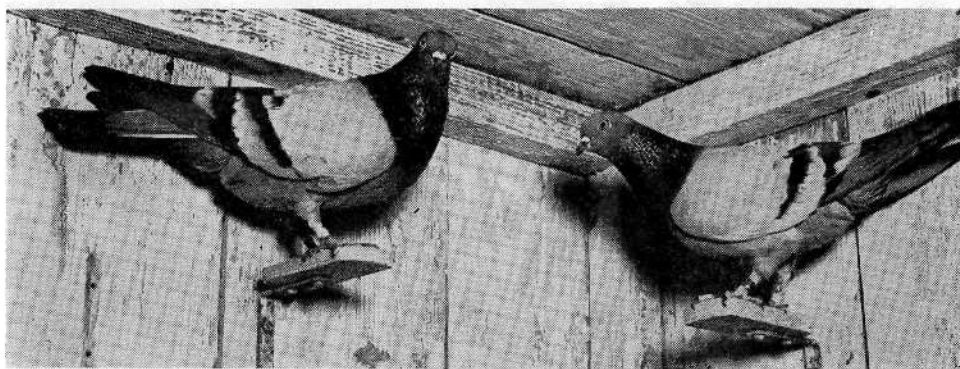
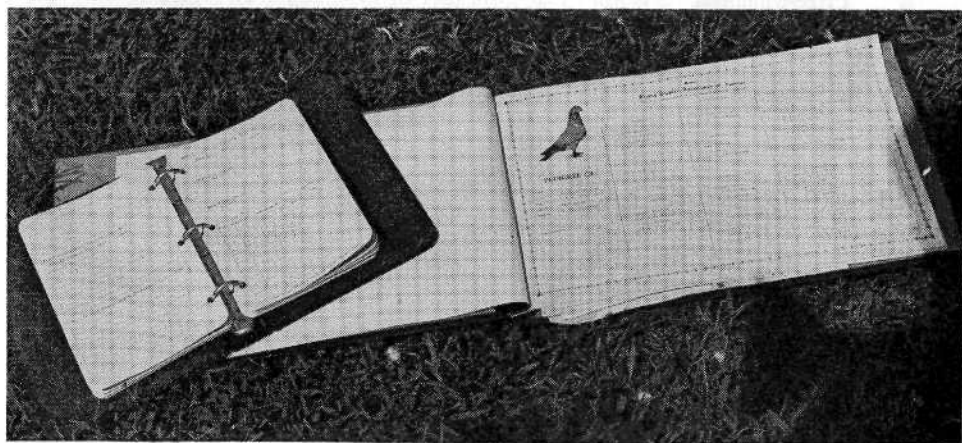


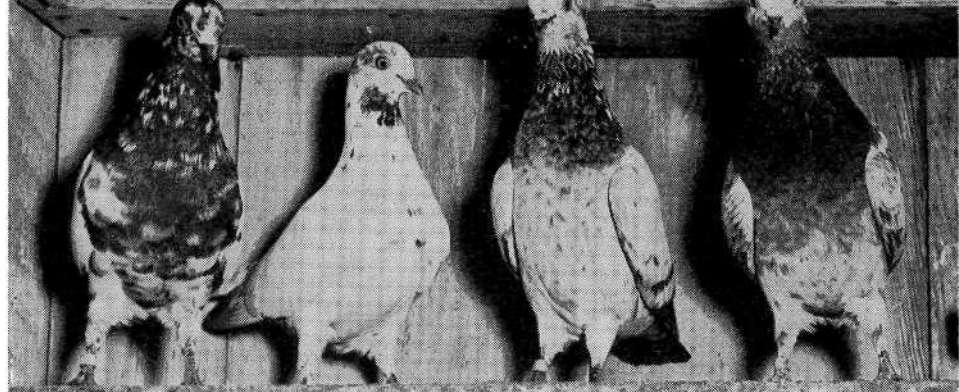
Table show set-up in the basement of Henry Prenger, whose pigeons are shown with ribbons won at the State Fair.



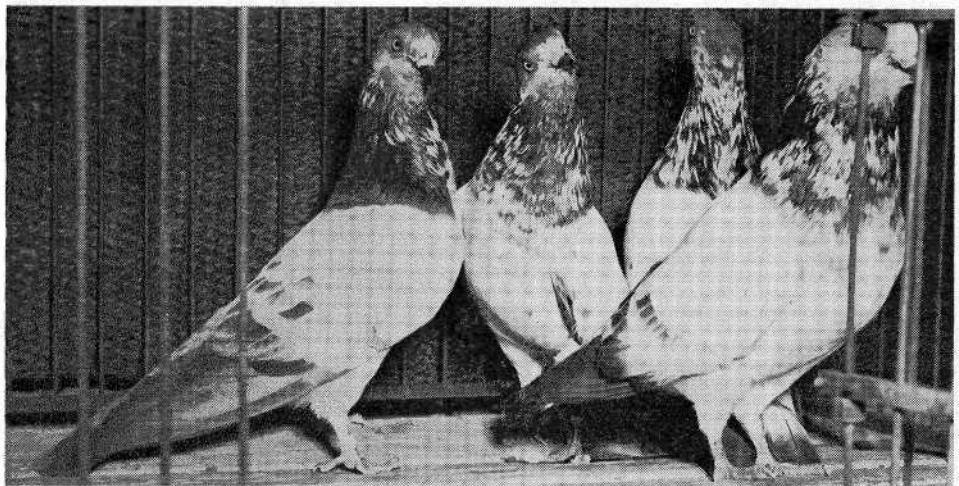
The Logue loft prides itself on this pair of good blue bars. The cock on the left was eleven years old when the picture was taken.



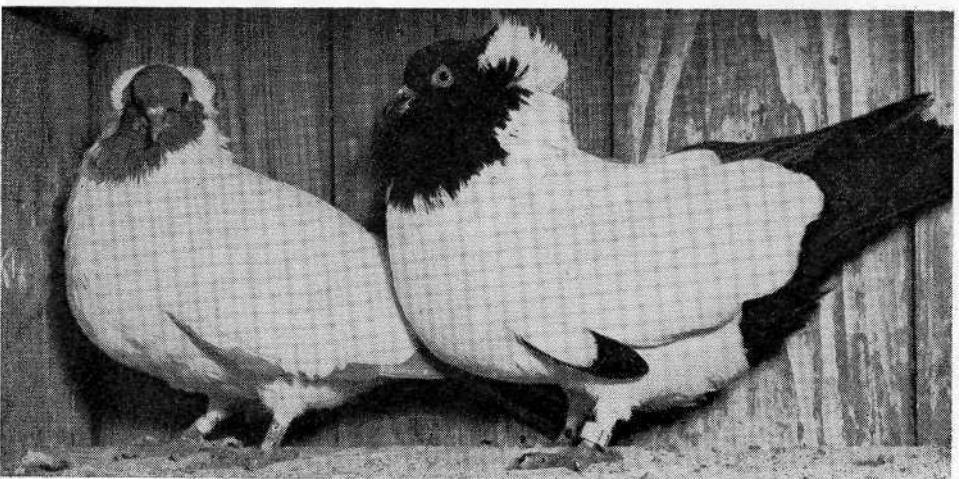
Loose-leaf folders are useful for keeping breeding records and pedigrees in order. Illustrated are Hoffman's record books.



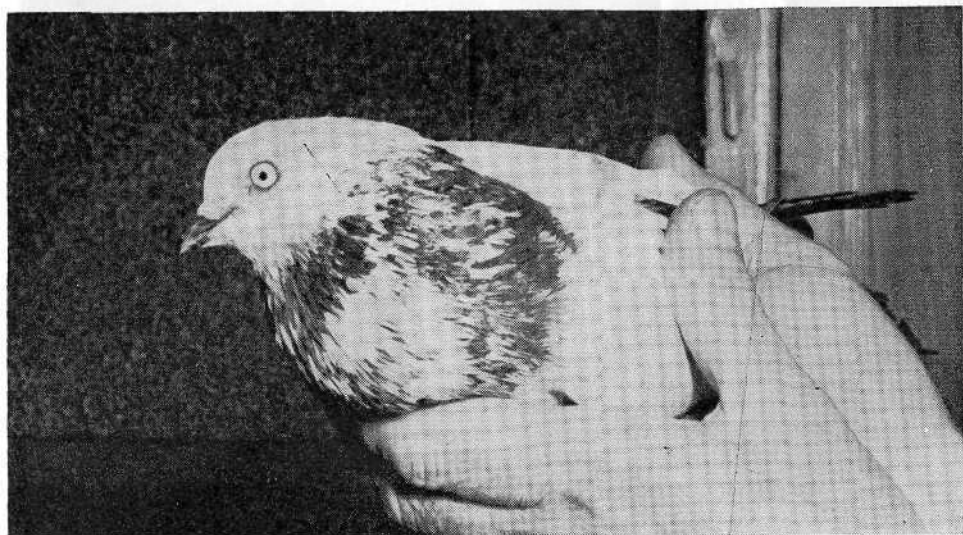
Mottle, chuck, gray bar, and grizzle of Logue's family of time-flyers.



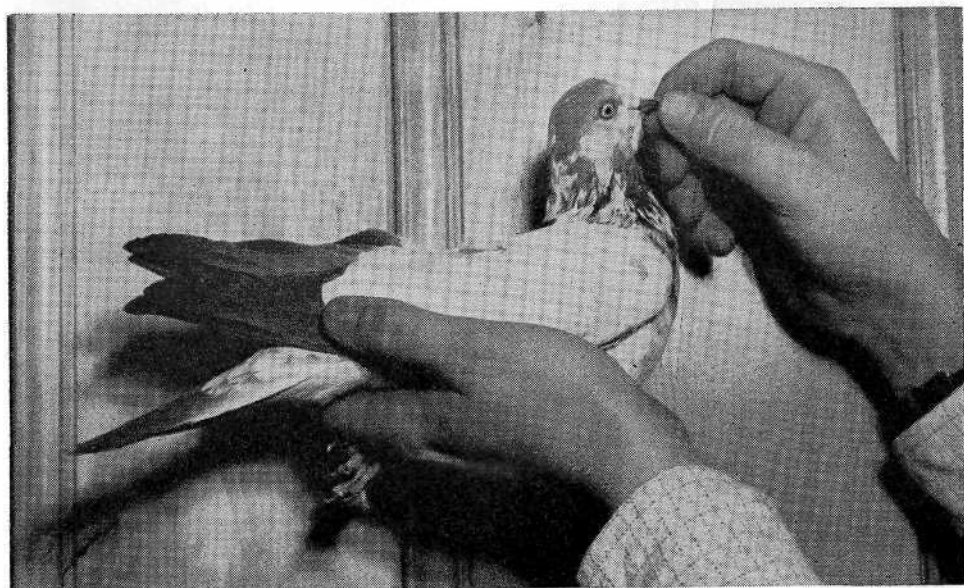
Prize-winning blue mottles that form part of the Skirvan show team.



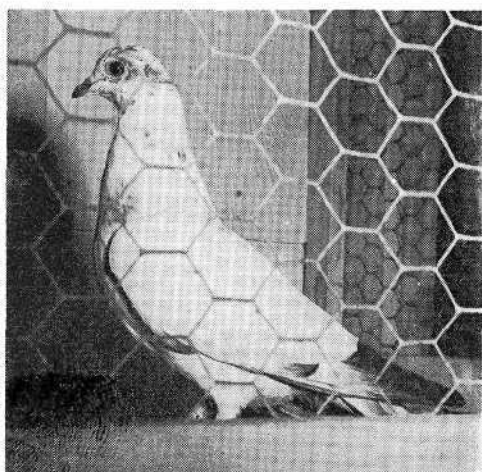
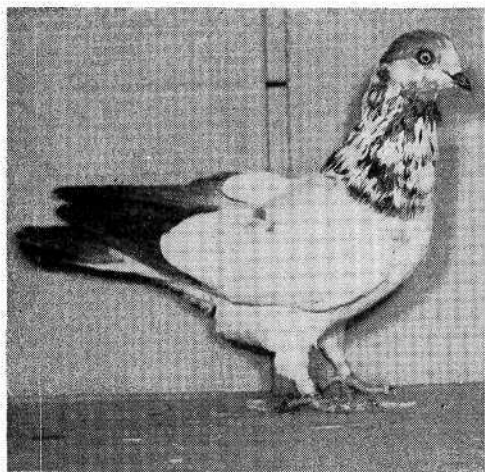
Jack Dvorak's Nuns. One of the breeds used as droppers.



Outstanding show cock of Skirvan's dual-purpose strain.

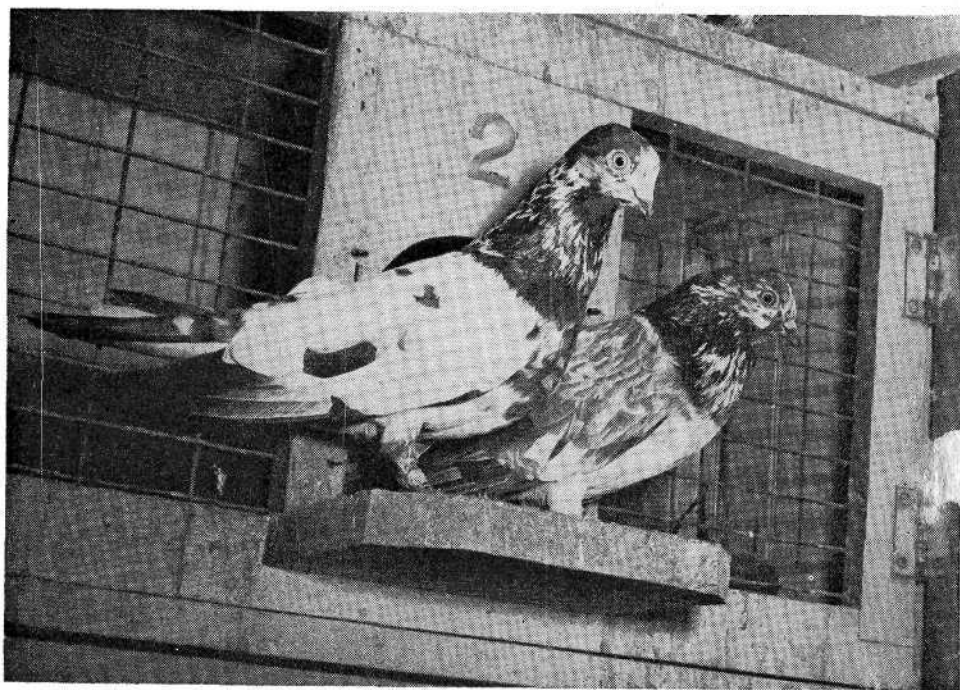


The judge examines a Tippler. If a dry, bright eye, clean, white wattle, and burnished feathers that slide silkily through the hand mean anything (and they do!) this could be the winner.



A Prenger-owned, Skirvan-bred dark print beauty.

A five-week-old of Kinnersley's breeding.



A pair of Hoffman's Tiplers.