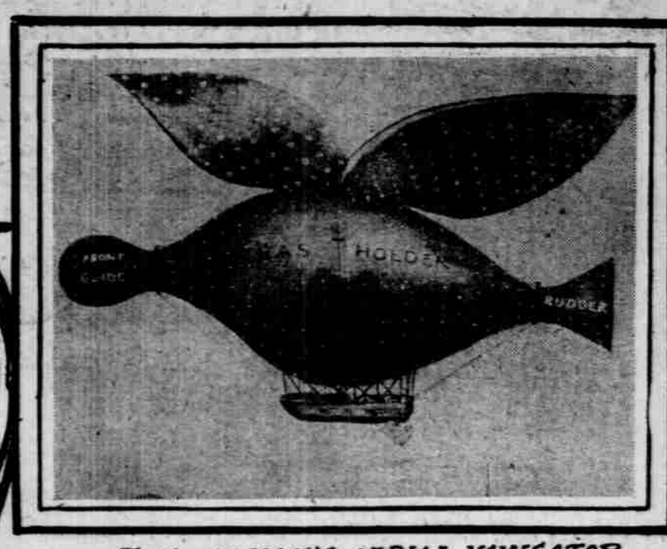
TO PROMOTE AERIAL NAVIGATION

What America's Aero Club is Doing to Win for Uncle Sam the Honor of Turning Out the First Practical Airship.

BOY KNABENSHUE NAVIGATING PROFESSOR BALDWIN'S AIRSHIP, THE CALIFORNIA "ARROW"—

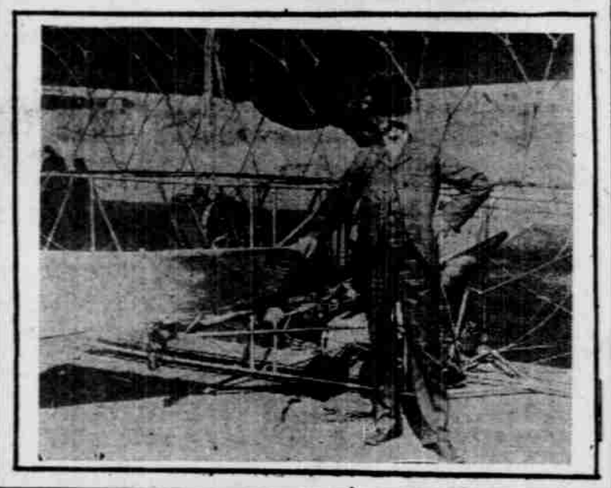
PREPARING AN AEROPLANE FOR EXPERIMENTAL —FLIGHT—

LINCOLN BEACHEY MAKING A SUCCESSFUL FLIGHT IN HIS AIRSHIP "THE CITY OF PORTLAND"—



F. M. MAHAN'S AERIAL NAVIGATOR—

SCENE AT TUXEDO ON WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY WHEN AERO CLUB HELD ITS FIRST BALOON ASCENSION—



DR. AUGUST GRETH AND CAR OF HIS AIRSHIP SHOWING HIS MOTOR AND MECHANICAL PARTS OF HIS INVENTION.

AMERICAN inventors are not waiting for foreigners to solve the great problem of aerial navigation. They are going ahead, and doing it themselves, and who would like to speculate that they won't win?

No mere desire to boast the American as against his European rival prompts the claim, but it is true that more is now being done in this country than anywhere in the world to provide man a medium of flying through the air with the same comfort and speed, in fact greater speed, than he now is carried across the continent on fast-flying trains.

All over the United States skilled inventors are directing their attention to this most important of modern, up-to-date transportation problems, and working along differen lines there are a dozen models of airships that promise success.

Some of these have already made good to some extent. A number have made flights that show their essential principles to be mechanically correct, and when certain details are worked out the airship of the future ought to be close at hand.

Not only are inventors working as individuals, but they are also urged to greater effort and encouragement by the Aero Club of America, a new but intensely alive organization.

What the Aero Club Is Doing.

This interesting club has for its object the perfection of a dirigible balloon, and the encouragement of all inventors who are working to that end. It was founded about one year ago, and includes many prominent Americans of wealth and public spirit. Its headquarters are at the Automobile Club of America 753 Fifth avenue, New York.

In its ranks are men in all walks of life, professional, artistic, sporting, social, scientific and business.

Its officers are: President, Homer W. Hedge; first vice-president, John F. O'Rourke; second vice-president, Charles J. Glidden; treasurer, Augustus Post; secretary, S. M. Butler; foreign representatives, Cortland Field Bishop and A. Lawrence Rotch, director of Blue Bell Observatory.

The club recently held its first public balloon ascension at Tuxedo. These ascensions are intended to create public interest in aerial navigation, and they will be given as often as possible. The next is scheduled to take place at West Point, and this meet will shortly be followed by another at Pittsfield, Mass., which is generally regarded as an ideal spot for the purpose.

Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, is among the most prominent and enthusiastic members of the club. He has made extended study of the problem of aerial navigation. Well remembering the hard fight he had before the telephone won its way, he is always ready to give a helping hand to the needy but able young American who is seeking to win for Uncle Sam the conquest of the air.

Evidence of Progress.

The recent exhibit of the Aero Club at the Automobile Show in New York gives an excellent idea of the progress that is being made. There were three airships, the California "Arrow," winner of the $10,000 prize at the St. Louis Exposition, and an airship built by Leo Stevens, of New York. Besides these were the Langley power model flying machines, which flew successfully over the Potomac, and gave promise that some day a full-sized aerodrome on the same lines would win all the measures of success predicted for it.

Striking as this showing was, it merely represents an outline of what is being done by Americans. To recite them all, to give a description of each in detail would be to attempt a work so monumental that it would take a huge volume.

In every instance there has been independence of action. The Nation that produced the inventor of the steamboat has inventors who dare think for themselves, and the airship experimenters are no exception. Their devices are as widely apart as the poles.

Fearless Knabenshue.

Roy Knabenshue has taken great risks with dirigble balloon. In fact he has exposed himself oftener than any other prominent American aeronaut, but he is still on terra firma, and has progressed perhaps nearer a working airship than the majority of his American contemporaries.

Knabenshue is absolutely fearless. He first came into prominence at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904. He was at that time standing in the crowd when some one was needed to operate the "Arrow," Professor Baldwin's prize-winning machine.

Knabenshue stepped from the crowd and volunteered. His complete success on that occasion drove him into deeper experiments with a machine of his own invented several years before. He went to New York with it, and made a flight that still lingers in the public mind as a genuine sensation.

Seated in his machine which in general design is somewhat similar to that of Santos Dumont, and looks equally like a cucumber or sausage with a triangular framed truss of bamboo for a car, Knabenshue rose over Central Park, and for an hour sailed over Father Knickerbocker, in full view of that Hudson River, on which another American had navigated the first steamboat.

Knabenshue showed that he could go against the wind, and could turn his air craft at will. This daring aeronaut is 28 years old, and hails from Toledo, O.

Clear across the continent, in Portland, Or., another airship startled the public by an experiment somewhat similar to that of Knabenshue.

Prominent Aeronauts.

Dr. August Greth, though an Alsatian by birth, can fairly be classed as an American, for he has been in this country for years, and it was not until after he had taken a degree from the University of California, and established business interests in San Francisco, that he first began to study aeronautics. His Greth machine gets its power from a motor. It has floated successfully over San Francisco, and showed itself to be able to go in all directions at the will of the inventor.

Leo Stevens, of New York, has had a number of successes. He too uses the design of a dirigible balloon.

F. M. Mahan has a machine that tends strongly to eccentricity in appearance. It resembles more than anything else the wild goose that we used to see pictured in the fairy books. It is provided with a lifting power balloon of sufficient capacity to overcome 95 per cent of the earth's gravity. Its two great wings, operated by a small gasoline engine, are designed to have sufficient power to propel the ship. Mr. Mahan claims great things for his invention.

Far less outre have been the experiments of the late Professor Langley. He was generally rated as the deepest thinker of American airship inventors, and though his devices have not met with full triumph, the principles that Langley has promulgated are given deepest consideration by the world's specialists on the subject.

Langley's Hope and Failure.

Langley pinned his faith to the gasoline aerodrome. The Government thought so well of this invention that the Board of Ordnance and Fortifications of the War Department appropriated $70,000 to enable the professor to carry out his experiment with it. The machine made its first appearance in 1895, and was given a public test in 1896. It sailed three-quarters of a mile over the Potomac, establishing a distance record of this kind of airship. It was built on the plan of a four-winged insect, but of model size, weighing 30 pounds, and carrying a one-horse power boiler.

The Langley "No. 2" was still a better machine, but it was damaged in launching, so that no one knows just what potentialities it may have had. It seems a pity, in view of the unfinished nature of his experiments, that Professor Langley's career should have been cut short by death at the moment. He never lost faith in his machine, and it is said that he had just brought it to the point of making a further experiment during the next few months.

Langley's machine at least proved that one of the most important things to be learned before the aerodrome could be made a success was balancing.

Various Successful Feats.

With this idea in mind, two young American brothers, Wilbur and Orville Wright, experimented with a two-decked soaring apparatus. Their tests were made at Kittyhawk, North Carolina. They built a number of machines and were encouraged by results. Both retain their enthusiasm, and are eagerly pressing forward to a better model.

In fact, this seems to be the spirit of all these daring young American inventors. They thrive on failure. The complete collapse of a machine on which they have spent time and money, leaves them entirely undaunted, and ready for a fresh effort.

A. M. Herring did not get much encouragement out of his first efforts, but he kept sturdily at it until he perfected a gasoline motor aeroplane. The model has flown 15 miles in a circle when tethered to a tall pole, and only stopped when the supply of gas gave out. It has a motor that weighs only two pounds, but gains a speed of more than 30 miles an hour.

Charles Hamilton takes a chapter from Benjamin Franklin, and pins his faith to a man-carrying kite. Tethered to a stout rope his huge kite of bamboo and duck has carried the aeronaut high in the air.

Israel Ludlow has a kite on similar lines. Drawn by a tug it gave good results in tests made on the Hudson.

Captain James M. Clinton is hopeful of a dirigible balloon run by turbines. The final test has not yet been made.

Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, pins his faith to a tetrahedral kite. When released in air it describes a series of descending spirals.

Bell is one of the veterans in the ranks of airship inventors. From him they range in age all the way down to Lincoln Beechey, "The Boy Aeronaut," who, at the age of 18, has made many daring flights in the Baldwin airship. Lately he has been working on a machine of his own modeling. His remarkably successful flights in the airship "City of Portland" during the Lewis and Clark Exposition last Summer gave him world-wide fame.

It is a wide list, and a varied one, all Americans working differently for the same end, but with a vigor and intelligence that warrants the hope that Uncle Sam will invent the first practical airship.

Uninscribed Tomb of Robert Emmet

"Pray tell me," I said to an old man who strayed
Drooping o'er the graves which his own hand had made,
"Pray tell me the name of the tenant who sleeps
Beneath yonder lone stone, where the sad willow weeps;
Every stone is engraved with the name of the dead,
But yon black slab declares not whose spirit is fled."

In silence he bowed, then he beckoned me nigh,
Till we stood o'er the grave—then he said with a sigh:
"Yes, they dared not to trace e'en a word on this stone,
To the memory of him who sleeps coldly alone;
He told them—commanded—the lines o'er his grave
Should never be traced by the hands of a slave.

"He bade them to shade e'en his name in the gloom,
Till the morning of freedom should dawn on his tomb;
When the flag of my country for liberty flies,
Then let my name and my monument rise!
You see they obeyed him—'tis sixty-eight years,
And they come still to moisten his grave with their tears.

"He was young, like yourself, and aspired to o'erthrow
The tyrants who filled his loved island with woe;
They crushed his bold spirit—this earth was confined—
Too scant for the range of his luminous mind."

He paused, and the old man went slowly away,
And I felt as he left me an impulse to pray.
Grant Heaven I may see, ere my own days are done,
A monument rise o'er my country's best son;
And, Oh! proudest task, be it mine to indite
The long delayed tribute a freeman must write.
Till then shall its theme in my heart deeply dwell,
So joy to thy soul, dear R. E., fare thee well.

G.

Barrie Viewed in Verse.

Exchange.

(Theater-goers who are fond of Barrie have been amused at Captain Graham's tilts against him in "More Misrepresentative Men." As Miss Ethel Barrymore, Captain Graham's fiancee, is now appearing in Barrie's play, "Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire," and Maude Adams in "Peter Pan," the following stanzas are especially to the point:)

O tiniest of tiny men!
So wise, so whimsical, so witty!
Whose magic little fairy-pen
Is steeped in human pity;
Whose humor plays so quaint a tune,
From Peter Pan to Pantaloon!

And modern matrons who can find
So little leisure for the Nurs'ry,
Whose interest in babykind
Is eminently curs'ry,
New views on Motherhood acquire
From Alice-Sitting-by-the-Fire!