

All Sails Set

REVISED



READING DEVELOPMENT SERIES

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Grade 6 - ALL SAILS SET

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NOTE TO THE TEACHER

This reader uses Canadian English spellings. Listed below are words which differ from American English spellings. Canadian spellings are listed first, followed by the American spelling, and the pages on which they occur.

behaviour - behavior: 100, 258
centre(d) - center(ed): 50, 60, 68, 176, 246, 281
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THE FLIGHT OF THE SILVER DART

PIONEER AIRMEN

Bras d'Or Lake is quite a big lake, blue and sparkling, nestling between the great rolling hills of Cape Breton at the northern tip of Nova Scotia. It is also a very famous lake, for from its ice in the year 1909 a young man named Douglas McCurdy made the first flight in Canada.

The story of that first airplane flight goes back even further than 1909, back, indeed, to a sunny day in the 1890's. On that day Douglas McCurdy, then just a small boy, was playing on the shore of Bras d'Or Lake, beside his home in the little town of Baddeck. Near him stood a tall white-haired man, throwing little chips of wood out onto the water. He would watch carefully which way the wind blew the chips and then make notes in a little book. After a while Douglas became very curious about this and went over to the man.

"What are you doing?"

"I am studying air currents," the man told him.

"Why are you doing that?"

"Because some day man will fly through the air just as he now sails on water, and for that reason we should know all about the air."

"What's your name?" Douglas McCurdy wanted to know.

The man smiled. "My name is Bell," he said. That was a very modest way of putting it, for he was really Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, the famous inventor of the telephone.

After that day Doctor Bell came down often to the side of the lake. Sometimes he threw chips on the water and sometimes he flew small kites. Often he let young Douglas help him with the kites, and in this way Douglas became much interested in the idea of flying and even dreamed that he might be the first man ever to fly.

When winter came, Doctor Bell went back to his home in the United States, but the following summer he was back again working in his fine home on the side of Beinn Breagh – which is Gaelic for Beautiful Mountain. Each winter he went away and each summer he returned to continue his experiments. As the years went on, the friendship grew between the young man and the old man, and Douglas's desire to fly became stronger than ever.

In 1903, while Douglas McCurdy was still in school, the first powered flight in world history was made by the

Wright Brothers at Kittyhawk, North Carolina. But still no Canadian had flown, nor had an Englishman.

Finally young Douglas was through school and ready for college. He left Baddeck then, left the beautiful lake and the blue mountain, and went west to the University of Toronto, where he took up engineering. Doctor Bell had convinced him that engineering was his career.

At the University he met another young man who wanted more than anything else to fly. His new friend was Casey Baldwin. They discussed all their ideas together and even went so far as to prepare plans and write papers on flying, which was thought by the college professors to be a rather foolish pastime.

Down at Baddeck, Doctor Bell was still carrying on his experiments, now with much larger kites of all different shapes. Some were towed by hand, others were pulled up in the air by horses, and still others were towed by a steamer out on the lake. In spite of all his work, he wasn't very close to building an airplane that would fly under its own power. One evening he and Mrs. Bell were discussing this, and she suggested that Doctor Bell get some young men to help him, young men with enthusiasm and a knowledge of engineering.

"A capital idea," said Doctor Bell, "I'll send for young Douglas McCurdy and the friend he keeps writing me about." Thus it was that Douglas McCurdy and Casey Baldwin received an invitation to come back to Baddeck and work with Doctor Bell in an attempt to build an airplane that would actually fly under its own power.



It was decided then to form an "Aerial Experiment Association" for the sole purpose of getting a man into the air. Doctor Bell was chairman of the association and Mrs. Bell put up the money - thirty-five thousand dollars. The association was formed in 1907, and in addition to Douglas McCurdy and Casey Baldwin there were two Americans, both friends of Doctor Bell. They were Lieutenant Tom Selfridge and Glenn Curtiss. Selfridge was a lieutenant in the American Army who, like Casey Baldwin, had always followed the flying experiments in other countries. Glenn Curtiss was a young motorcycle builder who had a reputation for building very fine gasoline engines.

That year was a wonderful one at Baddeck. The young men lived together in a large house on the side of Beinn Breagh overlooking the lake. They had a workshop nearby where they built kites and gliders of all shapes and sizes. Some of these gliders looked like a honeycomb, with thousands of little cells, but others were regular biplanes - that is, they had two main wings above each other.