

CHAPTER XXXVI

AIRPLANE ADVENTURES IN THE MIDDLE WEST

In studying aviation, Grandfather took the Curtis airplane into the Central West several times, and on some of these excursions Grandmother accompanied him. Grandmother was an excellent flier - she never appeared at all afraid and in the roughest air never showed the slightest traces of air sickness.

One day as we flew from Cleveland to Columbus, one of the three motors went dead. The plane, however, was able to fly with two motors. Grandmother evinced no uneasiness at this mishap and Grandfather showed his confidence by taking a nap. We landed at our destination safely and the pilot and mechanic took off on two motors and went back to Cleveland for repairs. Next day we resumed our journey.

On the first trip when Grandmother was along, Grandfather decided to stop at Wausau. The cartoons about "Dreams Come True" and "Boyhood Ambitions" had nothing on what happened to Grandfather and Grandmother. We were accompanied from Chicago by Mrs. G. D. Jones and her daughters Phoebe and Ellen. A stop was made at Oshkosh to get a bite of lunch. Grandmother telephoned some of her friends and by the time we took off, quite a group bid us bon voyage and wished us a happy landing. Two of them went on to Wausau with us, one of whom, Mr. Beardsmore, found that sea sickness, to which he was subject, was as nothing compared to air sickness.

We had already become blasé to airplane riding and were not prepared for what happened to us. The day had become drizzly, the pilot had some trouble in finding the town; besides the stop at Oshkosh had delayed us. Meanwhile a large group of our friends - it looked like half the town -

had come to the airport to see us arrive, and when a half hour past our scheduled time had elapsed, the crowd had become anxious for our safety. So when the big ship gracefully settled into the field - for Gorton could set the ship down in a way to win admiration of all who witnessed - the crowd all cheered and greeted us like conquering heroes.

Next day we had a couple of extra places and started to invite friends to go with us to Minneapolis. Two places enabled us to invite all friends of our own age - and we still had the two places left, so we took a couple of the younger set - Ruth Alexander and Genevieve Edmonds.

A year later, after many miles of flying, Grandfather and Grandmother on a beautiful morning again settled down at the Wausau Airport. Again a crowd of friends greeted us. This time Grandfather said: "The weather is fine and you are going to take a ride." Before they had a chance to say "No" Grandfather had a plane full off the ground and then another plane full and still another.

Then he said to Mrs. and Mrs. Gilbert, friends of long standing and somewhat older than Grandfather and Grandmother, "We are going to Chicago tomorrow. Your daughter, who lives there, would like to see you, and we are going to take you with us." "All right," they replied, and next morning they enjoyed the ride greatly.

The first time Grandfather landed in Kansas City he invited Cousin Genevieve Parlin and Cousin Ruth Brooks to take a ride. But they would not think of such a thing. After he had been in Kansas City several times, he persuaded them both along with Cousin Emmet to come out to the airport and see the plane. They would not, however, promise to go up. The pilot, not understanding the situation, while Grandfather stopped to talk with a man for a moment, hustled them into the plane and took off, but immediately

landed. "Why did you not give them a flight?" asked Grandfather. "The ladies got panicky and I had to take them down," said Gorton.

"What was the matter? Why did you not take a ride?" Grandfather asked his cousins. "We had to come down, Cousin Charley, the plane stopped. Oh, yes, it did. We looked out the window and we could see we were not moving at all." "Nonsense," said Grandfather, "you were going 95 miles an hour all the while, now you really must take a ride." So pushing the rather reluctant cousins into the plane, Grandfather began to point out the sights as we took off. "The Missouri River is not much to look at close at hand, but we shall go up so high that it will look pretty."

"Are we not getting pretty high, Cousin Charley?" "Oh, no, we are only a mile high and must get higher than that for the Missouri River to look pretty." So we went on up some 10,000 feet, where we could look down on fleecy white clouds and see on them the shadow of our plane encircled by a rainbow, and through crevices in the clouds, could see the Missouri River as a silver thread glistening below it. "I can see that flying is fun," said one of the ladies. "It was wonderful," said the other.

People are afraid of what they do not understand. In his talks on aviation Grandfather ~~was~~ went to say: "As a boy I recall an older generation who were afraid to ride on the train; more recently I remember a generation afraid to ride in an automobile; today we are in a generation which is afraid to ride in an airplane. What will the next generation be afraid to ride in? I can tell you. The next generation will be afraid to ride behind a horse."