

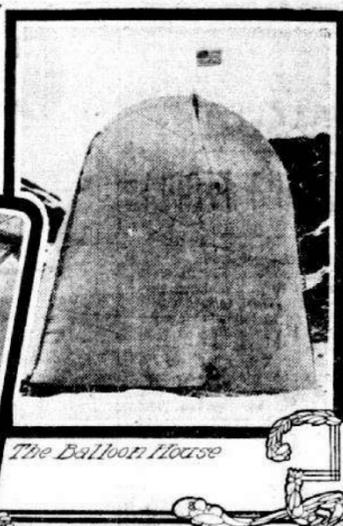
TO THE POLE BY AIRSHIP



Wellman at the Wheel



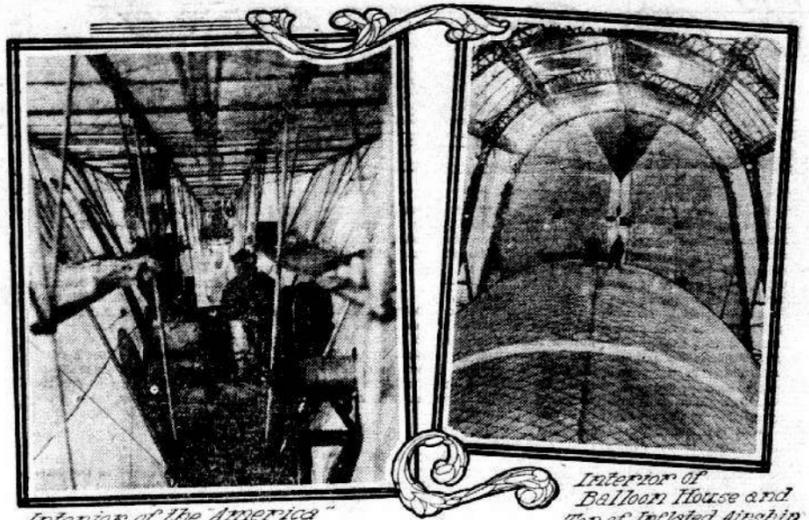
One of the Eleven Foot Screws



The Balloon House



"America" Leaving Shed



Interior of the America

Interior of Balloon House and Top of Inflated Airship

SOME fine day in August, if present plans do not miscarry, Walter Wellman, one of the most persistent of American Arctic explorers, will set out for the north pole in an airship. This is by no means his first attempt to reach the apex of our planet. In 1894 and again in 1898 he invaded the frozen north, and, whereas, he did not get within sight of the pole, he did discover new lands and otherwise contribute to the world's knowledge of this region. Both of these exploring expeditions were, however, conducted on the regulation plan—that is, by means of staunch vessels that could defy the ice and supplemented by the dog teams which are well nigh indispensable to exploration in the Arctic.

Wellman was not very strongly impressed by the project of the ill-fated Anders for reaching the pole in an ordinary free balloon of the spherical type, which must obviously be at the mercy of the winds, but from the time that the dirigible or steerable balloon first proved its practicability for long flights he was imbued with an ambition to trek northward via the aerial route—the one untried path to the pole, and the one which it seemed might be free from the obstacles which have rendered baffling the other highways during all these years of polar campaigning. It was in the year 1905 that Wellman first formulated definitely in his mind his daring scheme for reaching to the north pole in an airship and sending back the news of his victory by means of that other twentieth century innovation, wireless telegraphy.

Practical work began at once and the following season, the summer of 1906, saw the Arctic airship America, a reality, and a balloon house with the necessary incidental repair shops, etc., established far within the Arctic circle at a point as near to the pole as it was practised to establish a permanent human habitation. At first it

was hoped that flight for the pole could be arranged that summer, but it was soon seen that everything was so new and untried that the entire "open season" of two and a half months must be given over to preparations and the institution of permanent headquarters.

With a working base provided, the Arctic aeronaut and his aids went northward the following year, the summer of 1907, filled with hope that they could make their impatiently awaited dash for the pole. However, unkindly fate vetoed the project by providing weather conditions which no ordinary craft could combat. This was particularly discouraging because Wellman knew that business engagements would keep him in the United States during the summer of 1908, and the weather handicap of 1907 meant that the project must be put off until 1909. However, a brief respite in the gales of 1907 did permit Wellman to make a 20-mile voyage in his airship that clinched his faith in the flyer and has made him all the more confident of the outcome this year if he but has reasonable weather conditions—something more auspicious than the terrific summer of 1907.

In speaking of his unique project, just before setting out for the north, Mr. Wellman said: "The object of our proposed aerial cruise is not merely to reach the pole, but also to gain knowledge of the unexplored region lying about it. If the America were simply to pass over this unknown area the observations as to land or water masses, ice conditions, the weather characteristics of the region, etc., would, I think, be of immense value. We believe that our airship, with its

ability to motor more than 2,000 miles on the supply of fuel that we shall carry, has at least a fair chance to navigate from our headquarters directly to the pole.

"The distance from our headquarters to the pole is 75 statute miles. Once at the pole we shall be able to go with the most favorable wind toward any part of the land which surrounds the Arctic sea. The greatest distance from the pole to land is 1,000 miles, while the shortest distance is 553 miles, and the average distance is in the neighborhood of 700 miles. At the outset of our dash toward the pole we can certainly count upon the assistance of a favorable wind, because we will not set out from Camp Wellman until we have such favorable wind. However, even if the wind proves generally unfavorable after we leave the permanent balloon station the project is yet possible of accomplishment.

"In order that our efforts may be crowned with success it is only necessary that the America shall carry us somewhere near the pole, because we are going prepared to make the remainder of the journey to the pole and back again by sledging. The America can proceed with her engine power for 120 hours, traveling continuously at a

speed of 18 miles per hour. The average wind of the polar ocean in July and August is 16 miles per hour. If we are so unfortunate as to have a wind of average force blowing directly contrary to our course throughout the entire time of the voyage, we would still make headway at the rate of eight miles per hour, which would allow us the 120 hours' travel permitted for our fuel supply a distance covered of about 200 miles. Now, as I have mentioned, it is only 75 miles from our base of supplies to the pole.

"Granting these most unfavorable conditions we would find ourselves at the pole with our fuel well nigh exhausted, but there is every reason to believe that our airship would remain in the air several days longer with a large chance that in this time the winds would carry her as a free drifting balloon far toward some land, and of course any land would mean safety for all our crew. Even should this alternative fail we would have no reason to be discouraged, for we have not put all our eggs in one basket, or in two baskets for that matter. We still have recourse to the sledging scheme. We go prepared not only for the summer and autumn, but with provisions enough to enable us to remain in the north, if need be, the entire winter, sliding back the following spring, which is the season when Arctic travel may be pursued most favorably."

"One important factor in favor of Wellman's success this season is that he will not be compelled to lose much time in experimental preliminaries. On the other hand, he has in readiness carefully planned and fully equipped headquarters. This base of supplies, known as "Camp Wellman," is located on James Island, Spitzbergen, an uninhabited and unclaimed country. Here is a huge steel framework, 85 feet high and more than 200 feet in length, securely anchored and braced to withstand the severest Arctic blasts. It is but necessary to spread an acre of sail cloth over this skeleton structure and there is provided a balloon house that is adequate for all practical purposes. Machine shops and other incidental structures are in this place, having been constructed during the past few years—grouped within a stone's throw of that rugged monument which marks the spot from which Andree set out on that tragic first attempt to reach the pole by the aerial route. This balloon station and the airship itself were provided by the investment of the Chicago capitalists who backed Mr. Wellman's aerial project at the outset, but the whole installation was this year turned over to the explorer as a gift, and his present quest is made with his own funds, supplemented by the contributions of several men who are ambitious that an American shall beat explorers of all other nationalities to the pole.

"While, as has been explained, Wellman has headquarters ready to hand in the Arctic, the airship must be transported from Paris, where it has been since the last attempt at a polar cruise, and a variety of other equipment must be assembled. For one thing, a complete new gasmaking plant is to be installed to provide lifting power for the gigantic balloon. This new hydrogen plant involves the transportation to Danes island of 110 tons of sulphuric acid and 10 tons of iron pyrites. This paraphernalia, the airship and finally Mr. Wellman and the members of his party are being transferred from Tromsø, North Norway, to Danes island by the motor ship Arctic, which will have to make several of these ferry trips ere everything is assembled at the base of supplies.

"The motor ship Arctic, which is playing so important a part in Mr. Wellman's present preparations, is herself the subject of no mean interest. She was launched only this past spring, and is a three-masted schooner of 450 tons burden, built especially for ice navigation and of great sailing power. She is equipped with a paraffin motor which makes her independent of fuel while it can be this motor giving the vessel a speed of seven miles an hour without the use of sails. She carries a crew of seven men. When the Arctic discharges her final cargo at St. Athanasie the deck cargo of the ship will be a very different airship

from that which Wellman brought to this outpost of civilization several years ago. Melvin Vaniman, the chief engineer of the expedition, has occupied the interim in making many improvements in his craft. The most important of these is found in the installation of a second complete motive system, separate and distinct from the one originally installed. The extra engine power is insurance against accident, and will double the speed of the airship if both motors are operated at the same time, as they may be without interfering with one another.

"The America," which the adventurers, Walter Wellman relies upon to land him at the pole, is a down times as large as any of the dirigible balloons with which Americans are familiar through the exhibitions given in recent years at county fairs and military tournaments. It is not so large as the German giant of the air which Count Zeppelin recently sailed 200 miles, to the consternation of all Europe, and especially Great Britain, but it is twice as large as the French airships regarding which newspaper readers have heard much. Expressed in cold figures, the America is 184 feet

long and 52 feet in diameter at her present girth. She will lift nearly 10 tons. From the cigar-shaped bag of the America is suspended a steel car 10 feet in length. This car will be pretty crowded when the ship sails poleward. Here will be stationed Aeronaut Wellman and his party. Considerable space must be given over to the two motors of 80-horsepower each for driving the ship through the air, and yet more space is taken up by the all-important supply of gasoline. Some 1,200 gallons of this gasoline is stored in a round steel tank a foot and a half in diameter, which extends the entire length of the car, and thousands of pounds in addition are stored in every available nook and corner, so that all told the America will carry upwards of three tons of this precious fuel.

But this is by no means all the cargo of the pioneer airship. Fully as important as anything that has been mentioned are the 19 sledges, sledges and fully equipped lifeboat—practical life preservers designed to enable the aeronauts to make their way homeward should their craft leave them shipwrecked on land or ice or water.

Then there are provisions for 10 months in this crowded space, tools for making huts out of the heavy balloon fabric in the event of disaster to the airship, and, finally, a formidable array of scientific instruments of all kinds for making and recording observations of all kinds. No mention of the premier Arctic airship would be complete without reference to one feature, the like of which has never been possessed by any other sky craft. This novelty, which could be used only over the ice fields where there are no houses, electric wires or other obstacles, is known as an "equilibrator." This ponderous tail of the airship weighs 1,200 pounds. When not in use it is drawn up under the car, but when needed it can be let loose and dragged over the ice, serving as a powerful brake to prevent the airship being swept out of her course by contrary winds. The odd thing about it is that this Yankee invention serves a double purpose, for the interior is stuffed with provisions for the use of the balloons. The stuffed serpent is waterproof, so that no harm can come to the food even though the retarder be dragged through icy seas.

LABOR NOTES

Boston plasterers now receiving 60 cents an hour demand 65 cents.

Men are not working more than half time in the Indiana mining districts. For the eighth time Charles H. Moyer has been elected president of the Western Federation of Miners.

The wrecking truck drivers of Brownsville, N. Y., have recently formed an organization, which is gaining numbers. After considerable agitation the steam engineers and hoistmen in Joplin, Mo., have organized a union for both crafts.

The marine engineers now have a total membership on the coasts, the lakes and the rivers of the United States of more than 11,000. The organization of the wholesale dry goods clerks in New York city has applied for its admission to the United Hebrew Trades of New York.

It has been decided that the 15th annual convention of the Theatrical Stage Employees of America, in 1910, will be held in Washington, D. C.

A call has been issued for the holding of the national convention of the Women's Trade Union League in Chicago in the early part of September next.

The convention of the Wood, Wire and Metal Lathers' International union will be held this year in Boston, Mass., in the week beginning September 13.

A movement is on foot in the French parliament with a view to obtain an increase in the amount of pensions paid to an employee of railroad companies.

The general officers of the International Seamen's union have decided to petition congress to have the general law so amended as to prevent the undermanning of vessels.

A report recently issued from the international office of the cigar makers shows that the organization now numbers 42,000 members and that it has funds on hand amounting to \$200,000.

The International Printing Pressmen's convention appointed a committee to devise a practical and economical plan to provide treatment for the tuberculous, which plan shall be submitted to the referendum.

The executive council of the American Federation of Labor adopted a resolution in favor of the establishment of an international federation of labor. President Gompers will advocate the plan during his trip to Europe.

The French court has ordered the dissolution of the trades union which the postal telegraph and telephone employees formed during the great strike in Paris last May, holding that the law of 1884 relating to workmen's

unions does not apply to postal, telegraph and telephone employees who are state employees.

The last Texas legislature passed 14 state laws in favor of labor.

An attempt is being made to organize the wireless operators into a union.

The striking granite cutters at Waco, Tex., have won their demands for a raise from \$3.25 to \$3.60 a day.

Charles F. Wirmel of the Cincinnati Stationary Engineers' union has been appointed labor commissioner of Ohio.

The building trades in Sweden are now on the eve of a general lockout, owing to a dispute concerning working conditions.

A law was passed in Michigan recently which makes it unlawful for women and minors to work more than nine hours out of 24.

The Sawmillers' International union, which has its headquarters in Indianapolis, recently chartered a new union in Vancouver, B. C.

The National Women's Trade Union league has issued its call for the next annual conference, which is to be held in Chicago on September 27 of this year.

It is reported that the Western Federation of Miners has instructed its executive board to print socialist literature in a number of languages for distribution.

Pending the outcome of the conference between mine owners and miners, which is now in session, the 8,000 striking miners at Pittsburg, Kan., have resumed work.

According to statistics which have just been published there were 3,474 persons affiliated with the organized labor movement in Serbia at the close of the year 1907.

It is stated upon good authority that fully 80 per cent of the Scottish coal miners are in favor of insisting upon their demand for a reduction of 12 per cent in wages.

President T. L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers has been in the anthracite coal districts arousing interest in organization. The union has a large number of organizers in the field.

Governor Hadley of Missouri has signed the woman's nine-hour law. It regulates the employment of girls and women in factories, restaurants and other such places. Employment is limited to nine hours a day between 5 a. m. and 10 p. m.

James Duncan, first vice president of the American Federation of Labor, has appointed a committee of 16 to make a study of the subject of industrial education in this and other countries and report to the next national convention of the federation.

A fund of \$50,000 is being raised for the erection of a new building for the Home for Aged and Disabled Railway Employees of America on a site north of Highland Park, Ill. A large portion

of the fund is now in hand and ground has already been broken for the new structure.

From now on the officers of the Minnesota State Federation of Labor will make every effort to bring about peaceful settlements of all labor disputes. Should any controversy arise the officials will at once go to the heart of the matter and use every honorable means of arranging a settlement of the difficulties.

FOR SLEEPY HOTEL GUESTS.

Now it is unnecessary for weary, watchless guests to climb out of bed and call to the telephone central when they wish to discover the time. The whole laborious business is eliminated by a new device which may be attached to the bedpost or placed under the pillow. It consists of a small telephone receiver, connected with a master clock situated some place in the hotel. The sleeper wakes up, but is averse to rising. He reaches to the telephone receiver, places it to his ear and presses the button. A set of gears will then strike the hour, the quarter and the number of minutes past the quarter.—Van Norden Magazine.

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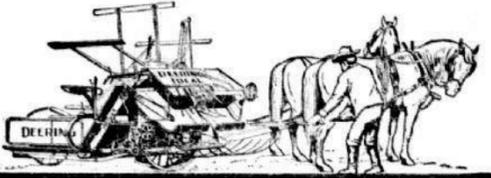
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