

**No Time For Fear:
Thoughts About Taking a First Flight
(July 18, 1914)**

It was thrilling.¹ One can hardly imagine the sensation of the first trip in the air. It gave me a feeling of supremacy to realize that I was above the ground and free to go anywhere that I pleased. Certainly it was the greatest sensation of the kind I have ever experienced.

“But weren’t you afraid you’d fall out?” inquired his wife, anxiously, approaching the subject the first time since he returned.

Afraid? Why, no. Fear was the least of my thoughts. The entire affair was arranged too hurriedly to be given much serious thought. When my lecture was concluded I was bidding farewell to the committee at Cedar Point and it was learned that I had but 15 minutes to get to Sandusky to make the train for Toledo, where I was scheduled to speak. Anthony Jannus, the aviator, happened to come up at this time and introduced himself and offered to get me to Sandusky in time for the train, and I accepted the offer. We got in the hydro-aeroplane, and the first thing I knew we were skimming beautifully over the water. It was wonderful. Then we arose and sailed at a height of many hundred feet and it seemed but a few minutes until we reached Sandusky.

I’m enthusiastic over the possibilities of the air. I really believe that within five years passengers will be carried between Terre Haute and St. Louis. Within ten years the air will be filled with crafts, I believe. I know how long it took the steam engine to develop, but we have all the necessary equipment and appliances to work with now and the airship should be developed wonderfully within a few years.

Terre Haute has a chance to become a great aeroplane center. Mr. Jannus spoke very highly of the work being done by the Johnson brothers here. I believe that if the necessary capital were furnished these boys that they would be able to pay back handsome profits from commercial work within the next ten years.

Of course, I am enthusiastic over my first ride, but then, you know how people talked about the steam engine when it was first built.

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¹ Debs had taken his first flight, aboard a hydroplane, as part of a tour of Ohio, when it was used to cross part of Lake Erie in order to make a train connection at Sandusky.