

AVIATION MAKES DEBUT IN GRINNELL

Flights by Aviator Ralph McMillen in Curtiss Biplane Popular Feature of Fair.

7-6-1912

ONE MADE YESTERDAY
WAS ESPECIALLY GOOD

McMillen Was Up 22½ Minutes
and Rose to a Height of Over
3,000 Feet.

Grinnell made its first acquaintance with an airship during the past few days. The flight on Wednesday, made in the face of a strong and treacherous wind, was good; that of yesterday, when conditions were favorable, gave the term "bird man" an entirely new meaning to all who watched the Curtiss bi-plane, with its daring driver, soaring high in the air apparently with all the ease of a bird.

The flight yesterday was a sample of aviation at its best. It was deferred until 5 o'clock in order to allow the wind to go down. The day's program of races was almost over when the biplane was wheeled out into the field. It took the air perfectly and then for 22½ minutes the spectators were given a sample of real aviation. The biplane rose to a height of over 3,000 feet. It passed over the grounds in big and ever widening circles, going sometimes as fast as 70 miles an hour and never less than a mile a minute, although the speed was not evident

to those on the ground. It passed over the city, going as far as Cooper school, then circled back again to the fair grounds. The landing was perfect.

On Wednesday, on account of the wind, nothing so extensive was attempted. A height of about 800 feet was attained and the machine stayed up 12 minutes and traveled about ten miles. At landing there was a slight accident. The weight was thrown a little too far back when the biplane struck the ground. The drag, which is thrown out behind to lessen the impetus, was bent and this caused the bending of one of the iron rods which supports the framework. The propeller, thus thrown out of alignment, struck one of the struts, which separate the two planes and shattered it into fragments. The damage was easily repaired.

Ralph McMillen, the aviator sent by the Curtiss people in place of Charles F. Walsh, the flyer originally contracted for, made a hit by his nerve. Walsh was injured a few weeks ago while making a flight in New York state and is now in the hospital.

McMillen himself is just out of the hospital. He is a Perry boy and was badly injured while making a flight in his home town last May. He had a passenger with him and the passenger became frightened and seized the control. In the resulting fall, McMillen was badly smashed up. Both legs and both arms, his collar bone, shoulder blade and four ribs were broken. The passenger who caused all the trouble escaped with a broken arm. One of McMillen's legs is still in splints and a rest has been arranged for it when he takes his seat in his biplane. In spite of his terrible experience the young aviator showed absolutely no trace of nervousness. He wanted to give the people a good flight yesterday and he succeeded. Only words of praise have been heard for this special attraction provided by the fair management.