

## THE FIRST FLIGHT

*Created by Peter Alden Yule*

In the earliest days of my memory, I am sure before the age of reason captured me, took me prisoner, beat me, tortured me and left me to be as I am today and forever, I could fly! Now before you think what I know you are going to think, let me make it very clear, I am not telling you of stepping into an aircraft with the grownups, and flying to Detroit or Atlanta, I am telling you of spreading my wings, and flying; as free as the birds, able to soar, glide, look down from the heavens, to survey the magnificence of earth, to just get up and go, in short to FLY.

Now don't tell me that you as a child, or in moments of whimsy, or in the wildest dreams common to all mankind, that you have never given thought to flying. The thought of flying, powered only by thought, or some other intrinsically unknown inner power of the mind, has been a driving force behind hundreds of generations of mankind. It is the stuff of legends, of myth, of the dream worlds of shape shifting American Indian cultures, of the believers the devotees of the so called out of body experience. Central American cultures have vividly depicted in stone, cuttings, and statues of hard rock, images, idols, freed from the gravity of earth, engaged in flight. All of the artifacts and relics were created thousands of years before hot air balloons, winged craft, and Para-sails, and hang gliders. The hidden cultures of history, less studied and often times looked on as drug dependent savages of the inner parts of the sub-tropic continents have believed in free flight. The ability that I am speaking of has no rival for being at the top of the list of desirable qualities, left out of our tool kits for life by an almighty creator.

Well is it possible, is it even imaginable to think if only for a moment, what I am about to tell you is true. Am I the only person on earth that knows the truth of my opening statements? Let me tell you once again, I can fly, can't I.

Please dear friend don't tell me it isn't so. Do not remove from me the last hopes, of my being, unique among my peers. Do not tell me that I can not fly. That would shatter me; leave me in an unbelievable quandary, unable to explain those things that I have looked down on from hundreds of feet above, suspended only on faith. Have you never

flown?

I am admittedly a somewhat strange and by all standards an unusually reserved individual. My life experience does not in any way differ very much from your own. Like you, I am a child of the universe a created, not evolved being. I have been shaped and molded by my environment, with its own sickly and twisted dements. I have been molded into what can best be described in a summary word, a man. With that being so, how then is it that I can fly? Does not man every man reject the pathetic felicitous thought that man might be able to fly. Are not the Gods of Truth and Wisdom conspired now to force upon us the pretentious theory that man was not meant to fly. Not fly in the sense that I have flown, or was it just a dream?

There was no difference in the day, it had begun hot humid, and still without a breeze, just as the days before had been. The whole northeast portion of the United States was in the grip of a record heat wave. The radio urged parents to keep children inside to avoid possible heat stroke. People were encouraged to stay as much as possible, away from public, and crowded places. Those who owned automobiles were reminded of the danger of overheating in such weather. Mother had gone to work at the arsenal, doing a man's work to help the war effort. My father, was not known to me, and had long since left the country for the lands that lay beyond my horizon. Nanas' house was to be my refuge for the day. There were no children of any age group anywhere in the neighborhood on this particular day. By mid afternoon, in order that she may finish her household chores, Nana sent me down the stairs to sit out in the shade of the front porch. With very precise instruction I was cautioned to not leave the porch or the front steps. "Play" she said, "play quietly and stay out of trouble until your mother gets home." And so it was that I, a young, and at that age, an uncompleted individual of limited schooling and without the benefit of an education, in such philosophical matters as free flight, was set to journey where no man had gone before.

Quietly I sat, with my eyes fixed on birds in flight circling in great skyward spirals, and then descending again. Far above the giant oak trees and towering elms, higher than the tallest pines visible in the distance, the birds in flight called out to me. I recall that I was wearing my newest hand me down shirt, with the picture of mountains on it. I

wore also with pride my high top black sneakers, rescued by my mother from a trash heap. I still had no knowledge of proprietary items of personal ownership. Material things and the values attributed to them had not been instilled in my still virgin brain. I had not been corrupted into the pathways of social submission to the high standards of intelligence that would become mandatory a few years hence. I was in retrospect a free soul. Oh how wonderful was my life. I could dream. I could fly!

Time passed with each second, each minute, being nothing more than a delaying tactic of nature, holding me back from my uncertain fate. At the moment of departure, I stood at the top of the steps and then climbed to the handrail that surrounded the porch. I looked toward the heavens, and boldly stepped forward. I was no longer earthbound. I was in flight. Freedom, adventure the unknown corners of the world were mine to command. I can not say with any degree of certainty at what point in time or at what height I opened my eyes, and looked down seeing with remarkable clarity the tops of the trees now well below my body. I was in a prostate position, with my hands at my side, and I could turn by moving my head to the left or right. I was in full flight moving at a very great speed when I caught up to the still circling birds, and passed freely among them. I saw below me streets and roadways that were unfamiliar, my world being somewhat limited in scope to a few mere miles in a radius from my home, from Nanas' house. I was in flight. To where, from what?

When the mystery of my location reached to my conscious self, I tried to turn and retrace my path. The turning was at first done with great ease. I slowed my speed, and again inhaled the experience of free flight, an un-tethered spirit, no longer tied to the confines of Nanas' porch. I wanted the freedom of which we have all dreamed. Nothing had ever told me that it could not be mine. It was mine and now going back to where I had come from, in retrospect made no sense, none at all. The tops of the trees were not as far below as they had been only moments ago, and I was beginning to see people on the roadways below. I saw in the distance familiar structures, the homes of neighbors, and too the school just up a ways from our house. I looked down and saw once more the porch from which I had fledged and begun my flight in search of release from all that I had been. I do not remember nor can I envision the

quality of my landing, but I suspect it was less than proficient. I know this for sure, because on landing my Nana was in attendance. She appeared to be very anxious and was yelling for the neighbors to come to her assistance. My arms were tired, my legs numb, and my head still spinning from the miraculous soaring with eagles that I had just completed on this my first flight into the realm of the unknown. I slept and when I awoke I was in the arms of strangers who had braced my back, and put my shoulder into a strong cast, and placed my left arm into a sling. But I could fly. Of this I am certain. I flew and spiraled and glided and soared and to this day, I have repeated this flight on several occasions. I no longer start on railings, but on several occasions, I have left the comfort of my own chair and begun the flight to heaven. I can fly, I will fly, and in the future, I shall fly and not return. I shall be the first if it be so to go where no man has gone before, to the ends of the universe and I will soar not with eagles but with the angels themselves.

Be now a believer, flight is not set aside for mere birds, nor is it forbidden to man. Flight is a given right, a magnificent challenge, a pathway into the unknown. The greater challenge by far is the safe return, to the point from which you departed.

May the Gods of wind and space be always with you and bless you on your flight, and by the Grace of God Our Heavenly Father, may you return safely from each trip.

Peter Alden Yule