

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, June 26, 1906

Beinn Bhreagh, Beinn Bhreagh Victoria County, June 26 1906 Cape Breton, N.S. Dear Mabel

The French Journal L'Aerophile for January 1906 contains some interesting details concerning the flying machine of the Wright Brothers of Dayton Ohio.

It seems strange that our enterprising American Newspapers have failed to keep track of the experiments in Dayton Ohio for the machine is so large that it must be visible over a considerable extent of country and an electrical tramway runs right by the field where the experiments were made.

Numerous persons residing in the neighborhood of Dayton have witnessed the experiments and yet hardly any details of the apparatus employed have appeared in print in America. This seems to be due to the desire of secrecy. The Wright Brothers have made their experiments at a time when few people excepting the surrounding farmers have been out. They have declined to give the newspapers any information and when they discovered that the Dayton Daily News contained an article describing their apparatus they made arrangements with the Editor to have the edition suppressed.

It seems however that a French Journal L'Auto sent to Dayton Ohio one of their correspondents, M. Robert Coquelle who interviewed various witnesses and although he could get no details from the Wright Brothers themselves he succeeded in obtaining for a price a copy of the suppressed number of the Dayton Daily News. He sent this to France and a French translation of it has appeared in L'Auto. L'Aerophile also gives extracts from it in the number published January 1906, Pages 18 and 19.

Considering the fact that this information was published as long ago as the first of January 1906, it seems strange that no American Journal has yet got a hold of the information.

The January number of L'Aerophile also contains a letter from the Wright Brothers to the Editor of the Journal giving such information as they care to make public, but the information has not so far as I am aware yet appeared in the English Language.

The same number of L'Aerophile contains a French translation of an interesting letter from a Mr. Weaver (who seems to be an American) addressed to M. Frank S. Lahm, but this letter too has not appeared in English. Mr. Weaver gives a plan sketch of the field where the experiments were made with its surroundings, and the results of interviews with the farmers who witnessed the experiments.

The same number of L'Aerophile contains a French translation of a letter signed by Wilbur and Orville Wright, dated 3rd of January 1906, and addressed to M. Frank S. Lahm relating to the purchase of his machine by the French.

The number of L'Aerophile published December 1905, pages 265 to 272 contains an account of the negotiations of the Wright 3 Brothers with the French government, with pictures of the two brothers.

Several letters are published from the Wright Brothers to persons in France with the object of inducing the French Government to purchase their machine. The price asked being one million francs. Cabl(grams backwards and forwards across the Atlantic are also given.

I do not understand how it is that so little attention has been payed to this matter by the American Press. I am now studying carefully the details published.

I wonder whether Bert would like me to ask Mr. Largelamb to send him some account of the matter.

Your loving husband Alec. Mr. A. Graham Bell Twin Oaks, Woodley Lane, Washington, D. C. U. S. A.