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## *Sheepshead Bay— Up and Away*

CALBRAITH PERRY RODGERS fell in love with flying in June 1911. He was thirty-two years of age. The object of his passion, born at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, seven and a half years earlier, was too immature, too maladroit to respect or reciprocate that passion. He would nonetheless—as with all true love affairs—honor his commitment. Wheresoever it led, he would follow.

It led, on September 17, 1911, to Sheepshead Bay, Long Island, where Cal Rodgers prepared for the initial leg of a flight that would culminate, so he fervently professed, in the first air crossing of the United States.

Most of the crowd assembled at the Sheepshead Bay racetrack for the Sunday afternoon takeoff was drawn more by the newfangled flying machine than by its driver. Airplanes and New Yorkers were not unacquainted. Both the Nassau Boulevard Field, where a nine-day international aviation meet would begin the following weekend, and that at Brighton Beach, currently hosting a three-day meet, had been operating for over a year. Such renowned birdmen as Thomas Sopwith and George W. Beatty had successfully negotiated the seventeen-mile air course between Brighton and Nassau Boulevard. Attitudes of big-city dwellers to