



AMERICAN COMPOSERS EDITION

MICHAEL DELLAIRA

(Two Page Excerpt)

THE CAMPERS  
AT KITTY HAWK

for SATB chorus

1998

Text by John Dos Passos

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# The Campers at Kitty Hawk

Michael Dellaira

**Presto, energico**

*ff*

Soprano

On De - cem - ber - sev - en - tenth nine - teen

Alto

On De - cem - ber - sev - en - tenth nine - teen

Tenor

On De - cem - ber - sev - en - tenth nine - teen

Bass

On De - cem - ber - sev - en - tenth nine - teen

3

S

hun - dred and three Bish - op Wright of the U - ni - ted Bre - the - ren re -

A

hun - dred and three Bish - op Wright of the U - ni - ted Bre - the - ren re -

T

hun - dred and three Bish - op Wright of the U - ni - ted Bre - the - ren re -

B

hun - dred and three Bish - op Wright of the U - ni - ted Bre - the - ren re -

6

S

ceived a te - le - gram from his boys Wil - bur and Or - ville who'd got - ten it in -

A

ceived a te - le - gram from his boys Wil - bur and Or - ville who'd got - ten it in -

T

ceived a te - le - gram from his boys Wil - bur and Or - ville who'd got - ten it in -

B

ceived a te - le - gram from his boys Wil - bur and Or - ville who'd got - ten it in -

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57

S to fall fall in - ae - ro ae - ro - nau - tics

A mar mar - shes ae - ro ae - ro - nau - tics

T — learned to fly ae - ro - nau - tics

B mar - shes Dress suits silk

60

S be - came the sport of the day con - grat - u -

A be - came the sport of the day con - grat -

T be - came the sport of the day con - grat -

B hats gold braid King czar

63

S la - ted by the czar crown prince the King of I - ta - ly

A u - la - ted con - grat - u - la - ted

T u - la - ted con - grat - u - la - ted

B crown prince con - grat -

## **The Campers at Kitty Hawk** by John Dos Passos (1936)



On December seventeenth nineteen hundred and three Bishop Wright of the United Brethren received a telegram from his boys Wilbur and Orville, who'd gotten it into their heads to spend their vacation in a little camp out on the dunes of the North Carolina coast with a homemade glider they'd knocked together themselves. The telegram read: SUCCESS FOUR FLIGHTS THURSDAY MORNING AGAINST TWENTY ONE MILE WIND STARTED FROM ENGINE POWER ALONE.

The figures were a little wrong but the fact remains a couple of young bicycle mechanics from Dayton Ohio had designed and flown for the first time ever a practical airplane.

In those days flying machines were the big laugh of all the cracker-barrel philosophers. They were practical mechanics; when they needed anything they built it themselves.

They hit on Kitty Hawk on the great dunes and sandy banks that stretch south to Hatteras seaward. Overhead the gulls and swooping terns, fishhawks and cranes flapping across the salt marshes.

They were alone there and figured out the loose sand was as soft as anything they could find to fall in, taking off again and again from Kill Devil Hill they learned to fly.

Aeronautics became the sport of the day, congratulated by the czar, crown prince, the King of Italy, King Edward for universal peace.

Taking off again and again they learned to fly. In the rush of new names the Brothers Wright passed from the headlines: Blériot, Farman, Curtiss, Ferber, Esnault, Petrie, Delagrange can blur the memory of the chilly December day two shivering bicycle mechanics first felt their homemade contraption soar into the air, above the dunes of Kitty Hawk.

"I released the wire that held the machine to the track. The machine started forward into the wind. Wilbur ran at the side holding the wing. The machine started slowly facing twenty seven mile wind, it lifted from the track. Wilbur was able to stay with it until it lifted from the track after a forty foot run. The course of the flight up and down was erratic, the first flight in the history of the world. The machine carried a man by his own power into the air in full flight forward without reduction of speed landed at a point as high as that from which it started."

When these points had been firmly established we packed our goods and returned home, knowing that the age of the flying machine had come at last.

Michael Dellaira, composer  
(from *USA Stories* for SATB)

Texts from *The Big Money* by John Dos Passos,  
the third novel in his trilogy, *USA*.

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