



# Polar Winds: A Century of Flying the North

*Danielle Metcalfe-Chenail*

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**Polar Winds: A Century of Flying the North** Danielle Metcalfe-Chenail

Polar Winds traces a century of northern flight from ballooning to bush pilots and beyond.

"They were all gamblers and fortune seekers. They did things on their own — were independent people who wanted to be free to roam. They were good people, but, of course, some were loners or escapists. They all depended strictly on their wits."

Joe McBryan, pilot and owner of Yellowknife-based Buffalo Airways, was talking about gold prospectors in the 1940s when he said this, but he could just as easily have been describing the aviators who have flown northern skies for over a hundred years. They were adventurers and pioneers, but also just men and women doing what was required to make a living north of the sixtieth parallel.

*Polar Winds* uses the stories of these pilots and others to explore the greater history of air travel in the North, from the Klondike Gold Rush through to the end of the twentieth century. It encompasses everything from exploration flights to the North Pole in airships to passenger travel in jet liners; flying school buses for residential schools to indigenous pilots performing mercy flights; and from the harrowing crashes to the routine supply runs that make up daily life in the North. Above all, it is a unique history told through the experiences of northerners on the ground and in the sky.

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