



THE Flyer

P. O. Box 1903, Kitty Hawk, NC 27949
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Summer 2000

Journey To Kitty Hawk

Fragmentary Memorandum by Wilbur Wright. Undated [circa September 13, 1900] From the Wright Collection, Library of Congress

Left Dayton Thurs. eve. at 6:30 P.M. over the Big Four and C. & O. Arrived Old Point about six o'clock the next day, and went over to Norfolk via the steamer Pennsylvania. Put up at the Monticello Hotel. Spent Saturday morning trying to find some spruce for spars of machine, but was unsuccessful. Finally I bought some white pine and had it sawed up at J. E. Etheridge Co. Mill. Cumpston Goffington, the foreman, very accommodating. The weather was near 100 Fahr. and I nearly collapsed. At 4:30 left for Eliz. City and put up at the Arlington where I spent several days waiting for a boat to Kitty Hawk. No one seemed to know anything about the place or how to get there. At last on Tuesday left. I engaged passage with Israel Perry on his flat-bottom schooner fishing boat. As it was anchored about three miles down the river we started in his skiff which was loaded almost to the gunwale with three men, my heavy trunk and lumber. The boat leaked very badly and frequently dipped water, but by constant bailing we managed to reach the schooner in safety. The weather was very fine with a light west wind blowing. When I mounted the deck of the larger boat I discovered at a glance that it was in worse

condition if possible than the skiff. The sails were rotten, the ropes badly worn and the rudderpost half rotted off, and the cabin was



RICK YOUNG (3rd from left), shown with daughter and staff of The Wright Experience, will fly a 1900 replica Wright glider on Sept. 13 at 10:30 am at Jockey's Ridge State Park in Nags Head. (Photo by Lisa Holian)

so dirty and vermin-infested that I kept out of it from first to last. The wind became very light, making progress slow. Though we had started immediately after dinner it was almost dark when we passed out of the mouth of

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Sept. 13th, 1900 Reenactment

Welcoming Wilbur At Kitty Hawk Bay

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

9:00 am Wilbur Wright will pole into shore on a skiff from a shad boat anchored in Kitty Hawk Bay. First Flight Society President, Rex Peters, serving as Master of Ceremonies, will introduce the program narrators who will begin with the story of Wilbur traveling from Dayton to Elizabeth City and on to his ultimate destination, Kitty Hawk. Wilbur will come ashore (at the site of the new Baldview Bed & Breakfast).

The program will include remarks by Kitty Hawk Mayor, Clifton Perry, and other special guests along with a summary of the Wrights' accomplishments to the year 1900. (In case of rain, ceremony will take place

at Wright Brothers National Memorial Visitor Center.)

10:30 am The program continues at Jockey's Ridge State Park where a 1900 camp reconstruction and reenactment of the

(continued on page 2)

Donald Wills Douglas To Be Inducted Dec. 17th

Donald W. Douglas, a pioneer aeronautical engineer and aircraft manufacturer, opened the era of mass airline travel in 1936 when he introduced the DC-3, the first passenger air liner capable of making a profit for its operator without a government subsidy. A native of Brooklyn, NY, Douglas attended the U.S. Naval Academy and graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1914 with a bachelor of science degree in engineering. Early in his career, he served as a civilian aeronautical engineer with the U.S. Army, then as chief engineer for the Glenn L. Martin Company, where he was involved in the design of the Martin MB-1 bomber.



Donald Douglas

FIRST FLIGHT HONOREE 2000

Douglas relocated to the Los Angeles area in 1920 where he organized the Douglas Aircraft Company. The new firm established its reputation in 1924 when U.S. Army airmen flew Douglas World Cruisers on the first flight around the world. In 1932, after more than a decade producing military aircraft, the company received a contract from Transcontinental and Western Airlines for a new airliner to rival the twin engine Boeing 247 then entering service with United Airlines. The result was the DC-1 and DC-2, predecessors to the famous DC-3. By

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ICARUS

Each year The First Flight Society relies on ICARUS to commission the artists each year to paint a portrait of the new inductees to the Paul E. Garber Shrine, also known as the First Flight Shrine, located at the Wright Brothers National Memorial in Kill Devil Hills.

The selection committee this year has chosen the portrait artist, Ardith Starostka of Columbus, Nebraska to paint the portrait of Donald Wills Douglas which will be unveiled this December 17th.

A member of the American Society of Portrait Artists and recipient of numerous national awards, Starostka was chosen from over 30,000 artists to create a piece for a special meeting at the White House in 1995 where she was asked to paint an ornament for the permanent White House collection. Ardith was named one of the top 10 Finalists in the PSA International Portrait Competition.

The theme for this year's event is *Flying Machines* and a call for entries has been made with

a deadline of November 29th, 2000. For criteria on submissions and entry fees, call 252-441-6584.

Don't miss this tremendous exhibit opening December 3rd at Glenn Eure's Ghost Fleet Gallery and Seaside Art Gallery, both in Nags Head. A shuttle bus will operate between the locations during the reception and awards presentation on December 16, 1999 from 7 to 9 p.m. Due to the recent relocation of the Dare County Arts Council Gallery to Manteo, the Icarus Youth Exhibition will be held at the Dream Center in Nags Head.

(SCHEDULE OF EVENTS continued)

1900 glider flights with participants in period costume.

12:00 pm A casual Fish Fry (\$10 tickets at the door) to be held at the tent at noon. Open To Public.

2:00 pm A panel, including historians Tom Crouch of the Smithsonian, Rick Young of the Wright Experience, and Outer Banks own, Bill Harris and David Stick, will include discussions on Outer Banks lifestyle and the Wrights' accomplishments in 1900. Open To Public

5:30 pm First Flight Centennial Foundation Social and Dinner. By Invitation.

Commission Update

Gov. Jim Hunt recently appointed former state Senator Russell G. Walker of Asheboro to serve as Chairman of the First Flight Centennial Commission. Walker replaces Thad Woodard, who has served as commission chairman since 1998.

Formed in 1994 by the North Carolina General Assembly, the First Flight Centennial Commission is responsible for celebrating and commemorating the 100th anniversary of Orville and Wilbur Wright's historic first powered flight at Kill Devil Hills, NC in 1903. The Commission operates under the auspices of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources.

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources Secretary Betty Ray McCain praised the appointment of Walker stating, "We are fortunate to have Senator Walker at the helm of this commission and we pledge our support for this daunting assignment that he has taken on the state of North Carolina."

As Chairman of the 28-member commission, Walker will direct celebrations of North Carolina's role in the history of flight through five thematic programs: education, arts, peace and humanitarian, military and flight specific. Commission members include volunteers from across the state representing a number of diverse interests including the military, the hospitality industry, business and the public sector.

Walker, a native of Conetoe, NC and a longtime resident of Asheboro, has served a total of 20 years in



Senator Russell G. Walker
New FFCC Chairman

the North Carolina Senate representing District 16. As a World War II pilot in the U.S. Army Air Corps, Walker flew cargo planes across the Himalayas before joining the U.S. Air Force Reserves and then retiring in 1955 with the rank of Captain.

"Senator Walker will be an outstanding leader for the Commission, using his broad experiences in the military, aviation, business and public service to direct our efforts toward a successful centennial celebration," said Dr. Kathryn Holten, Executive Director of the Commission.

The First Flight Centennial Commission is headquartered in Raleigh, NC. For more information about the commission and the centennial celebration, call (919) 733-2003.

Elizabeth City Celebration

The Wright Brothers in Elizabeth City Events Steering Committee is planning a series of programs focusing on the Wrights' visits to Elizabeth City from 1900 to 1903. The following Program is the first in the series which will culminate with the celebration of the centennial of flight in 2003:

Friday, September 8, 2000

6:00 pm • Wilbur and Orville symbolically arrive by train at the old depot site (Albemarle Bible College).

6:15 pm • Unveil first interpretive marker, Wright Bros. and President of College.

6:45 pm • Wright Brothers board horse drawn carriage and ride to site of the Arlington Hotel (currently La Plaza, 110 Water Street).

6:45 pm • Unveil second interpretive marker: Wright Brothers and the Mayor.

7:15 pm • Walk to Waterfront Park and unveil third interpretive marker - Wright Brothers and Senator Marc Basnight.

7:30 pm • Short historical presentation by Rick Young.

• Ticketed social on the deck at Mulligans.

9:00 am Saturday September 9, 2000

• Flotilla carrying the Wright Brothers casts off for the Outer Banks (Waterfront Park).

1900 - 2000

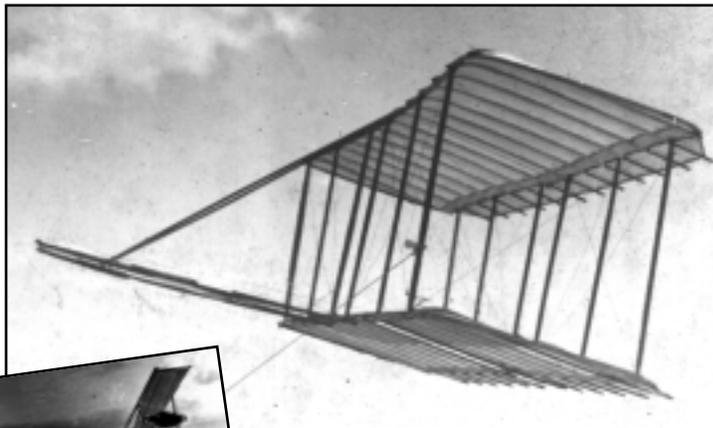
By Tom Halfhill

As we approach the 100th anniversary of powered flight by the Wright brothers, many claims and revisionist writings are appearing. Many of these are interesting and some sound possible. The disturbing thing, to me, is that none of the persons named is living today to give their side of the story. We have to rely on the interpretations and conclusions of the writers. One has to wonder where these silent people were when the Wright brothers were living and finally receiving the deserved world-wide publicity. Of course there are some documented facts that lead to these interpretations and conclusions. It is my intention in this article to list some documented facts that relate to the Wright brothers and others that have influenced the advancement of aviation.

One of the friendly controversies here on the Outer Banks of North Carolina is-- just where did the Wright brothers really fly their aircraft in the early 1900's. Was it in Kitty Hawk or Kill Devil Hills, in Dare County or Currituck County? If we go back to the early English settlements, all of the area called Virginia and North Carolina was carved out along with other states. Early northeast North Carolina was known as Albemarle County and in the middle 1600's, several new counties were carved from it including the original Currituck County which stretched from the Virginia state line all the way south to Ocracoke. In 1870, Dare County was formed from parts of Currituck and Hyde counties.

In 1920, seventeen years after the first flight, the General Assembly of North Carolina shifted the Atlantic Township which contained the areas known as Kitty Hawk and Duck to Dare County. Sounds like the flights occurred in Currituck County as history lists the flights at Kitty Hawk. But, the sand dunes called Kill Devil Hill and West Hill, where the glider flights were actually made, were in Dare County at that time and the level flights in 1903 started at the base of those dunes. The fact that the dunes have migrated a hundred yards or more to the south over the years until they were stabilized in the late 1920's does not alter the above. The Park Service and others have done many surveys to establish these facts. To make all this even more confusing, the monument and park dedicated to the Wright brothers is in a town now known as Kill Devil Hills, a town that didn't exist in 1903. Well, it's easy to see why history can be confusing and S.A.T. and S.O.L. questions open to argument!

You have read in previous First Flight Society newsletters articles detailing the Wright brothers early glider flights in 1900-03 and their four successful powered flights on December 17, 1903. They went back to Dayton, Ohio and worked on another flying machine for the next two years that resulted in the 1905 Wright Flyer III -- probably the first really practical airplane. They were then flying at Huffman



1900 Wright glider, before and after.



Prairie outside Dayton and made many record-breaking flights, but they did not seek publicity as they wanted to first secure

patents to protect their achievements. Many other people around the world were also making successful flights during this time period but none had the proven control systems that the Wrights had perfected and patented.

The fact that the Wrights abandoned much of the accepted data on flight by Lilienthal and others led to their successes. Others were still using some of the flawed data and had mixed results. Some made exaggerated claims, news reports were often misleading and foreign countries and some U.S. "wannabes" were desperately trying to invent proof of being the first to fly. All of these claims, at that time period, were proven in court to be false, and most of the individuals alive acknowledged that they did not have the expertise of the Wrights.

Early in 1908, before Wilbur flew in France and Orville at Fort Myer, the brothers visited Kitty Hawk again to fine-tune their flying skill and their aircraft. They had not flown since 1905 and many others were now successfully flying. They had competition.

A group led by Alexander Graham Bell--yes, that one--had formed an association called the Aerial Experiment Association. Glenn Curtiss was a member and he asked the Wrights for some information. They furnished much technical information as they felt that it was protected by their patents. John Montgomery, the first U.S. person to have a glider flight, was making many claims and Langley would prove to be a thorn for the Wrights. All of these people had to copy or hitchhike on the Wright control system to have successful aircraft.

Also in 1908, the Wrights received their patents and had signed contracts for the sale of airplanes. Wilbur took an improved 1905 Flyer to LeMans, France and on August 8, 1908 made public flights that lead to great publicity and thousands of people in Europe witnessed the flights. A month later, Orville made public flights at Fort Myer, Virginia for the U.S. Army. These public performances in 1908 convinced the skeptics that the Wright brothers had conquered the air. No other persons came forward at that time to claim otherwise.

WILBUR
(continued from front page)

the Pasquotank and headed down the sound. The water was much rougher than the light wind would have led us to expect, as Israel spoke of it several times and seemed a little uneasy. After a time the breeze shifted to the south and gradually became stronger. The boat

was quite unfitted for sailing against a head wind owing to the large size of the cabin, the lack of load, and its flat bottom. The waves which were now running quite high struck the boat from below with a heavy shock and threw it back about as fast as it went forward. The leeway was greater than the headway. The strain of rolling and pitching sprung a leak and this, together with what water came over the bow at times, made it necessary to bail frequently. At 11 o'clock the wind increased to a gale and the boat was gradually being driven nearer and nearer the north shore, but as an attempt to turn round would probably have resulted in an upset there seemed nothing else to do but attempt to round the North River light and take refuge behind the point. In a severe gust the foresail was blown loose from the boom and fluttered with a terrible roar. The boy and I finally succeeded in taking it in though it was rather dangerous work in the dark with the boat rolling so badly. By the time we had reached a position even with the end of the point it became doubtful whether we would be able to round the light, which lay at the end of a bar extending out a quarter of a mile from the shore. The suspense was ended by another roaring of the canvas as the mainsail also tore loose from the boom, and shook fiercely in the gale. The only chance was to make a straight run over the bar with nothing but a jib, so we took in the mainsail and let the boat swing round the stern to the wind. This was a very dangerous maneuver in such a sea but was in some way accomplished without capsizing. The waves were very high on the bar and broke over the stern very badly. Israel had been so long a stranger to the touch of water upon his skin that it affected him very much.

(1900-2000 cont.)

In 1910 the Wright Company was founded at Dayton, Ohio and the manufacturing of airplanes resulted. A flight school was established at Huffman Field to train pilots and as the saying goes--the rest is history.

The Flyer
is a Newsletter of
The First Flight Society

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(DOUGLAS, continued from front page)

1941, 95 percent of U.S. airline passenger miles were being flown by Douglas aircraft. The C-47, the U.S. Army Air Force's version of the DC-3, served in every theatre of war as both a troop carrier and transport aircraft. Remaining in production until 1947, some 15,000 DC-3s and variants were eventually produced in the U.S. and under license abroad.

Douglas continued to lead the way in the production of both military and civil aircraft in the years following WW II. The DC-4, DC-6 and DC-7 aircraft pioneered transcontinental and transoceanic airline routes, while Douglas military aircraft saw service with the U.S. Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. Post-war experimental aircraft produced by the company, like the Douglas

D-558-2 Skyrocket, set new speed and altitude records. Donald Douglas remained with the company that he had founded until 1967, when a corporate merger led to the creation of the McDonnell-Douglas Corporation.

A century after flight was born on the sands of the Kill Devil Hills, the products of the American aerospace industry continue to the the global standard for quality, performance, efficiency and reliability. The continued success of that enterprise rests on a foundation of solid engineering, business acumen and clear vision established by earlier generations of industrial leaders. No one better represents that tradition of excellence than Donald Wills Douglas.

Communicate!

The First Flight Society Has A New Telephone Number: 252-441-1903

- Also, please keep us advised of address changes.
- We like to communicate at lightning speed and zero postage. Please send your e-mail address to dec17@firstflight.org.

First Flight Society Membership Application

Members of the First Flight Society come from all walks (or flights) of life, but we all share a common bond: our love of aviation. The purpose of the society is to foster and promote a public awareness of, and widespread interest in, the origin, history and future of flight, in all its forms, and to memorialize Orville and Wilbur Wright, first in the world to successfully achieve powered flight in a heavier-than-air machine, December 17, 1903, near Kill Devil Hill, at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Join us by completing the information below and mailing your membership check made payable to the First Flight Society.

Name _____, Address _____, State _____, Zip _____

(Mail to The First Flight Society, P. O. Box 1903, Kitty Hawk, NC 27949)

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