



# Scientists and Inventors

## Orville and Wilbur Wright, Inventors

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“I’ll fly,” Orville told them, approaching the aircraft.

Milton looked at his sons.

Orville, born in 1871, and Wilbur, born in 1867, were going to take him on a flight in their now famous, “Flying Machine.”

His boys were always fascinated by flying. Way back in 1878, Milton brought home a toy helicopter for his seven children. Orville and Wilbur took a particular liking to it. Made of cork and bamboo, his sons played with it until it broke. Then, they designed their own.

“Go on, Pop,” Wilbur said, breaking Milton’s reverie. “Get in.”

Orville and Wilbur could not be any more different from one another. Wilbur was a force to be reckoned with. He was bold, a captain of innovation, and he moved their various projects forward. Orville was a quiet thinker, who strategized effectively with his whip smart brain. The two combined to create an indomitable force.

Milton was proud of his sons when they started their successful bicycle repair shop, making an honest living from their trade. But they began to follow their crazy dreams about flying. Milton watched his boys design gliders and various flying contraptions. They created a wind tunnel in the back of their bike shop to test out the angles and equations required to achieve lift and flight. They took trips from their Ohio homebase to Kitty Hawk, North Carolina to test their machines on the dunes.

It scared Milton, but he kept quiet about it. He watched his sons crash and fail time and again. He watched them suffer broken bones and bruised ribs. He saw them sink their savings into this wild dream. He made them promise they would never fly together because he loved them too much to lose both at one time.

That was, until today. At Huffman Prairie field in Ohio, Orville and Wilbur piloted their aircraft together for the first time, while Milton watched from below. And he found that he wasn’t scared. Because after years of error and failure and trying and learning, his boys had done it. They’d built a real flying machine! They mastered power, lift and control. Orville and Wilbur could fly!

And so would he. Today, at age 82, after years of watching, Milton was going to fly with his sons.

The machine lurched forward, bumping across the field. Milton felt a jolt and then a sort of nothingness, like he was floating, except he wasn’t, he was still firmly in his seat, flying!

“Higher!” he laughed. “Higher! Higher!”

The Wright Brothers were inventors and pioneers in aviation, inspired by decades of aviation innovators. They are generally credited as designing, building and flying the world’s first powered airplane. Their flight of the Wright Flyer in 1903 was the first successful, controlled flight of a heavier-than-air aircraft. Their legacy impacts the way we travel, ship goods and explore our universe every day.

## NEWSPAPER CONNECTIONS

**Create a cartoon of Milton Wright’s first flight, in the style of a cartoon in the newspaper.**